

Speed Scratch Your Way to Sauce Success



Learn which sauces are trending right now. From aioli to reductions we're seeing them on menus across the nation. Get speed scratch prep tips for deep flavor the easy way.

Anyone who attended culinary school or received classical training in a kitchen knows the five great French mother sauces, so named because they are the base for hundreds of unique sauce recipes. But chefs don't need to have mastered Béchamel, Hollandaise, Velouté, Espagnole, or Tomato to have a repertoire of sauces at their fingertips.

Not only are all of these classic foundational sauces now available in high-quality speed-scratch and prepared versions, but there are other, more contemporary sauce varieties that provide a starting point for creative riffs and innovation.

Here are some basic sauces, both hot and cold, that are growing, trending, or showing up on menu radars in lots of interesting variations:

Aioli (+28.6% growth between 2016–2020, according to Datassential) – Similar to mayonnaise, this Mediterranean condiment of olive oil emulsified with garlic has moved way beyond its simple origins to encompass such variations as black pepper, herb, green chile, tomato, avocado, and much, much more.

BBQ (0%) – Holding steady with nearly 60% penetration on menus, BBQ sauce is making news with all its regional and flavor variations. Kansas, Texas, St. Louis, and Memphis styles remain popular, while branded spirits, spicy elements such as habanero, and global influences including Korean and churrasco are on the rise.

Beurre Blanc (+7.8%) – Simpler and lighter than hollandaise (there’s no egg yolk in beurre blanc), this “white butter” has a neutral flavor that adapts well to additions like citrus, capers, garlic, balsamic, herbs, Cajun spice, coconut, pineapple, and other piquant or bold ingredients.

Brown Butter (+12.2%) – Butter that has been melted down and cooked until its color changes to a light brown has a nuttier flavor than regular butter, and can be used as-is on proteins (especially fish and chicken), egg specialties, pasta, vegetables, or in desserts. It can also be incorporated into vinaigrettes or cream sauce, or flavored with herbs, nuts, spices, and more.

Cheese Sauce (+11.8%) – For all the kinds of cheese there are, there’s a corresponding sauce to showcase it, from mellow Gruyère and familiar Alfredo to boldly flavored blue or jalapeño Jack.

Reduction (+1.8%) – As the name suggests, these versatile sauces are created by reducing an ingredient, such as wine or balsamic vinegar, to create a smooth texture and concentrated flavor. Specific types of wine, such as Bordeaux or Chablis, as well as spirits such as port, sherry, and brandy add an upscale image, but ingredients such as caramelized onions, mushrooms, Dijon mustard, and herbs can also play a part.

Salsa (+4.7%) – Here’s a sauce that can support innovation, from the original spicy Mexican table sauce of tomatoes, onions, and chiles to variations made with corn, black beans, tropical fruit such as mango and pineapple, tomatillos, and even dill pickle. In the process, this ubiquitous sauce has come out from behind the taco onto grilled fish and chicken, sandwiches, burgers, and much more.

Source: Datassential SNAP! (2020)

The information provided is based on a general industry overview, and is not specific to your business operation. Each business is unique and decisions related to your business should be made after consultation with appropriate experts.