

# Trend Watch

## TOP TAKEAWAYS



Bacon-Wrapped Pork Chop

**Smithfield**  
**Farmland**<sup>®</sup>  
 FOODSERVICE GROUP  
**PORK. SOLVED.**

### Table of Contents

- Top Takeaways
- Data to Note
- Pork in the News
- Out-of-the-Box Thinking

## There's No Stopping Bacon

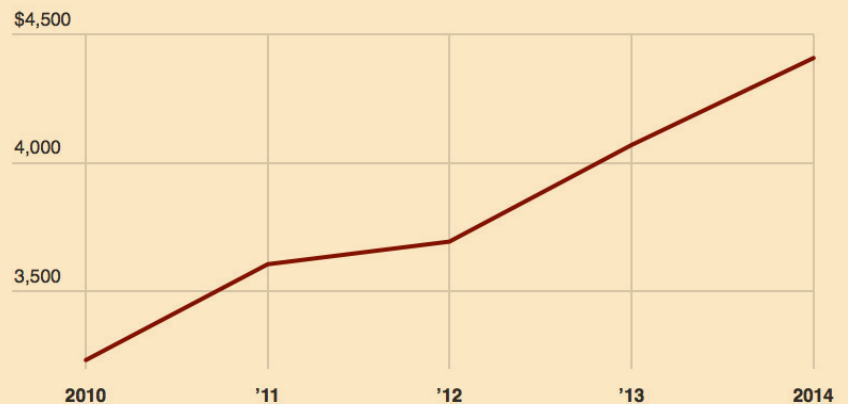
The pork industry traveled a bumpy road in 2014 as millions of pigs were affected by a widespread virus which, in turn, drove pork prices to an all-time high. But, despite the hiccup, bacon turned out to be one of the best-selling meats in America.<sup>1</sup>

According to Chicago-based market researcher IRI, consumers purchased more than 864 million pounds of bacon at American supermarkets, retailers, convenience stores, drugstores, military commissaries and dollar stores last year.<sup>1</sup> Consumers were still purchasing bacon even at record prices. With those prices now dropping, there's no limit to restaurant innovation when it comes to bacon-themed menu items. Many chains have caught on, debuting all sorts of unique, bacony creations, such as Little Caesars new deep-dish pizza wrapped in thick-cut bacon.

There are no limits to bacon creativity, and the protein can be featured both as a traditional complement to a menu item or an indulgent treat. Chefs are pushing bacon to its limits and consumers are responding with a resounding, "More bacon, please!" It appears that despite any industry road blocks or bacon naysayers claiming that the fad is over, bacon is surely here to stay.

### Bringing home the bacon

Shoppers bought more than 864 million pounds of bacon at American supermarkets and food chains last year, sending bacon sales to an all-time high.



Source: IRI. Sales in millions of dollars.

The Washington Post

## DATA TO NOTE



Asian Style Ribs

**Smithfield**  
**Farmland**<sup>®</sup>  
FOODSERVICE GROUP  
**PORK. SOLVED.**

### Chefs Play Up Pork in Ethnic Dishes

There have been whispers of an upward trend in ethnic cuisine this year. In fact, Technomic reports that Asian foods have been trending for years but continue to come up with something new.<sup>2</sup> This could be the year of Asian and Vietnamese cuisine, and pork is not being left off the table.

Asian and Vietnamese cuisine play well to a diverse consumer segment looking for bolder, spicier and more innovative items on the menu. Chefs can play up traditional dishes or have some fun creating their own. Innovation in Asian and Vietnamese menu items is vast in the kitchen, and pork is often a shining star of menu variations.

### HERE ARE SOME GREAT EXAMPLES OF ASIAN-INSPIRED DISHES:



#### **Vietnamese Bologna, Chef Jamie Bissonette**

Chef Jamie Bissonette of Toro in New York creates Vietnamese bologna, a recipe featured in his book, *The New Charcuterie Cookbook*. The innovative dish is created using an old-school technique for making bologna using pork shoulder and turning it Vietnamese with the addition of palm sugar, fish sauce and Thai chilies, and then wrapping it and steaming it in a banana leaf.<sup>3</sup>



#### **Dirty South Korean Sandwiches, Chef Richard Hales**

Chef Richard Hales of Sakaya Kitchen gives a Vietnamese spin to traditional sliders with his Dirty South Korean sandwiches – pulled pork sliders with house-made kimchi slaw and quick pickle.



#### **Pork Belly Buns, Chef Lon Symensma**

Chef Lon Symensma of Cholon in Denver offers creative takes on Asian classics, such as Pork Belly Buns paired with sesame-honey glaze and pickles.

<sup>2</sup> FastCasual.com, "Prognostication: 2015 menu trends." <http://www.fastcasual.com/articles/prognostication-2015-menu-trends/>, Oct. 27, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Tasting Table, "A Little Cure-ious." [http://www.tastingtable.com/entry\\_detail/national/17880/How\\_To\\_Make\\_Jamie\\_Bissonettes\\_Vietnamese\\_Bologna\\_from\\_The\\_hm?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=national&utm\\_campaign=A\\_Little\\_Cure\\_ious\\_2014\\_09\\_16&utm\\_content=Cooking\\_editorial](http://www.tastingtable.com/entry_detail/national/17880/How_To_Make_Jamie_Bissonettes_Vietnamese_Bologna_from_The_hm?utm_medium=email&utm_source=national&utm_campaign=A_Little_Cure_ious_2014_09_16&utm_content=Cooking_editorial), Sept. 16, 2014.

## PORK IN THE NEWS



Bacon Crisps

**Smithfield**  
**Farmland**<sup>®</sup>  
FOODSERVICE GROUP  
**PORK. SOLVED.**

### The Revival of Tapas

With a growing trend in shared plates and small plates, tapas are taking center stage on many restaurant menus. In fact, countless restaurant concepts completely devoted to tapas are popping up across the nation.

Andrew Freeman of Andrew Freeman & Co. released his eighth annual trend prediction report for 2015 with a nod to tapas and the cuisine of Spain, saying it will dominate this year.<sup>4</sup> It's a Spanish tradition that has recently been revived in the U.S., and this artful way of serving up culinary creations is resonating well with chefs and consumers alike.

So what's all the fuss over these tasteful bites? Many consumers are having a preference for smaller plates because of the lower cost. Some prefer to have a taste of a variety of items, and others with a smaller appetite prefer to share with a group. Tapas play well in social situations, whether that be large groups dining together or tasting events. Plus, chefs can charge premium prices for tapas, as they appear as trendy, upscale items. Putting tapas on the menu is a great way for chefs to attract new customers while energizing existing diners.



Pincho De Lomo De Cerdo – Grilled pork loin brochette with alioli sauce

Emilio's Tapas, Sol y Nieve, Chicago, IL



Pork Tostada – Maple Creek Farm pork loin braised in tomatoes, tomatillos, chilies and garlic served over tostadas topped with avocado and crema

La Merenda, Milwaukee, WI

**Tapas featuring pork are a menu favorite among chefs and consumers alike. Turn the page to see how pork plays into the tapas trend.**

## OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING



Tender Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Hickory-Smoked Bacon

**Smithfield**  
**Farmland**  
FOODSERVICE GROUP  
**PORK. SOLVED.**

## Chefs Wow Customers With Tapas Featuring Pork

When it comes to creating mouth-watering tapas that guests will love, pork often plays a huge role. Not only is pork versatile enough to be implemented into just about any cuisine and paired with just about any flavor, but heads turn for pork. Customers love bacon-wrapped anything and are intrigued by the uniqueness of cuts like pork belly. Chefs can experiment with every cut of pork to put a spin on traditional items or produce their very own tapas creations.



### Tocino

Orange coriander braised pork belly, slow cooked gigande beans, charred scallion yogurt, pickled baby vegetables

The Iberian Pig, Decatur, GA



### Lacquered Pork Belly Bites

Bartlett pear, pickled radish

Moxy Modern American Tapas, Portsmouth, NH



### Datiles

Bacon-wrapped dates, stuffed with goat cheese, drizzled with a balsamic reduction and roasted red pepper white wine sauce

Bulerias Tapas Bar, Chicago, IL



### Presa Iberica

Pan-seared Iberian pork shoulder with pearl onions, chickpea puree and Piquillo peppers

Andanada, New York, NY



### Calamarito Fritos

Fried squid, serrano ham, pork belly, onion, orange zest, blood orange aioli

San Chez a Tapas Bistro, Grand Rapids, MI



### Grits & Grillades

Slow braised local pork stewed in a rich Louisiana gravy served atop stone ground smoked cheese grits and a sunny-side-up quail egg

Restaurant IPO, Baton Rouge, LA