

Imports of Fruits on the Rise as Indians Look to Build Immunity

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Kolkata: Apples and blueberries from the US and the kiwi-fruit from Chile and New Zealand — Indians are consuming more of top-quality imported fruits that are considered to be good for immunity-building.

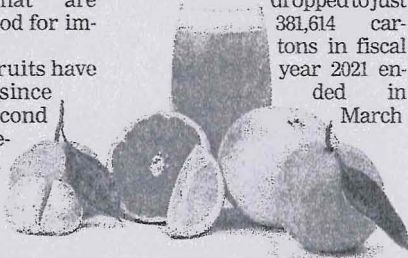
Imports of these fruits have increased 20-30% since April amid the second wave of the pandemic, compared with around this time last year, said people dealing with the trade.

“We have witnessed a perceptible change among consumers and they are willing to spend more for fruits that they believe are healthy and from a trusted origin,” said Sumit Saran, the India representative of the Washington Apple Commission.

Imports of Washington app-

les start peaking in April, around the time when the season for Indian apples ends, and go on till July.

India annually imports 2 lakh tonnes of apples at an average landed price of ₹120-150 per kg. Imports of the variety from the US state of Washington had dropped to just 381,614 cartons in fiscal year 2021 ended in March



compared with 1.07 million cartons the year before, even as India increased the duty on the juicy fruit to 75% from 50% after the then Trump administration raised the tariffs on Indian shipments of steel and aluminium to the US. The higher duties still stand, but imports of apples from the US have now in-

creased again.

Millennials in particular have developed a taste for quality fruits in this second wave of Covid, said Saran of the Washington Apple Commission which promotes the fruit in international markets.

The US is also shipping more blueberries to India. Nearly 1,800 tonnes of fresh, frozen, and dried blueberries as well as fruit filling were imported in 2020 from the US last year. This is expected to go up by 20-30% this year,” said Raj Kapoor, a representative of the US High-

bush Blueberry Council.

Blueberries are also imported in dried and frozen forms for use in the dairy, baking and confectionery industries.

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