

# Trend Watch

## TOP TAKEAWAYS



### Barbecue Popularity Continues to Be Hot for Summer

It's that time of year again—the weather is getting warmer and people are ready to get out and enjoy the summer. One thing that is synonymous with summertime besides warmer weather is barbecue. Whether it's in the back yard with friends and family, or a night out at a popular restaurant, barbecue continues to be a hot trend for summer 2015.

Barbecue was listed as the #1 perennial favorite for 2015, with an overwhelming 64% of chefs putting barbecue at the top. Pulled pork, another barbecue favorite, was listed as #9 for 2015, with 55% of the overall surveyors rating.<sup>1</sup>

Chefs are always looking for new ways to make classic American staples more innovative and appealing to consumers. As barbecue becomes increasingly popular, pork continues to be a crowd favorite to eat off the grill. From pork ribs and shoulders, to butts and bellies, these large pieces of meat are incredibly versatile once barbecued. Pork lends itself nicely to low and slow cooking methods, making it the perfect protein to use for all barbecue styles.

Barbecue is popular in all regions across the country, which makes it the perfect cuisine for chefs to play around with new ways to menu it.

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## WHAT'S HOT

According to the Nation's Restaurant News's "What's Hot" for 2015 survey, 1,300 chefs who were surveyed put barbecue at the top of the trending list. Below are the four main trends they named to watch out for this summer season.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Mixing Regions

Barriers between different regions are coming down. Chefs from North Carolina who are famous for their vinegar-based barbecue sauce are bringing traditional Southern BBQ all the way from Texas into their establishments.

### 2. Healthy BBQ

This may seem like an oxymoron to most, but barbecue can fit the bill when it comes to healthy eating. And with more and more consumers focused on the importance of protein, chefs are making their barbecue as healthy as possible.

### 3. Whiskey and Barbecue

This combination may seem like a no-brainer for most, but pairing whiskey with barbecue in a culinary dish takes taste profiles to the next level.

### 4. Meat-eaters haven

People at sporting events, such as football and baseball games, are large consumers of barbecue. Brisket, pulled pork, smoked chicken and turkey are now being used to top ball-game classics, such as hot dogs, brats and hamburgers.

## DATA TO NOTE



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### Appetizers Take Center Stage on Restaurant Menus

Appetizers are upstaging the main entrees at restaurants and are becoming a 'must-have' for consumers rather than a second thought. Datassential's recent study attributes this surge of popularity of appetizers to the growing snacking and shaking trend.<sup>3</sup> Whether it's a mid-morning, mid-afternoon or pre-dinner bite, appetizers are moving up on the food chain.

Appetizers are the perfect place for chefs to showcase their creativity and put more adventurous ingredients and flavors on the menu. Appetizers, which are meant to be shared, lend themselves nicely to those who are willing to try something out-of-the-box and away from their comfort zone. Since consumers don't have to commit to eating the entire dish alone, they are more likely to order something new and different.<sup>4</sup>

With pork's never ending versatility, it's the ideal protein option for chefs to use to create innovative appetizer dishes. From bacon, to pork belly, chorizo and even pork ears, check out how chefs across the country are menuing pork on their appetizer menus.

### HERE ARE A FEW WAYS THAT CHEFS USE PORK TO CREATE FLAVORFUL ON-TREND APPETIZERS:



Chorizo-stuffed medjool  
dates with bacon and piquillo  
pepper-tomato sauce

Avec, Chicago, IL



Bacon and Gruyère  
roasted bone marrow  
with parsley puree

Salty Sow, Austin TX



Potato Chip Nachos  
five cheese fondue, jalapeño,  
pork belly

Swine, New York, NY



Lettuce wraps of crispy pig  
ears, florida oranges, spring  
onion and salted peanuts

Tongue & Cheek, Miami, FL

## PORK IN THE NEWS



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### America's Taste Buds Are Heating Up-Spice Is on the Rise

There's been a noticeable upward trend and increasing popularity of hot sauces and spices being incorporated into dishes across day parts. The NPD group reports that consumers ages 25-34 have the strongest preference for spicy; with 68% of consumers in that age group having a strong liking for spicy foods.<sup>5</sup> But they aren't the only consumers who are joining the hot sauce bandwagon; according to the NPD group, 56% of household kitchens keep hot sauce in their cabinets.<sup>6</sup>

What might be a surprise to most, breakfast is the most popular meal of day for spicy foods to be consumed. The American Egg Board reports that spicy foods that appear on breakfast menus have increased 17% from 2009.<sup>7</sup>

Breakfast is not only the most popular time consumers add spice and heat to their meals, but it's also a popular time to eat pork. Whether it's bacon, ham or sausage, breakfast joints across the country feature pork on their menus. Restaurants are beginning to combine the two, adding a good amount of heat to their pork breakfast offerings. It's the best of both worlds for consumers; they get to eat the pork they love with a little 'wake me up' heat.

### SEE HOW THESE RESTAURANTS ARE PERFECTING THIS DESIRABLE PAIRING OF PORK AND HEAT:



The Breakfast Banh Mi with Vietnamese sausage, breakfast kimchi, a fried egg, house-made hot sauce and everything bagel with cream cheese was named Restaurant Hospitality's 2014 Best Breakfast Sandwich in America. Jack Flaps, Cleveland, OH



The Donut Breakfast Sandwich adds caramelized onions, American cheese, sunny side up egg and orange coriander breakfast sausage to a Sriracha-glazed donut. The Gallows, Boston, MA



## OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING

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### Chefs Across the Country Are Adding Bourbon

Barbecue may be a traditional American staple, but chefs are looking for ways to spice up their BBQ menus. One red hot trend that is sweeping the barbecue nation is incorporating bourbon into barbecue sauce.

According to Datassential, bourbon is appearing on 32 percent more menus than it was four years ago.<sup>7</sup> The Midwest and South are no strangers to bourbon being paired with barbecue items, but even the East and West Coasts are beginning to incorporate this flavor profile. Bourbon appears on 7 percent of menus in the Northeast, and 4 percent of menus in the West.<sup>8</sup>

Why are chefs turning to this brown liquor to amplify their barbecue offerings? To most chefs, bourbon and barbecue are the perfect pairing-bourbon adds a smoky, wood flavor to the meat, which only adds to the flavor profile of barbecue.



#### **Hickory Bourbon BBQ Baby Back Ribs**

Braised pork ribs with hickory bourbon BBQ sauce, roasted garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables

Alchemy, Madison WI



#### **Bourbon Cherry Pork Chop**

Seasoned and glazed in a bourbon cherry BBQ Sauce. Served over mashed sweet potatoes

Annapolis Smokehouse & Tavern, Annapolis, MD



#### **BBQ Pork "Pancakes"**

Bourbon sorghum whole wheat pancakes topped with barbecue pork, horseradish pickles, Asian slaw

Marketplace at Theatre Square, Louisville, KY



#### **Feisty Pig**

Pizza with pulled pork, smoked bacon, red onion, pickles, jalapeño peppers, mozzarella, cheddar cheese with a bourbon molasses sauce, garnished with green onion

Rafferty's Pizza, Nisswa, MN