

# Trend Watch

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## TOP TAKEAWAYS

### Island Cuisines Make Their Way to the Main Land

A new wave of fusion cuisines has hit mainstream America—and some of these cuisines originated in our own backyards. Hawaiian and Filipino foods have made tidal waves across the country and consumers are actively seeking out restaurants that feature island flavors. Many trend forecasters have specifically called out Hawaiian and Filipino as cuisines to watch in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

Hawaiian cuisine borrows flavor influences from Japan, Korea, China and the Pacific Islands to create its own unique fusion blend. Filipino cuisine is heavily influenced by Indian, Spanish and Chinese flavors and ingredients. As the population of Filipinos in America continues to increase, currently 3.4 million, the cuisine continues to become increasingly popular. In the past, Filipino foods could only be found in smaller establishments and were extremely traditional in preparation and presentation. Now, chefs are elevating the cuisine and using new techniques, flavor fusions and presentation to bring a new, fresh take on Filipino foods.<sup>2</sup>

According to Amy Mesa, author of 'Memories of Philippines Kitchens,' pork is the most important and accessible source of food for Filipinos.<sup>3</sup> The whole pig is most commonly cooked in the Philippines, roasting over a spit fire. But deep-fried pork belly and deep-fried pork knuckles are also traditional dishes. While Filipino cuisine may be taking on a 'new' spin in America, pork remains the number one item on any Filipino menu.

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#### Halo-Halo Fries

Ground pork, Kewpie mayonnaise and bonito flake mix

Tito's King Kitchen, New York, NY



#### Pork Shank

Confit pork shank, garlic liver gravy, garlic vinaigrette, watercress, frisée, radish

Sunda, Chicago, IL



#### Pampangan Style Sizzling Sisig

Pig ears, snout, cheek, & belly cooked 3 ways with garlic, bird's eye chili's, red onions, & kalamansi served with garlic rice

Maharlika, NY, New York

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## DATA TO NOTE



### Chefs Are Kicking Up the Heat

Spicy foods are becoming increasingly popular across the country. In restaurants in all parts of the nation, chefs are utilizing all types of pepper and spices to pack the heat in their dishes. As of 2015, 56 percent of consumers surveyed in an NRA study said they consume spicy foods at least one time per week and 2 out of 5 consumers believe food tastes better with some heat.<sup>4</sup> The old standbys, jalapenos, red pepper flakes and cayenne pepper, are still popular. Recently, chefs have been experimenting with new spices and peppers from around the world. As consumers' palates have widened, their demand for spicy foods has increased. More and more chefs are finding that dishes that have some sort of spice level are out-selling dishes with no heat.<sup>5</sup>

Gone are the days where 'exotic' spices can't be found in the most mainstream grocery stores; now wasabi paste, ghost peppers and chipotle peppers can be found everywhere. Consumers are accustomed to seeing these names and are more willing to try them. What's the best way to use spice in any dish? Remember it is all about balance. Some consumers might not be attracted to dishes which have a lot of heat, so it's important to use other ingredients and flavors to balance some of the heat. Creamy sauces and condiments can help cut through the strong heat from different peppers and sauces. Fresh herbs and cheese can also help to counter heat, that way guests can have a little kick in their dish without being overwhelmed.<sup>6</sup> Pork is commonly used in recipes that have some heat – ramen, tacos, curry – just to name a few. Pork can hold up against spices and peppers, all while pairing perfectly with the condiments and ingredients that balance out heat. Chefs who utilize pork in their spicy dishes use cuts from the whole pig, even the pork skin. Because pork can be used in multiple cuisines and dishes, it's the perfect protein to carry heat. The restaurants below are not afraid to use spice, read on to see how these chefs use spices and peppers to create the perfect dish.



**Toukatsu**  
Shoyu broth base topped with asari, ground pork, crispy pork skin, Chinese Tian Jing red chili, Szechuan chili bean sauce, Thai chili

Strings 2, Chicago, IL



**Pork Belly Steam Buns**  
Slow cooked pork belly served on an open faced steam bun with hoisin, kewpie mayo, jalapeno & cilantro

Chino Latino, Minneapolis, MN



**Nam Kao Salad**  
Crispy rice salad with soured pork, raw ginger, onion, peanuts, cilantro, chile

Night + Market, LA, California

## PORK IN THE NEWS

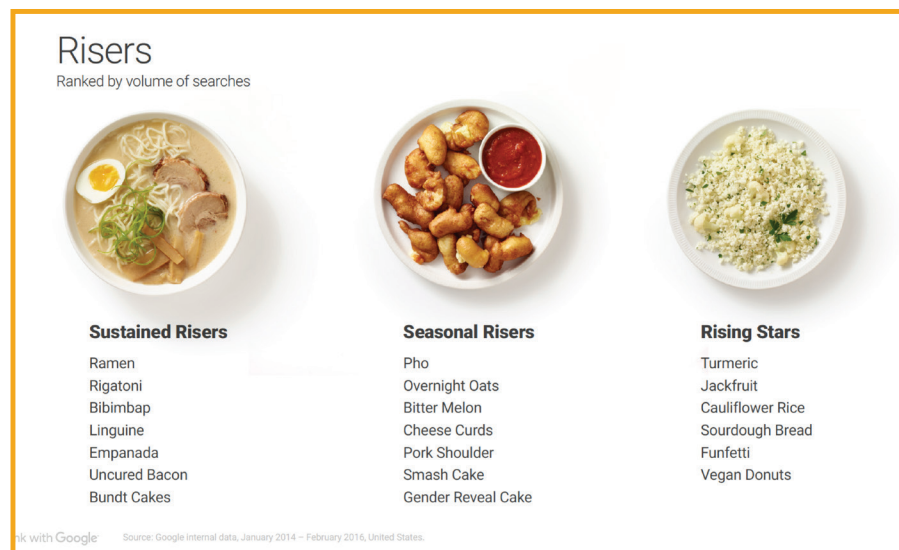


### Consumers Want More Pork Shoulder

When consumers are looking for recipes, menu ideas or restaurants to eat at, they most often turn to the internet for assistance. A recent report released by Google shed some light onto what the top five foods American's have been searching for over the past two years. Pork shoulder was in the top five, making it one of America's hottest food trends.<sup>7</sup> This report not only shows what American's are cooking at home, but what they are looking for when eating out at restaurants.

The love for pork runs deep across the country, but pork shoulder searches were mainly conducted in Eastern and mid-Western states – not surprisingly, as the Midwest is known for its focus on meat. The cities with the most searches specific to pork shoulder were Chicago, Denver and Boston.<sup>8</sup>

With barbecue becoming more popular over the years, consumers have gotten more familiar with pork shoulder. From pulled pork to carnitas, pork shoulder can be used in a multitude of applications. According to the study, consumers are interested in ethnic preparation of pork shoulder and different cooking methods, from slow cooking to barbecuing and braising.<sup>9</sup> With consumers becoming more educated and interested in the preparation of the meat, it gives operators an opportunity to bring an educational aspect into their restaurants. Detailed explanations of how dishes are cooked and having open kitchens for customers to watch are perfect ways restaurants can engage consumers. Chefs can use this momentum to explore new and innovative ways to feature pork shoulder on their menus. From appetizers and bar snacks to full sized entrees and breakfast dishes, pork shoulder can be used anywhere on the menu. And with the increase of consumer popularity, offering pork shoulder can help increase sales and drive restaurant traffic.



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## OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING

### Putting Pork Shoulder on the Menu

There are a million ways operators feature pork shoulder on their menus. The versatile cut holds up extremely well to low and slow cooking, making it tender and juicy. It can be barbecued in a smoker or braised in the oven. From tacos to tortas, sandwiches and pizza toppings, pork shoulder can be used for any type of cuisine. Check out these innovative ways chefs feature pork shoulder on their menus.



#### PORK SHOULDER TACOS

Beer tortilla, chile-mezcal sauce, avocado, seasonal pickles, cilantro, pepitas

Bar Takito, Chicago, IL



#### PORK SHOULDER TOSTADA

Charred tomatillos, queso panela, sunny eggs

Beast + Bottle, Denver, CO



#### 12-HOUR SLOW BRAISED PORK SHOULDER

Tomato-peanut relish, spiced honey glaze

Swine Southern Table & Grill, Coral Gables, FL