

SPICY INGREDIENTS

INGREDIENT HOT LIST

Hot & spicy food and beverages have been heating up in the retail and dining space. In fact, most Americans love spicy food: according to Instacart, 74% of diners eat hot sauce with their meals. But heat and spice aren't limited to hot sauce, yet instead expand to a wide range of categories in the food and beverage space. Spice has even seeped into all corners of pop culture that can often influence eating and purchasing decisions for consumers. There's more to heat than just blowing out your palate. From bright and fruity to singed and smoky, read on to learn the ingredients and flavors that can help spice up your own product line.



HOT ONES ON FIRE

YouTube channel Hot Ones, where the hosts interview celebrities while they eat hot wings, has been viewed more than 56 million times!

HOT SAUCE OFF THE CHARTS

In 2020, the market was valued at \$2.75 billion. Now, it's expected to grow at an annual rate of 7.9% CAGR through 2026, when it is expected to hit \$4.9 billion, for an increase of 78%!

Source: Instacart, Facts and Factors

SPICY SIBLINGS

While 'spicy' isn't one of the five major flavor components — sweet, salty, sour, bitter and umami — that doesn't mean it's any less important. The power of spice is that it can complement or even enhance other flavors in unexpected, delicious ways. And 'spice' doesn't always mean 'hot:' ingredients like cinnamon or black pepper also have a distinct quality that helps wake up the palate!



SPICY SALTY HAVING A MOMENT

The spicy-salty snack category has grown 12% in the last four years. These types of spicy snacks are most popular with younger generations: 69% of Millennials and 73% of Gen Z consumers report buying spicy snacks for themselves or their households.

Sources: Eater, The Harris Poll

Classic Combos

SWEET-SPICY

- Cinnamon & Sugar
- Habanero & Pineapple
- Honey & Chili Peppers

SALTY-SPICY

- Cheddar & Red Pepper
- Chips & Salsa
- Soy Sauce & Thai Chili

SOUR-SPICY

- Chili & Lime
- Lemongrass & Ginger
- Sour Cream & Tex-Mex

BITTER-SPICY

- Kale & Red Pepper
- Dark Chocolate & Chili
- Coffee & Cinnamon

UMAMI-SPICY

- Tomato & Black Pepper
- Sushi & Wasabi
- Chicken & Buffalo Sauce

SPICY GOES GLOBAL

While all regions use spice in some way, a few global cuisines are particularly well-known for their heat.

Mexican Cuisine: Vibrant and bold, Mexican dishes use a wide variety of chili peppers to keep things interesting.

Thai Cuisine: Dishes from Thailand feature a complex interplay between spice, sweet, sour and citrus flavors.

Indian Cuisine: Indian food uses spices both for heat and aromatics, creating a multi-layered experience.

Jamaican Cuisine: The principal chili found in Jamaican cuisine is the Scotch bonnet pepper, which gives dishes a fiery, fruity flavor.



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



TRUFF BLACK TRUFFLE INFUSED HOT SAUCE is made with the finest red chili peppers and infused with black winter truffle. It contains no preservatives.

42% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



BUMBLE BEE WILD CAUGHT TUNA SEASONED WITH SPICY THAI CHILI has 15g protein. It is wild-caught tuna with spicy sweet heat and Thai flavors.

41% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



TRADER JOE'S CHEDDAR CHEESE WITH SCOTCH BONNET CHILI AND RED PEPPERS is said to be sweet with heat and is made with milk from cows not treated with rBST.

38% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



CHEETOS MAC 'N CHEESE CHEESY JALAPEÑO PASTA WITH FLAVORED SAUCE is a quick, delicious treat that microwaves in three minutes.

Ghost Pepper

Originating in Northeast India, the ghost pepper is intensely spicy with notes of fruit and smoke. It's 170 times hotter than Tabasco!

MARKET AND CONSUMER SENTIMENT

- The fastest-rising consumer interest for ghost peppers is in the snack category
- Dunkin' Donuts ghost pepper donut drove an entire news cycle, with mentions on TODAY, CNN, NBC and more
- Popularity for ghost pepper as an ingredient peaked in 2021 but is on the rise again
- 18% of consumers love or like ghost pepper, 73% know it and 29% have tried it
- +44% 12-month growth on U.S. menus; +32% 4-year growth



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



LUCERNE DAIRY FARMS GHOST PEPPER CHEESE SLICES are made with Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño, habanero and ghost pepper.

51% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



BENITO'S GHOST PEPPER INFUSED MAPLE SYRUP is said to have a strong maple flavor that gives way to an intense wave of heat of the ghost pepper, ideal for chicken and waffles, pulled pork, bacon, wings, and pancakes.

Carolina Reaper

This crossbreed of La Soufriere and Naga peppers, the Carolina Reaper is currently the hottest chili pepper in the world. The flavor is one of extreme heat with a hint of fruitiness.

MARKET AND CONSUMER SENTIMENT

- The 'One Chip Challenge', eating a single super spicy Carolina Reaper chip without water became a viral TikTok trend
- Taco Bell's LTO Reaper Ranch burrito and fries was so popular, they introduced a line of chips
- 12% of consumers love or like carolina reaper, 50% know it and 17% have tried it
- +233% 4-year growth on U.S. menus



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



H-E-B HOT CAROLINA REAPER PEPPER CHEESE PUFFS are now available as part of a limited-edition series. This kosher certified product is said to push the taste buds to the limit and tops the Scoville scale for pepper heat, which means it is one of hottest peppers on the planet.



BRAVADO SPICE CO. AKA MISO GHOST REAPER HOT SAUCE is described as an exceptionally flavorful hot sauce. This extremely spicy product is made with ghost peppers, red wine vinegar, aka miso, tamari, sesame oil, togarashi and salt, and adds a unique kick as a marinade for short ribs or in noodle soup.

SICHUAN PEPPERCORN

This spice produces a numbing sensation (“ma la”) with notes of citrus and is a key component of Chinese dishes like mapo tofu. It is actually not a pepper but more closely related to citrus plants.

MARKET AND CONSUMER SENTIMENT

- Commonly used in savory and sweet applications
- The ingredient was banned from import into the U.S. until 2004, so the market is still in its infancy but growing
- Widely available in Asian grocery stores
- 70% 4-year growth on U.S. menus



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



ONE CULTURE FOODS NEW AMERICAN SAUCES EARTHY SPICY TINGLY SAUTÉ AND FINISHING SAUCE contains cumin and Sichuan peppercorn with fermented soybean, chili flake and garlic. The product is made with natural foods and real flavor, and is said to invite one in with warmth, and then tease with a spicy tingle.



MCCORMICK GOURMET GLOBAL SELECT SZECHUAN PEPPER SALT & SPICE BLEND is described as a complex and vibrant blend of Szechuan, pink, green and black peppercorns with coriander seed and salt that creates a bright lemony and complex flavor.

32% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

GOCHUJANG

This Korean fermented chili paste balances sweet, savory, and spicy tastes. It's commonly used in popular dishes like bibimbap to add some sweet heat.

MARKET AND CONSUMER SENTIMENT

- Gochujang is particularly popular for LTOs
- Gochujang is most popular with Asian consumers and is showing +54% 4-year growth on U.S. menus
- Consumers, particularly Gen Z, are increasingly seeking out Korean flavors
- The global gochujang market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 6.8% from 2021-2030
- 7% of consumers love or like gochujang, 22% know it, and 12% have tried it



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



TRADER JOE'S GOCHUJANG VEGETABLE STIR FRY with Zucchini Spirals features a variety of vegetables in a spicy, savory gochujang sauce.

55% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



365 EVERYDAY VALUE ORGANIC SPICY KOREAN GOCHUJANG MUSTARD is medium hot, vegan, kosher and USDA organic certified.

30% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

THE TAKEAWAYS

Spicy foods have been heating up grocery store shelves for a while now, but there's more to it than just the Scoville scale. Pair something spicy with another taste in order to get the most from both ingredients – there's a reason that pairings like chili and lime or cinnamon and sugar are classic combos! For inspiration, look to international cuisine on balancing heat and flavor and you'll have something delicious and unique in no time. From gochujang to ghost pepper, the ingredient possibilities are seemingly endless – reach out to learn how flavor can add complexity to your next innovation.



SOURCES

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- Fact MR
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- Eater
- The Harris Poll
- HEB
- Pepperhead
- BBC
- All Recipes
- Data Intelo
- Spicy Exchange
- Datassential

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