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THE LATEST

The Best Hot Sauces from Around the World

Travel the world through spice.

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You might be the type who steals mini Tabasco bottles from the room service cart. Maybe you know how to say “spicy, please!” in eight languages. Perhaps you're the daredevil in your friend group who reaches for any flaming red jar at a [food stall](#) and just pours, no questions asked. Whatever hot sauce bottles are proudly claiming real estate on your refrigerator door, you love heat, and you're always looking for more of it.

For hot sauce fanatics, the world of spice is large and varied, and in this guide, we're here to help you make sense of it. Hot sauce has a place in [many kitchens across the globe](#). It can be

made by blending any number of different chiles, spices, oils, and acids—and ranges from burning Belizean habanero hot sauce with carrot and vinegar to tingling Szechuan chili oil with numbing peppercorns.

Below, we run through some of the best hot sauces from around the world—focusing on the Americas, Africa, and Asia, primarily on native flavors—and where to find them online. Though they are just as important in their own right, we've chosen to leave out the many chili pastes, powders, flakes, and salsas of the world (a few, rare exceptions are made for paste-like hot sauces that toe the line). Everything here can be dribbled or poured atop any dish of your choosing. We're not going to get into technical measures of heat, like Scoville units, since not every manufacturer or hot sauce lover uses that system—as long as you can decipher between words like mild, medium, hot, fiery, etc., you're good to go. (Back-up plan? Start small when tasting.)

Read on for our guide to the hot sauce landscape of the world. Have fun, and proceed with caution.

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The Americas

In the U.S., hot sauces from around the world cover tabletops in homes and restaurants. When it comes to what the U.S. makes itself, however, there are two main traditions, both of which rely on cayenne peppers and vinegar for a tangy spice: Louisiana-style hot sauce, like [Crystal Hot Sauce](#) and [Louisiana Hot Sauce](#), and thicker buffalo sauce, like [Frank's Red Hot](#). Some exciting newcomers are popping up on the scene, too. Made in Hawaii, [Dakine Hawaiian Hot Soy Sauce](#) plays up the island's local flavors; out of South Carolina, [Red Clay's Carolina Hot Sauce](#) is made with a mix of Fresno chiles and endemic Carolina Reaper peppers; [Mike's Hot Honey](#), made using chiles from New York and Jersey, is Brooklyn's favorite pizza topping; and if you want a medium hot sauce designed for topping post-surfing nosh, California-based [Cayucos Hot Sauce](#), with red jalapeños and sweet chiles, is the local go-to on the state's central coast.



Red Clay's Carolina hot sauce is made with Carolina Reaper peppers

Heading south to **Mexico**, the most popular hot sauces, poured on everything from tacos to mango slices, get thicker and lighter on the vinegar: **Valentina** is the go-to in many households, whereas love for **Cholula** stretches across the border. A real kick comes from habanero-based hot sauces like **Chimay** and **El Yucateco's Green Habanero sauce**—just a few drops of either punch up fish tacos. Where habanero really reigns supreme, though, is in **Belize**, where potent, vibrant blends of habanero and vegetables like carrots are the base of local icon **Marie Sharp's many hot sauces**. **Picama's hot sauce**, the most popular in Guatemala, is made with medium heat serrano peppers, with a thick, ketchup-like consistency—but **Green Belly Hot Sauce**, also made in **Guatemala** with habaneros instead, is a spicier local take.



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We're traveling to Guyana, Peru, and Thailand from the comfort of our own kitchens.

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In [Jamaica](#) and neighboring islands, a seriously hot (and slightly fruity) flavor can be found in scotch bonnet hot sauce, famously used to make jerk chicken. [Baron's West Indian hot sauce](#) tops many tables in the [Caribbean](#), though [Shaquanda's Hot Pepper hot sauce](#) ("Brooklyn-based with roots firmly planted in Barbados," according to their site) is deeply beloved stateside. To crank the heat up further, look for [Trinidad & Tobago's](#) classic blends of scotch bonnet and local scorpion peppers, like [Trini Pepper Sauce](#) (made in the States with ingredients from the islands).

[South America](#) leans heavily on homemade salsas and sauces for spice (llajua in [Bolivia](#), aji verde sauce in [Peru](#), Colombian aji picante, for example), but great bottled hot versions can also be found. From Peru, creamy [Uchucuta hot sauce](#) with spicy rocoto peppers (almost an aioli, but not quite) is a moderately hot packaged take on one such classic. Also from Peru, the brand [Arde Charapa](#) makes a delicious hot sauce with the bright and fiery Amazonian aji charapita peppers—though they don't ship internationally (yet), other charapita blends can be found on [Etsy](#), of all places.

In **Brazil**, the heat comes from powerful Portuguese malagueta peppers, which are used in cooking, and blended with vinegar and any number of other spices to make hot sauce. Bottles of this moderately hot molho de pimenta, like **Sabor Mineiro's**, can be found at nearly every snack counter in the country (though you could buy the spicy whole **peppers**, which come packed in vinegar, if you want to make your own).

Africa

Our favorite African hot sauces dance the line between pourable and spoonable, but some we simply couldn't skip. In northern Africa, heat is embedded in many dishes in the form of thick harissa pasta (first made in **Tunisia** with hot peppers, paprika, and oil, and now popular throughout the region), which can eliminate the need to pour on a secondary source of heat—though plenty of diners top off meals with an extra plop of the stuff. A fairly thin version by **Dea Harissa**, from France, comes in a squeezable tube. In **Egypt**, the Middle Eastern shatta hot sauce reigns, with red or green chiles and usually a few herbs like garlic and parsley (try **Sun Lion Shatta**).

Ghana's shito sauce stands out from the pack, with an umami seafood base (fish oil and dried fish or prawns are used alongside the namesake kpakpo shito chiles, and some vegetables). Though most households have their own recipe, **Maria's Shito Hot Sauce** comes in a squeezable bottle, and ships throughout the States.



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In Ethiopia, [awaze sauce](#) is often served alongside meats, usually made from a berbere spice blend (with chiles like cayenne, nutty fenugreek seeds, garlic, and warmer flavors of cinnamon and paprika), that is mixed with tej, a mead. It is often used as a marinade, but when made as thin as it should be, it can be dribbled on just about anything. Finding a bottled version can be hard, though [Brundo Market](#) makes one (it's temporarily unavailable on Amazon, but will hopefully return soon).

Throughout a handful of countries in Southern Africa, one hot sauce is ubiquitous: Peri peri sauce, made with African bird's eye chile (also known as peri-peri, related to the malagueta pepper beloved in Brazil). This condiment, first made by Portuguese colonizers in either Angola or [Mozambique](#) (the debate is ongoing) is used as a marinade for its namesake flame-grilled rotisserie chicken, but you can pour this bright, tangy, garlicky hot sauce, like the version from [Nando's](#), onto just about anything.

Asia

Chile peppers and peppercorns form an important base in many Asian cuisines—so it's no surprise you'll find a wealth of hot sauces throughout the continent. [Korea](#) is among the countries known for spicy condiments, specifically gochujang, a fermented chili paste made with dried red pepper flakes, glutinous rice, fermented soybeans, and salt. It's not meant to finish dishes; it's a flavorful paste for cooking, but there are true hot sauces that incorporate this crave-inducing flavor, like [Mother In Law's Sesame Gochujang sauce](#) (made in the U.S.).



Fly by Jing chili crisp is made with Sichuan peppercorns

While thick chili oils are somewhat a category of their own, they're hands down the hot sauces of the moment, despite having been around for many years. In **China**, the medium heat **Lao Gan Ma spicy chili crisp** (crisp because the Guizhou chiles are fried before being mixed with oil) sits on many a kitchen table, where the tasty sauce is heaped into soups and onto pan-fried noodles. Jenny Gao's **Fly by Jing** is a modern take on the condiment, made with 100 percent natural ingredients in Chengdu, with added Sichuan peppercorns that'll make your tongue tingle; **Momofuku's Chili Crunch**, made in the States with a recipe straight from their **New York City** kitchen, has added Mexican flavors like chile de árbol, and extra umami from added seaweed.

China isn't the only country with chili oil though. In [Japan](#), where dishes go lighter on the spice than in neighboring countries, a milder chili oil called rayu, like [this one from S&B](#), is heavier on flavors of chili oil, garlic, and soy sauce. A Vietnamese version of the condiment from [Me's Way](#) is closer to the Chinese version, though it gets extra umami from the addition of anchovy, in a three-generation-old recipe that is representative of the chili oil served throughout Huế, Vietnam.

[Southeast Asia](#) is perhaps best known for bringing sriracha to the world, however—and not just those red Huy Fong bottles with the green top. The semisweet garlic-forward hot sauce, first made in the town of Sri Racha, Thailand, is not available in many other renditions, like [Shark Sriracha](#). That said, Huy Fong's take on [Sambal Oelek](#), a thick blend of crushed red chiles, salt, and vinegar, is a popular mass-produced version of the classic Malaysian and Indonesian condiment, which has mid-level heat (other bottled versions get a bit of umami from shrimp paste). Filipino cuisine isn't exactly known for an emphasis on spiciness, but a new generation of hot sauce makers are looking to change that: Manila-made [Caramba! hot sauce](#) uses locally grown chiles blended with endemic ingredients like mango, whereas U.S.-based brands like [Djablo](#) and [Sarap Shop](#) are making sauces designed to highlight and compliment traditional Filipino flavors.

It'd be impossible to talk about [Indian food](#) without spice, in which fiery heat is so often incorporated into dishes through chili powder, or delivered via thick chutneys. That said, more pourable hot sauces exist: Bottles of [Swad hot sauce](#) are perfect for shaking onto snacks like samosas.

Elsewhere

Australia is getting into the hot sauce game—as [Australia GQ declares it](#), largely because of the popularity of the show Hot Ones. But the country is home to the native Tasmanian Diemen pepper berry, which is blended into sauces made by [Diemen's](#), for a stinging berry flavor rounded out by vinegar and salt ([email the company](#) for a quote on international shipping).

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