

# Trend Watch

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## TOP TAKEAWAYS

### Summer BBQ Sauces – What's Hot This Season!

With each changing season, our taste buds crave meals that reflect our physical surroundings. Warm summer days cause our mouths to water at the scent of our favorite food cooking on the grill. Our eyes light up at the sight of a majestic open fire, and our taste buds dance at the thought of flavor perfection. Since anyone can make freezer-burned ribs smothered in store-bought BBQ sauce, consumers seek the real pros behind the grill who understand there is an art to grilling. Whether consumers enjoy the taste of slow-roasted, dry-rub brisket or saucy ribs off the grill, how meat is cooked and the sauces the meats are glazed in determine the quality of great BBQ.

Cooking pork to tender and juicy perfection is only half the battle. The sauces and seasonings are the other half. Americans crave a fix for their flowering taste buds as more and more people are adapting to more exotic flavors in their meals. Asian- and African-inspired condiments gathered the appreciation of 71% of chefs participating in the NRA 2016 Hot Trends survey who believe exotic condiments are the number one hottest trend.<sup>1</sup> Consumers are hungry for rich, complex sauces and flavor profiles. Some people prefer sweet flavor profiles, such as classic maple BBQ, while others enjoy smoked and spicy notes such as bourbon or Sriracha.

Many operators have wisely noted this craving and have created their own unique BBQ sauces, such as the house-made Fireball Whisky BBQ sauce at Uno Chicago Grill. Red Robin offers premium-dipping sauces like the Smoke & Pepper Ketchup and Smoked Bacon. Then there are places famous for their unique sauces, such as Alabama, the birthplace of white BBQ sauce made with mayo. The sauce-pairing potential has a high success rate because of pork's broad flavor capabilities.

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#### FIREBALL WHISKY BBQ CHICKEN & BACON MELT

Tender fried chicken filets tossed in house-made Fireball Whisky BBQ Sauce, topped with cheddar, bacon and ranch dressing on sourdough bread.

Uno Chicago Grill, Chicago, IL



#### WHITE BBQ SAUCE

Alabama is the birthplace of white BBQ sauce made with mayo. At Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Que in Decatur, AL, the BBQ chicken is dunked in white sauce before serving.

Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Que, Decatur, AL



#### DELICIOUSLY DUNKABLE DIPPING SAUCES

Premium dipping sauces include Thai Chili, Roasted Green Chile and Smoked Bacon.

Red Robin, Greenwood Village, CO

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## DATA TO NOTE



### The Growth of Pork's Menu Penetration

Menu penetration of pork has grown 4.9% in the four-year period 2013-16 as more people identify and reinvent the uses and flavor profiles of pork.<sup>2</sup> This year has already seen booming demand for pork and pork products. The versatility, cost-efficiency, diversity of flavor profiles and cooking capabilities explain why pork's incorporation into menus around the country is a growing trend.

Move over chicken sandwiches and burger patties. Pork is not to be overlooked and in many cases is taking America's classic recipes to a whole new level. Pork belly is cut for more than just bacon. The crunchy and juicy meat is a great topping on pizzas or braised in Asian soy sauce served over rice and veggies. Pulled pork is more than just a sandwich choice, since it can be topped with cilantro and fresh lime on tacos.

Then there is pork shoulder, pork cheek, pork sausage, burnt ends and more. Each cut of pork can be grilled, smoked or slow-cooked to uncover the juicy, versatile flavors desired. This delicious source of protein is growing in use across menus around the country, as it is not only tasty, but also inexpensive compared with other meat options, such as ground beef.

American BBQ is a beloved staple in barbecue-belt states like Alabama, Tennessee and Texas; however, its versatility means perfection when combining the traditional cuisine with unique marinades and seasonings. Pork was on 58.4% of menus in 2013 and as of today is on over 6 in 10 (61.3%) of menus.<sup>3</sup> Pork has become a hot menu option, and with it is the emergence of bold ethnic flavor variations, such as Caribbean and Pan-Asian. Culinary creatives around the world are incorporating this adaptable protein to invigorate all meat lovers and savory seekers.

As pork has made its gradual penetration into mainstream menus, it has also brought with it a variety of global seasoning selections. From Cantonese inspired Char Siu Pork Tenderloin that uses a variety of Asian sauces and seasonings, such as soy sauce, Chinese mustard and sake to Korean pork chops made with their famous chili paste gochujang to give a classic dish a spicy flair.

Today, pork is more than just a menu favorite. It is a huge opportunity to attract new customers and build business for those savvy operators that realize its popularity and versatility. With its easily enhanced flavor profiles and application diversity, it's no wonder pork is fast becoming the new protein of choice across the country.

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### PORK IN THE NEWS



## Smithfield® 2016 CHEF'S TABLE

### Charlotte, North Carolina – The Road Show Continues

In early May, Smithfield hosted its fourth Chef's Table, in Charlotte, North Carolina, at City Smoke. Corporate Chef Frank Dominguez partnered with City Smoke's Executive Chef Adam Pugh to showcase pork's versatility, while delighting palates through a number of different tasting stations. City Smoke was chosen due to its prominent address right in the heart of uptown Charlotte and because it features a contemporary take on Southern classics and comfort food. The menu has a "down home" feel and includes an adventurous wine selection, as well as added craft cocktails.

Chefs from in and around Charlotte attended this invite-only party to taste Smithfield's DURoC and Log Smoked Bacon product lines. Chef Frank prepared his famous Vietnamese Tacos, a combination of pulled pork belly, Sriracha BBQ sauce and kimchi slaw served in a wonton shell. The evening included passed appetizers and small bites; the main course was served tasting-station style. The menu also included Chef Adam's Award-Winning Carnitas and finished with Crisp Bacon Pecan Pie – there wasn't a hungry person in sight.

**Iron Skillet Smithfield  
DURoC Roasted Pork Belly**  
Skewered and drizzled with  
Béarnaise Sauce



**North Carolina  
Grilled Cheese**  
Carolina Moon Creamery  
"New Moon," Smithfield  
Log Smoked Bacon,  
heirloom tomato



**Rubbed Smithfield DURoC**  
St. Louis-Style Ribs  
brushed with City  
Smoke sauce



**Vietnamese BBQ Taco**  
Pulled Pork Belly, Sriracha  
BBQ sauce and kimchi slaw  
served in a wonton shell





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## OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING

### BBQ Means PORK

And pork's regional versatility means a head-turning style to satisfy all BBQ lovers.

Not all BBQ is created equal. And that's great news for BBQ fans everywhere. Smithfield is the BBQ authority and understands the differences in every region. The versatility of pork lends itself to deliciously different regional BBQ tastes, which create menu excitement and diversity. Smithfield partnered with Brewmaster Jared Rouben to forge a deep connection between the kitchen and various brew styles. Based on the various BBQ styles, Jared provides a great resource to offer operators and chefs exciting beer flavors for a few trending BBQ styles.



#### CAROLINA-STYLE BBQ

The light body of an American Pilsner, highlighted by the sweetness from the beer's grain profile, complements the sour notes in Carolina vinegar sauces without overshadowing the smoke flavors found in the pork.



#### MEMPHIS-STYLE BBQ

APAs typically showcase a tropical fruit bitterness that balances with both sour notes from vinegar sauces and sweetness from coleslaws introduced in Memphis-style pork dishes such as pulled pork sandwiches.



#### KANSAS CITY-STYLE BBQ

Sweet Kansas City tomato- and molasses-based BBQ sauce pairs well with the complementary sweet notes found in Bock beers. A light- to medium-bodied Bock beer balances the residual sugars found in these sauces without overwhelming the palate.