

## **Sauces and Dressings are Heating up For the Summer Season**

The cooking sauces and dressings sector has performed well in recent years, thanks to the recession and subsequently economic recovery. Since 2005, Americans have been spending more time and money on home meal preparation. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the average amount of time people spend preparing meals increased 10% between 2005-2010. Importantly, while the amount of money households spent on food at home rose 10% during this time period, too, spending at restaurants declined 5%.

The salad dressing segment is being reinvigorated by new product innovation. Specialty and natural dressings are growing at 2.5 times the growth of national brands. Kraft, Wishbone, and Kens are declining while customers are exploring flavorful trends with a modern twist. According to Mintel Menu Insights, Ginger (up 20%), Sesame (up 25%), Peanut (up 185%), and Soy (up 65%) dressings are all trending upward, showing Asian influences are still strong. Herb (up 188%), Basil (up 860%) and Lime (up 13%) indicate the light, fresh flavors are important on salads.

In the dressings/vinegar subcategory, “gluten-free” and “low/no/reduced allergen” claims appeared on roughly 40% products. Meanwhile, the “all natural” claim ranks third overall in the subcategory in terms of sheer number of products with this claim, and the claim was on 26% more. In both the cooking sauces and dressings/vinegar subcategories, the kosher claim ranks fourth overall and appeared on more than 20% of products in 2011 vs. 2007

Future sales growth in BBQ Sauces and Marinades will hinge on inspiring home cooks to increase the number of products they use and the frequency, as well as offering better-for-you options, sweat heat and more ethnic and spicy flavor varieties. Manufacturers are featuring cuisines such as Moroccan, Thai and Korean and niche products such as White Meat Bbq Sauce, Pineapple Habanero, and Tropical Mango Lime.

Retailers have a great opportunity for the upcoming season as they allocate more space to specialty and natural dressings, sauces and marinades. The key is to focus on the marketing trends of health, ethnic and fresh flavors that are driving growth and innovation in the categories.

### **Sources**

<http://www.preparedfoods.com/articles/110990-cooking-sauces-and-dressings>

**“Specialty Foods—The NASFT State of the Industry Report—The Market—U.S., September 2012**

<http://www.dressings-sauces.org/flavor-trends>

**Flavor Trends in Dressings and Marinades, Specialty Food Magazine**

<https://www.specialtyfood.com/news-trends/featured-articles/article/dressings-marinades/>