

Barbecue



Barbecue: The Great American Flavor

As spring turns into summer, weekends are punctuated by a new cycle of celebrations: graduations, family reunions, Memorial Day outings and festive Father's Day meals. When consumers crave hearty, flavorful comfort food at this time of year, it's probably picnic-friendly, traditional American heritage fare—above all, barbecue.

Barbecue in its most authentic form is the province of specialty restaurants with their own smokers, where meat is cooked for hours at a relatively low temperature to come out fall-off-the-bone tender. But barbecue as a flavor—in the form of sauces, glazes and rubs—can be a crowd-pleasing part of the culinary repertoire of almost any restaurant. To take advantage of the American addiction to barbecue, however, operators need to be aware of the latest trends.

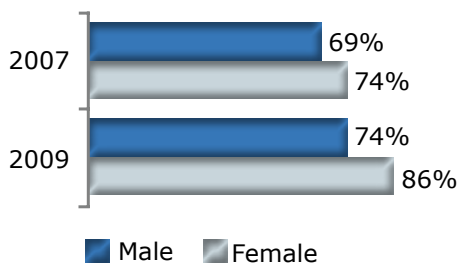
From Regional Tradition to Universal Favorite

No other flavor right now marries retro and trendy in the same way that barbecue does. In an age when diners have become fascinated with regional traditions (Tuscan fare rather than just Italian, for example), barbecue restaurants increasingly offer multiple barbecue styles involving variations in cooking method, rubs and sauces. For instance, Ohio-based City Barbeque specializes in regional American barbecue, including pork shoulder from the Southeast, brisket and sausage from Texas, and ribs from two distinct barbecue-focused cities, Memphis and Kansas City. The fascination with regional barbecue is a trend that has staying power. In a study conducted last year by Restaurants & Institutions magazine, almost four out of 10 consumers expressed strong interest in barbecue and three out of 10 said they'd like to see more Southern-style offerings in general.

In addition to the specialty restaurants that present authentic barbecue prepared in a smoker, barbecue as a flavor is also proliferating in restaurants—and for good reason. Consumers polled by Technomic prefer barbecue over all other flavors as an accent for beef and pork dishes; they also love it as a sauce for chicken wings and as a dip for chicken fingers. Even more interesting: Consumers increasingly want their proteins to be offered with a choice of sauces and dips, and two-thirds are on the lookout for interesting new flavors.

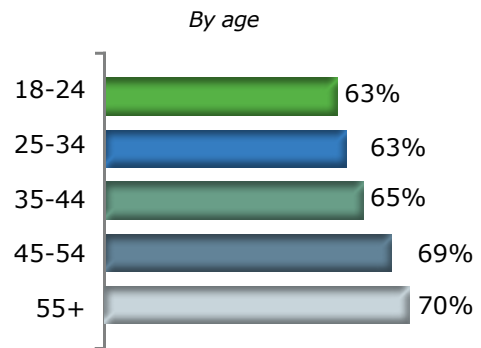
How important is it for you to be able to customize your meal (e.g., choose toppings, sauces, accompaniments and other ingredients) at home?

By year and gender: top two box—important and extremely important



Base: 718 consumers aged 18+
 Respondents indicated their opinions on a scale of 1-6 where 6 is extremely important and 1 is not important at all

I like trying new flavors from time to time



Base: 1,500 consumers aged 18+

Barbecue Flavor Evolution

Barbecue flavors have extended far beyond regional roots to establish familiarity and acceptance among the leading flavor profiles across many different menu categories and foods—from pork, chicken and burgers to Asian or Latin-accented appetizers and entrées. Barbecue flavors—typically imparted through the use of sauces or glazes—are being tweaked with a wide variety of smoky, spicy, sweet or fruity accents. (A perfect example is Burgerville's Cherry Chipotle Pulled Pork Sandwich, which was part of a cherry promotion last summer.)

Barbecue sauce is consumers' top choice (62%) for a dipping sauce for chicken fingers.

The following page lists a few examples of on-trend barbecue items from a variety of menu categories and ethnic cuisines, drawn from 2009 and 2010 menus.

Barbecue with Ethnic Accents

Since the very word “barbecue” derives from the Spanish *barbacoa*—which itself likely is descended from a Caribbean Indian word for “fire pit,” *barabicu*—it makes sense that barbecue with sweet and spicy flavors from Latin and Caribbean cuisines are increasingly popular. Hot and smoky flavors, such as those found in chipotles, jalapeños, and mesquite-grilled fare, are being combined with tropical influences. Examples include:

- **Chipotle Barbecue Ribs**—basted with a smoky-sweet chipotle-raspberry-tamarind barbecue sauce, *El Torito*
- **Tangy BBQ Buffaloco Wings**—with barbecue sauce spiked with chipotles, habaneros and citrus juices, *El Pollo Loco*

In addition, Mexican restaurants are incorporating barbecue flavors in traditional Mexican snacks:

- **Brisket Tacos**—hand-shredded, hickory-smoked brisket in a fresh tortilla with barbecue sauce on the side, *Taco Cabana*
- **Mondo Bonfire BBQ Burrito**—pulled pork, barbecue sauce, coleslaw, choice of black or pinto beans, rice and pico de gallo, *Taco Del Mar*

The biggest news in barbecue is the proliferation of Korean barbecue flavor profiles, set off by the wildly popular Kogi Korean BBQ-to-Go food trucks that tool around Los Angeles offering “Koreanized” tacos and burritos topped with short ribs, chicken, pork or tofu. The Kogi trucks inspired not only a whole species of Asian ethnic food trucks in Los Angeles and other major cities, but also new menu items at “land-based” restaurants, including:

- **Baja Kogi Korean Barbecue Tacos**, *Baja Fresh Mexican Grill*
- **Korean Barbecue Beef Taco**—part of a springtime Pacific Rim Menu promotion, *Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant*
- **Spicy Asian BBQ Sandwich**—Steak marinated in pears, green onions and Asian spices, topped with onions, provolone cheese and a spicy Asian barbecue sauce on a fresh roll, *Charley’s Grilled Subs*

New Twists on American Classics

Spicy, smoky, sweet and bourbon-, whiskey- or rum-spiked barbecue sauces are amping up flavors for specialty burgers. In particular, there’s been a notable trend in both LSRs and FSRs to burgers that pair barbecue sauce with bacon and Cheddar cheese. But other eateries are focusing on the mini-burger or “slider” trend with petite burgers that go beyond beef:

Operators in all restaurant segments have identified barbecue as the top flavor for pork.

- **B.B.Q. Pork Sliders**—barbecue pork topped with coleslaw and spicy barbecue sauce on toasted mini-buns, *Grand Lux Cafe*
- **BBQ Chicken Sliders**, *Claim Jumper*
- **Barbecue Sliders Sampler**—one with pulled pork, one with chopped steak and one with pulled chicken, each served on a toasted mini-bun with a signature sauce, *Sticky Fingers*

Further afield beyond beef, pork and chicken, chefs are turning to seafood—particularly shrimp—for a flavorful interpretation of barbecue.

- **New Orleans BBQ Shrimp**—with smoked tomatoes and roasted celery, sautéed in beer and spicy Bayou barbecue sauce, *Famous Dave’s*
- **Chipotle Barbecue Shrimp**—sautéed with jalapeño butter, roasted red peppers and pasilla chilis, with a smoky-sweet chipotle-raspberry-tamarind barbecue sauce, *El Torito*
- **Southwest Tootsy Roll**—shrimp, cream cheese and chives twisted into an eggroll and served with signature Lime Barbecue Sauce, *Whiskey Creek Wood Fire Grill*

The menu possibilities posed by these barbecue trends may seem overwhelming, but your Sysco Marketing Associate can help you understand consumer and operator trends, as well as product and recipe suggestions. Marketing Associates can call on Sysco chefs, experts and resources to help develop, cost out, and market barbecue items that will set your establishment apart from the crowd. Your Marketing Associates can also arrange another invaluable service—the Sysco Business Review, in which Sysco experts evaluate all facets of your business to rev up the menu and other points of differentiation while strengthening the bottom line. (And don't forget Sysco's iCare partner companies, which offer independent operators access to an ever-growing suite of marketing, operational, financial, human resources and environmental services.)

You can rely on Sysco for your barbecue needs, from sure-fire hickory charcoal to the highest quality meat. Sysco can advise you on developing your own signature barbecue flavors or offer suggestions for uses of our flavorful, top-quality barbecue sauces. **Sysco Imperial** sauces are available in a variety of flavor profiles:

- Original—a distinctive blend of sweet spices, onion and tomato with a hint of garlic
- Mild—a smooth-textured, rich tomato-based sauce with a nice balance of spices that also works wonderfully as a base
- Smoky—the nation's #1 selling barbecue sauce for foodservice applications, a medium reddish-brown sauce that combines the perfect balance of natural smoke and spices, creating an authentic wood-smoke flavor
- Spicy—a hearty, robust sauce that combines molasses, mustard, tomato, and hickory smoke

Premium **Sysco Imperial Reserve** Barbecue Sauces provide a superior cling that really seals in flavor:

- Original recipe features a smooth, sweet blend of tomatoes with a hint of onion and garlic
- Spicy sauce gives a "kick" with its robust, smoky base and touch of molasses
- Smoky recipe exudes a natural, hickory-smoked flavor that's perfect for dipping and glazes

Or choose **Block & Barrel Barbecue** made with tender beef and pork, including:

- Ready-to-serve Sliced Barbecue Beef Brisket with Sauce
- Western-style Shredded Smoked Pork Barbecue with Sauce
- Chopped Southwestern Barbecue Beef with Sauce

Block & Barrel Barbecue comes fully prepared, frozen and packed in convenient 5-pound resealable tubs or trays. Simply heat and serve, and you've got all the flavor with none of the time-consuming effort.

And, no matter how you shake it, customers can't get enough of **Sysco Imperial** barbecue spices. SUPC#5913181 (IMP/MCC SPICE BBQ GRND) and SUPC# 9765561 (IMP/MCC SEASONING BBQ MESQT) are perfect for beef, pork, poultry, seafood and vegetables. They also go beautifully when added to marinades, sauces, chili, stews, soups, casseroles and gravies. **Sysco Imperial** barbecue seasonings are a delicious blend of high quality spices with a consistent recipe/flavor profile.

For more information, contact www.sysco.com. Information on the Sysco iCare program and iCare partners can be found at www.syscoicare.com.

