

THE FLAVOR OF CHARRED & SMOKED

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPACE



TREND REPORT BITE

When it comes to flavor, playing with fire has never been hotter! Innovations on the shelf and menu are emerging that leverage smoke, char, and ultra-caramelization to underline and emphasize the natural characteristics of an ingredient. Familiar smoked ingredients like chilies continue to garner attention while the technique of smoking is expanding to unexpected places like fruits, desserts and drinks. Thanks to the rise in the number of consumers owning a smoker grill, more people are experiencing a wider variety of authentic smoked woods. Read on for smoky inspiration for your innovations.

Elevated with Fire Flavor • Nuances of Smoked Wood • Smoked Sweet Stuff



+6.6%

forecasted CAGR of the **SMOKER GRILL** market, 2023-2028*

Technavio, Smoker Grill Market Analysis, Jan 2024
*North America, Europe, APAC, South America, and Middle

71%

of U.S. consumers love or like smoked foods.

Datassential, Consumer Preferences

ELEVATED WITH FIRE FLAVOR

Consumers appreciate the richness and depth that comes from familiar ingredients elevated with fire. Smoked and charred chilies have long been a technique used to boost their natural flavor and heat, found in recipes and product profiles. When ubiquitous savory ingredients like salt and corn are smoked or charred, flavor depth and complexity is created along with consumer curiosity. Smoked herbs and spices allow the introduction of a note of smoky flavor that enhances but doesn't overwhelm applications.

FROM OUR CHEFS: SMOKY CREAM SAUCE

A dose of hickory liquid smoke, smoked paprika, and OLD BAY® seasoning adds depth and smoky notes to traditional beurre blanc sauce. Serve with halibut ([click](#) for recipe), caramelized veggies and more. Developed by Executive Chef Hadar Cohen Aviram, U.S.



FROM OUR BENCH: CREAMY CHARRED POBLANO CRACKER

Rajas Poblanas is a dish that originated in Puebla, but now is popular throughout Mexico. Charred poblano peppers are sliced into "rajas" or strips and blended in a creamy cheese sauce with corn and spices. Luz Ramirez, Sr Scientist replicated the taste of this rich dish in seasoning format for crackers with Roasted Poblano, Sour Cream and Sweet Corn flavors.

Flavors Elevated with Fire

Chillies

- Smoked Jalapeno (Chipotle)
- Charred Poblano
- Smoked Habanero
- Smoked Sweet Red Pepper

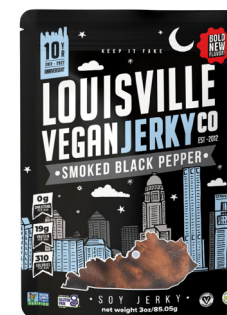
Savory

- Charred Corn
- Charred Tomato
- Smoked Sea Salt
- Smoked Mustard
- Wood Smoked Chicken
- Smoked Cheddar

Spices and Herbs

- Smoked Cumin
- Smoked Paprika
- Burnt Rosemary
- Smoked Black Pepper

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Louisville Vegan Jerky Co Soy Jerky with Smoked Black Pepper Flavor U.S., Jan 2024



Charred Chicken @ Dig Inn Seasonal Market* Described as perfectly prepared charred chicken, marinated in lemon and spices for a deliciously unique flavor. *Fast-casual chain, 30 units.



Barcoop Bevy Bloody Mary Cocktail Mixer with Smoked Sea Salt and Chiles US, July 2024

NUANCES OF SMOKED WOOD



As consumers recognize that smoky flavors add an incredible punch to food (and drinks), they are exploring the variety of smoked wood types and the nuances each offers. From the strong, earthy notes of mesquite to the mild, sweet fruitiness from applewood, each smoked wood has distinct, characterizing flavors suitable for specific pairings and applications. For example, hickory has a strong flavor that stands up well to bold pairings, great for meats.

Nuances of Smoked Wood

Applewood

Light · Fruity · Mild Intensity

Cherrywood

Dark Fruit · Floral · Resin

Hickory

Sweet · Assertive · Smoky

Maplewood

Sweet · Subtle · Mild Intensity

Oak

Versatile · Moderate Intensity

Mesquite

Hearty · Savory · High Intensity

FROM OUR BENCH: SMOKED CHERRYWOOD PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE WHEY PROTEIN BAR

Reimagining classic pineapple upside cake cooked on a smoker grill with cherrywood pellets adds a unique depth of flavor. Sandy Scaliatine, Sr Scientist was inspired to apply a such profile to a protein bar. Along with Yellow Cake and Grilled Pineapple flavors, a TrueTaste® Cherrywood Smoke flavor was added resulting in a sweet, smoky taste experience.



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U.S. CANADA

+47% **+25%**

Predicted 4-year growth of **OAK SMOKED** on menus.

Datassential, 2024-28



Low and Slow Hickory Smoked BBQ Cheese Puffs US, Oct 2024



Kind Savory Paprika Nuts and Mesquite Smoked Sea Salt Nut Bars US, June 2024

SMOKED SWEET STUFF

As smoking expands into new occasions, consumers are being introduced to the flavor of *smoked sweet stuff*. Fruits are a clear choice since the technique caramelizes their natural sugars, resulting in a complex, sweeter taste. The same is true for other sweet ingredients like honey and maple syrup. Mixologists are even incorporating smoke into their cocktail creations as signature offerings.

Smoked Sweet Flavors to Explore

- Burnt Caramel
- Smoked Espresso
- Smoked Honey
- Charred Lemon
- Smoked Maple
- Burnt Marshmallow
- Burnt Orange
- Burnt Pineapple



FROM OUR CHEFS: SMOKED STRAWBERRY NEGRONI SPRITZ

To deliver a dimension of smoke to the classic negroni, Chef Stephanie Bryson, U.S. added applewood smoked strawberries as a base. A simple syrup infused with aromatic cardamom and cinnamon is then mixed with gin, Campari, and sweet vermouth. Then, a garnish of torched orange achieves an elevated, complex taste experience. [Click](#) for recipe.



FROM OUR CHEFS: BURNT ROSEMARY BUTTER, LEMON AND TOASTED MERINGUE ICE CREAM

Fusing beloved flavors of nutty brown butter and classic lemon meringue, this ice cream boasts a satisfying texture with charred flecks of crunchy torched meringue and rosemary brown butter as an underlying flavor enhancer. Developed by Bex Colley, Culinary Assistant, Australia. [Click](#) for recipe.

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Dript Up In Smoke
Smoked Maple Syrup
Canada, May 2024



Jeni's Burnt Orange
Dreamsicle Ice Cream
features burnt orange
caramel, U.S. June 2024



The Smoked Papaya (Cocktail) from
The Aviary in Chicago features rye,
bourbon, nardini, papaya, and honey
bitters, all enveloped in hickory smoke.

THE TAKEAWAYS

As smoke forward profiles become increasingly popular, there is an opportunity to deliver these intense and delicious flavors to a variety of innovations. But instead of having to build a smokehouse, fortunately the complex, culinary forward flavor of smoke can be achieved with flavor ingredients. Both savory and sweet applications can be enhanced and complemented with such. Concerned about off-notes when working with smoke flavors? Allow us to share our collection of TrueTaste® natural hardwood smoke flavors designed to meet labeling needs and deliver a clean taste with no ashy notes.

YOU DESERVE MORE. LET'S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor and seasoning partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let McCormick Flavor Solutions market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your “what’s next.” Our technical flavor, seasoning and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend.

From concept to manufacturing, we’re here for you — every step of the way. Contact your sales representative or [click here](#) to chat us up.



FROM OUR CHEFS:

CHARRED PLUM CROSTINI

Grilling plums brings out their inherent sweetness, adding flavor complexity via char and smoke. Blended into a sweet and smoky sauce for drizzling over layers of creamy burrata, sliced plums, and toasted French bread, this exciting use of fire transforms the taste experience for a most memorable appetizer.

[Click for the recipe.](#)

Hungry for more? Click to check out all of the 'Charred & Smoked' recipes.



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