CHEESE SAUCE
AS AN INGREDIENT
With a number of flavor options and applications, cheese sauce can be the star ingredient in a variety of dishes. It can be used to create menu items and LTOs while addressing consumer preferences and providing versatility to commercial and non-commercial kitchens alike.

This report looks at how to create menu items using cheese sauce that address current trends while providing actionable insights that can benefit your menu, your operation and your culinary partnerships.
TOP INGREDIENTS PAIRED WITH CHEESE SAUCE

69.5%  67.0%  46.8%  35.7%  24.8%  15.3%  14.7%  12.9%  11.0%  10.8%  10.7%  10.6%

Alfredo Sauce  Sauces  Cheese  Chicken  Fettuccine  Garlic  Cream  Tomatoes  Onion  Shrimp  Parmesan  Breads

POPULAR CHEESE SAUCE MENU APPLICATION

BEER CHEESE AND SOFT PRETZELS

“People love the beer cheese and pretzels. They like the cheese sauce as a side so they can dip themselves.”

–Full-service Restaurant

CUTTING-EDGE CHEESE SAUCE MENU APPLICATION

CHEESE FONDUE NIGHT

Campus dining option of rich cheese with bread, crudité and other selections for dipping
TOP DISHES WITH CHEESE SAUCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dish</th>
<th># of menu instances</th>
<th>Growth over the last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fettuccine/Fettuccine Alfredo</td>
<td>3,681</td>
<td>+1.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo/White Pizza</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>-11.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortellini</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>+2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrito/Chimichanga</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>-0.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choice of Pasta</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-2.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrimp Entree</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chicken Pizza</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>+0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostaccioli/Penne</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>+1.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Technomic, Menu — powered by Ignite

CUTTING-EDGE CHEESE SAUCE MENU APPLICATIONS

MAC & CHEESE BAR
Build-your-own Mac & Cheese option with cheddar, garlic cream, basil pesto, Cajun cream, or paprikash cheese sauce

CHICKEN ALFREDO SANDWICH
Alfredo-flavored chicken sandwich topped with creamy Parmesan Mornay
CHEESE FRIES

“We do cheese fries, bacon cheese fries and a bacon-cheese-ranch fry on the regular menu. We also do LTO fries that may include other toppings, too.”
–Full-service Restaurant

NACHOS

“Nachos have heavy use by families. They’re an easy sharable item for the table.”
–Full-service Restaurant

POPULAR CHEESE SAUCE MENU APPLICATIONS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broth</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dungeness Crab</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crackers</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>King Crab</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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Foodservice directors are tasked with doing more with less — and managing food inventory is no exception.

All foodservice operations want to keep inventory at a minimum, and operators are reducing the ingredients needed in their kitchens through strategic and savvy menu building.

There are a few primary reasons for the reduction in ingredients: cost, quality and space. By buying larger quantities, an operator can get better per unit ingredient costs. By functioning on a set or limited number of ingredients, the inventory is used faster, the quality is at its peak, and there is little or no spoilage.

Storage space is also at a premium. An operator’s space to store ingredients is fixed, and no matter how many times the menu changes, the available storage likely does not change. Therefore, it is critical to have a high percentage of ingredients that are multi-use ingredients so there is space for unique items that can entice the guest.

Selecting multi-purpose ingredients not only helps to address a few of the operational challenges around inventory management but allows operators to create a variety of menu items across dayparts and cuisines.

Guacamole can be the dip, the soup topper, the appetizer or a featured component of the main dish. For example, it can be made into a sauce and paired with a jalapeno cheese sauce jointly drizzled over nacho-seasoned chicken tenders for delicious meal.

VERSATILE CONDIMENTS CAN ALSO SERVE AS MULTI-USE INGREDIENTS. RANCH DRESSING IS MILD, AND IT CAN BE USED ON SALADS AND QUICK-STEAMED VEGETABLES OR AS A DIP FOR PIZZA STICKS OR A UNIQUE SANDWICH SPREAD.

PUTTING INGREDIENTS TO WORK IN YOUR KITCHEN

SHELF-STABLE CHEESE IS THE SAUCE OPERATORS NEED AT THEIR FINGERTIPS FOR NEARLY ENDLESS OPTIONS.

Thinking beyond just nachos, cheese sauces can serve as:
- an ingredient in dishes like mac and cheese or enchiladas
- a topping for grilled meats or baked potatoes
- a dip for soft pretzels and vegetables
- a base for a host of soups, sauces and fillings

Just from this one ingredient, foodservice operators have developed menu items such as Curried Chicken and Cauliflower, Marinated Beef Street Tacos, California Roll with Wasabi Cheese Sauce and Mexican Chicken Balls dipped into cheesy fondue.

When it comes to managing inventory — and finding menu inspiration — multi-use ingredients like cheese sauce have a big impact in the kitchen and on the plate.
CHEESY CHORIZO BREAKFAST SCRAMBLE

YIELDS: 72 cups

INGREDIENTS

12 cups Chorizo, cooked, drained of excess grease, finely crumbled
½ cup (or as needed) Vegetable Oil
6 cups Black Beans, canned, drained and rinsed
6 cups Yams, ¼" dice, roasted
1½ cups Caramelized Onions, finely minced into a paste
¾ cup Red Peppers, ¼" dice, roasted
¾ cup Green Peppers, ¼" dice, roasted
48 cups beaten Eggs
1 #10 can Muy Fresco Queso Blanco
1½ cups Cilantro, minced

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the cooked chorizo in a tilt skillet over medium-high heat to render any remaining fat. Add enough vegetable oil create a total of ½ cup rendered fat/oil in the pan.

2. Stir in black beans, yams, caramelized onions, red peppers, and green peppers.

3. Reduce heat to medium. Pour egg into the skillet and evenly distribute over the surface. Allow eggs at the bottom of the skillet to solidify, then gently scramble to maintain large curds. Repeat until eggs are fully-cooked and no moisture remains.

4. Stir in the cheese sauce. Heat, stirring occasionally, until heated through. Stir in cilantro or sprinkle over the top.
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- Delivering market driven solutions
- Adding value through dedication to our customers’ success

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