

TRENDS

TO KNOW

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY


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 **DATASSENTIAL**



HOW TO SPICE UP CHEESE SAUCE

THE TREND

Cheese sauce is a well-loved, versatile condiment or dip that can serve as a blank canvas for innovation and add cheesy goodness to a wide range of items – think everything from loaded fries/nachos to tacos to pizza to appetizers like pretzel bites and jalapeno poppers. With kids loving dippable foods, cheese sauce could be an appealing condiment to add to kids' menus, too. To increase appeal among younger, more adventurous generations of consumers, consider offering a variety of cheese sauce flavors, such as spicy (integrate peppers like jalapenos or on-trend ingredients like chili crisp) or play with the types of cheese used to create the sauce. While cheddar is classic, other options like blue cheese, Gouda, pepper Jack, Gruyere, or even vegan cheese could be leveraged to expand the appeal of cheese sauce.

DAIRY REPORT

Cheese sauce is inherently a dairy-forward product that can be created using a variety of cheeses. While cheddar is traditional, other types that can be leveraged include blue cheese, Gouda, Gruyere, vegan cheese, and more. Look for opportunities to leverage cheese sauce across dayparts and menu parts – offer it as a dip option on kids' menus, as a pourable condiment for nachos/loaded fries, drizzle it on hot dogs, and more. Also consider playing with flavors and adding a spicy element, beer, or mashing it up with another condiment like sriracha or Nashville hot sauce to take cheese sauce to new heights.

MENU INSPIRATION

JALAPENO PRETZEL BITES

Old Chicago Pizza + Taproom

| Houston, TX (HQ)

Baked jalapeno pretzel bites with mustard beer cheese sauce made with Guinness.

BUFFALO CHICKEN WAHLBITES

Wahlburgers | Hingham, MA (HQ)

Bold, fried, buffalo chicken bites, served with blue cheese sauce.

SOPHIA'S MEATBALL SANDWICH

Sophia's Restaurant | Columbia, MO

House-made meatballs smothered in marinara, asiago cheese sauce, mozzarella, and cheddar cheese. Baked on Italian bread.

SARDOU

City O' City | Denver, CO

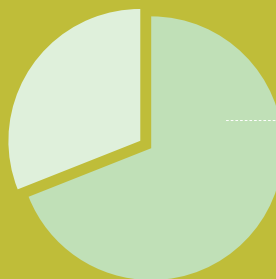
Two eggs or scrambled tofu, grilled artichoke hearts, vegan cheese sauce with garlic, chili flakes, wine and spinach, toasted almonds, and potatoes.

WHITE PIZZA

Sauce Pizzeria | New York, NY (HQ)

Topped with shredded mozzarella cheese, creamy ricotta cheese sauce, fresh spinach, homemade garlic oil, and parmesan cheese.

DATA FILE



69%

OF CONSUMERS LOVE OR LIKE CHEESE SAUCE

Datassential Consumer Preferences Database

TREND STAGE

UBIQUITY



Cheese sauce is in Ubiquity on the Menu Adoption Cycle (MAC), appearing on 16% of menus (Menu Trends). It's well-loved by consumers and has the highest appeal among Millennials, specifically. With Millennials being a foodie generation, look for opportunities to add interest to cheese sauce by capitalizing on trend-forward, earlier-stage ingredients in cheese sauce. Think ghost peppers for a spicy challenge (they've grown 32% on menus over the past 4 years, according to Menu Trends) or lean into experiential innovations like pouring cheese sauce tableside onto items like loaded fries/nachos.

Cheese sauce is well-loved and versatile – lean into trend-forward add-ins to add interest (such as spicy peppers or global chili crisp) and consider upping the experience ante by having servers pour cheese sauce over items like loaded fries or nachos tableside. Also get creative with the cheeses used to make cheese sauce and consider offering a plant-based alternative.

KEY TAKEAWAY