

Sprouts debuts new format store in Dania Beach, with others on the way

By **RON HURTIBISE**

DEC 01, 2021 AT 6:00 AM

Shoppers entering Sprouts Farmers Market's newest South Florida location on Wednesday, in Dania Beach, will experience a new format, expanded lines of health-oriented groceries and more produce.

The store at 150 S. Compass Way in the Dania Pointe mixed-use center is the first of five new Sprouts locations scheduled to open in the tri-county region over the next few weeks. Doors open Wednesday at 7 a.m., followed at 5 p.m. by a live appearance by cookbook author and NBC lifestyle show host Danny Seo.

Shoppers will notice several differences between the new stores and the chain's first four area locations in Deerfield Beach, Miramar, Wellington and Jupiter.

Sprouts Farmers Market opens in Dania | PHOTOS



A look at the new Sprouts Farmers Market opening at the Dania Pointe shopping center (Susan Stocker / South Florida Sun Sentinel)

Already known for its large selection of affordable organic products, the Phoenix, Arizona-based chain is targeting consumers who have adopted alternative diets, such as paleo, ketogenic, vegan and

gluten-free.

Products geared toward those consumers are featured prominently throughout the store.

There's vegan jerky for folks who don't eat beef, "keto-friendly" crunchy snack mixes, tortillas made from cactus, numerous varieties of gluten-free breads and much more.

The store's meat counter has been pushed closer to the front doors so shoppers encounter it upon entering. But it's not called a meat counter. Instead, it's referred to as "Center of Plate." Various cuts of steak, chicken and pork coexist with plant-based meat alternatives, including products made by Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, Lightlife and LikeMeat.

Meat substitutes have evolved considerably in recent years and now offer "texture and taste that are getting closer to the real thing," said Dave McGlinchey, Sprouts' chief format officer. He added, "People are looking for plant-based meals instead of turkey or rib roasts."

Sprouts plans to introduce new products each month — stuff that shoppers won't likely find in traditional supermarkets, at their "innovation center," said corporate spokesman Diego Romero.

"We want people to come to Sprouts like they're coming to a farmer's market and find something new to take home and get excited about," Romero said.

Other changes include an expanded produce section that occupies about 25% of the store's 21,600 square feet. About 30% of the store's fruits and vegetables are organic.

After opening a new regional distribution center in the Orlando area this year, Sprouts is able to source more of its produce from Florida-based farms.

About 100 new items have been added to the typical Sprouts store's selection of bulk items — the nuts, trail mixes, dried fruits, grains, gummy bears, coffees, and candies that shoppers can purchase in whatever volume they desire.

Sprouts differs from organic-rich competitors like Whole Foods and Fresh Market in that it doesn't sell hot-to-go items beyond rotisserie chicken. But it offers a variety of refrigerated ready-to-cook meals such as chicken parmesan, fettuccini alfredo, beef stroganoff and chicken "street tacos."

The new format also features a 30% to 40% larger frozen food section, McGlinchey said. The frozen and ready-to-cook foods appeal to the thousands of young people moving into the apartment high-rises surrounding the new location in the Dania Pointe mixed-use development.

“People want more convenience but they also want high quality,” he said. “Today’s technology allows [manufacturers] to keep the nutrients while freezing the food. There’s a lot of innovation. And frozen food tastes better.”

Wednesday’s grand opening will be followed by debuts of four other area stores:

- 9850 Jog Road, Boynton Beach, Dec. 10
- 1901-B North Military Trail, West Palm Beach, Dec. 15
- 700 E. Oakland Park Blvd., Oakland Park, Jan. 7
- 12690 SW 88th St., West Kendall, Jan. 7

2022 will be another big year for the chain, which now has more than 370 locations across 23 states. The company is expected to announce plans to open six more stores, mostly in South Florida.

With 25 stores already open across the state, McGlinchey says expanding in South Florida makes sense as the chain works harder to appeal to health-conscious folks. Consumers here are more likely to be among the company’s two target customer groups — experience seekers and health enthusiasts, he said.

Still, older stores won’t be left to molder. Products and categories introduced in the new-format stores will eventually make their way to existing stores, Romero said.

The Dania Beach store will be open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday’s live in-store appearance by Danny Seo, editor-in-chief of a national magazine and an NBC lifestyle show, both called Naturally, Danny Seo, will begin at 5 p.m. Free copies of Seo’s latest book, Naturally, Delicious Dinners, will be given to the first 150 people in line to see Seo, while sushi and wine samples will also be offered.