

# TREND WATCH

## Regional cuisines gaining popularity everywhere.

The mantra "Buy American!" is making its way into restaurants everywhere. The proliferation of regional tastes beyond their actual borders is a result of pride for all things American, plus it helps alleviate concerns about the origin of certain foods. That's why operators are scrambling to add these cuisines to their menus.



Crab & Ham Rangoon

Chains, for one, are increasingly highlighting specific regions in their menu descriptions. Pizza sauces, glazes, dipping condiments and other accompaniments are being identified as regional to emphasize flavor differentiation. And the popularity of ultra-spicy Southern Chicken items is guiding menu developers toward other bold regional flavors, from hot to spicy to sweet.

## What consumers are craving.

According to Technomic Center of the Plate, pork is still the consumer favorite protein for BBQ. Other pork facts include:

**36%** Consumers who say they like to explore regional varieties of mainstream cuisines in order to try new foods and flavors.<sup>1</sup>

**NEW**

**50%+** Consumers who are more likely to order protein dishes with regional or ethnic flavors.<sup>1</sup>



**32%** Consumers who would be willing to pay extra for authentic ethnic or regional fare.<sup>1</sup>



## What's to come?

Restaurant menus will continue to explore the regional foods and flavors of the American melting pot and adapt to consumers' flavor preferences. These ingredients and preparations will reflect various ethnic influences, especially for Southern-style cuisine.



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## Trending Regional Flavors

TexMex Tacos. Northwest Salmon. Hawaiian Poke. New England "Chowda." Restaurant operators are looking coast-to-coast to bring unique and interesting options to their menus. Regional flavors imply that the offerings are fresher, more premium and less mass-produced. Consider that:

- America has always featured a wealth of distinct culinary styles based on the ingredients and cultures of its varied regions.
- The entire notion of regional American cuisine is changing...It's getting more specific, using a city or state versus a cuisine type.
- This has long existed in pizza, notably with New York, Chicago and Detroit styles, which have different crusts, topping layers, ingredients and baking techniques.
- Barbecue also has diverse styles, featuring various smoked meats and distinctive rubs and sauces.<sup>2</sup>

## Popular Regional Barbecue Flavors

BBQ styles are a prime example of regional flavors that garner popularity beyond their borders. Consider these:

**Memphis Style** - Generally liked overall

**Kansas City Style** - Popular overall, but skews to Midwestern tastes

**Texas Style** - Popular overall, but more popular in the South and West

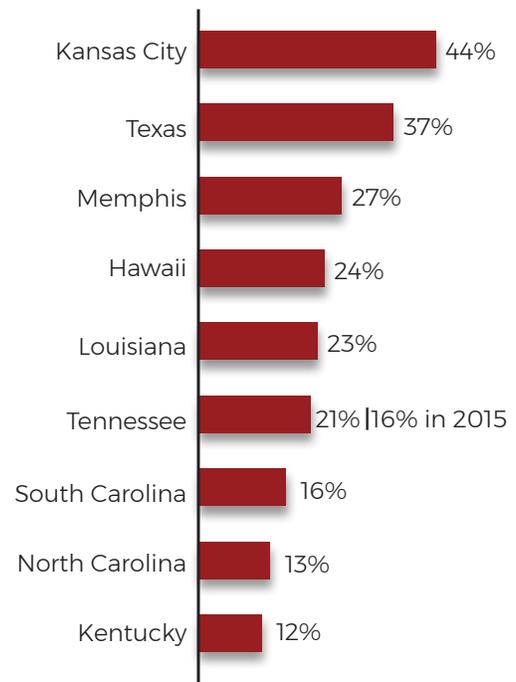
**North Carolina Style** - A style that's particularly preferred in the South

**Tennessee Style** - Growing in preference due to the trend of alcohol-infused sauces and foods, such as whiskey flavor

**Hawaiian Style** - Preference peaks in the West

### Barbecue Sauces<sup>3</sup>

Tennessee-style sauce gaining interest





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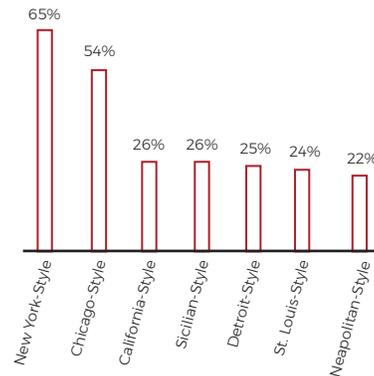
## "No, the best pizza IS...!"

Everyone has their favorite pizza style. But believe it or not, some Chicagoans like New York-style pizza, and vice versa! Consumers are expressing interest in authentic regional food and flavor variations; in fact, chains that specialize in specific regional-style pizza have been growing and expanding their presence out of region. In addition:

- About 49% of consumers expressed that they are more interested in pizza establishments that offer more authentic pizzas.<sup>4</sup>
- While toppings and proteins still reign as most important elements on pizza, consumers are even becoming more discerning about their pizza crust flavors.
- Though most consumers are familiar with a few, there are more regional variations to be explored, including options like Rhode Island-style grilled pizzas.

### Style of Pizza<sup>4</sup>

Regional American pizza styles are most preferred



4. Technomic, Flavor consumer trend report, 2017

## Menu Highlights



Bees from the ranch's onsite apiary make the honey used in these wings' sweet, sticky and salty soy-and-honey glaze.

**Valley Kitchen**



The Cubano: Roast pork, smoked ham, Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard on a toasted roll.

**Snarf's Sandwiches**



Korean War Pig sandwich: features seared pork belly and pulled pork in a Korean barbecue glaze.

**Melt Bar**

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