

TASTING

High-End Barbecue Sauces

Small-batch barbecue sauces promise pit-master magic—but are they worth their higher price tags? To find out, we mail-ordered four products that had some buzz, were award winners, or were marketed by barbecue pros.

We sampled the sauces plain and on grilled chicken, focusing on sweetness, complexity, texture, and overall appeal. Our two least favorite sauces were too sweet, containing twice the amount of sugar per serving as the others. A third sauce was watery and mild. But the fourth, Pork Barrel Original BBQ Sauce, delivered. With generous additions of vinegar, salt, and chili paste along with liquid smoke, it was tart, spicy, and more savory than sweet. It also had enough body to cling to the chicken.

To see how Pork Barrel compared with our supermarket winner, Bull's-Eye Original BBQ Sauce (\$2.39 for 18 ounces)—a sweet, tomato-based classic—we held a taste test on grilled chicken. Votes were evenly split on these very different sauces. For traditionalists, Bull's-Eye is best, but for a savory, tangy sauce with a kick, we recommend splurging on Pork Barrel. —Hannah Crowley

SUPREME SAUCE

PORK BARREL ORIGINAL
BBQ Sauce

Price: \$5.49 for 12 oz
(46 cents per oz)

Comments: This “big, bold” winner boasted a “robust,” “vinegary” kick.



MILD AND RUNNY BONE SUCKIN' SAUCE

Price: \$6.79 for 16 oz
(42 cents per oz)

Comments: Some tasters noted “interesting honey and fruit” flavors. For others, the sauce was “thin” and “boring.”



OVERLY SPICED

STEVEN RAICHLIN BEST OF
BARBECUE Chipotle Molasses
Barbecue Sauce

Price: \$9.99 for 18 oz
(56 cents per oz)

Comments: The “licorice,” “molasses,” and “hoisin” flavors of this sauce were too much of a good thing.



SACCHARINE SWEET

AMERICAN STOCKYARD BBQ
Sauce Harvest Apple

Price: \$6.95 for 22 oz
(32 cents per oz)

Comments: This last-place sauce was “too runny,” with a “cloying sweetness.”



Named SUPREME BBQ Sauce

By *Cook's
Illustrated*

