

LATIN FLAVOR INSPIRATION

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD
AND BEVERAGE SPACE

TREND REPORT BITE

Often defined by the prevalence of Spanish and Portuguese, Latin America is a richly diverse region whose culinary influence on North America is both significant and unmistakable. Curious consumers and 1st and 2nd generation immigrants are creating demand for traditional Latin dishes, drinks and flavors. From smoky chilies to tropical fruits, there are endless flavors to give a Latin spin to any application.

THEMES TO EXPLORE:

- Flavor from Fire
- Celebrating Cinco
- Street Bites & Sips
- Dulces Mexicanos



“Latin American cuisine is more than just food — it’s a story of history, culture and innovation. From ancient indigenous farming techniques to globally recognized signature dishes, the **flavors of Latin America continue to shape the culinary world.**”

SmartBrief, March 2025, Amy Sung

Flavor from Fire

Every global region has its unique traditions for cooking with fire and Latin America is no exception. In fact, barbecuing can be traced back to the region, specifically the indigenous people of the Caribbean who roasted meat indirectly over flame. Latin countries now have a diverse and influential history of preparing flavorful meats like barbacoa and carne asada that deliver rich, fire-kissed taste. Often accompanied with zesty sauces that use bold spices and smoked chilies, Latin barbeque flavors can inspire your next innovation.

“Latin American BBQ techniques, like Argentinian asado and Brazilian churrasco, are gaining momentum. In 2025, marinades using ingredients like chimichurri, achiote, and citrus-based rubs will take center stage.”

- ANTICIPATED TRENDS IN BBQ FOR 2025, [BBQREVOLUTION.COM](https://www.bbqrevolution.com)



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[¡YA OAXACA!](#) is dedicated to introducing traditional Oaxacan flavors to mainstream markets. Their Barbacoa Adobo Sauce, crafted with guajillo chiles and avocado leaf, offers a bold, authentic take on barbecue flavors.

[GARCIA FOODS](#) released frozen Chicken Al Pastor. Tacos Al Pastor can be traced from Lebanese immigrants bringing spit-roasting meat to Mexico. Described as chili-rubbed meat, charred onions and pineapple for an earthy, smoky, slightly sweet profile.



Street Bites & Sips

As consumers seek out new global flavors while craving comfort food, the vibrant street foods of Latin America continue to shine. Often rooted in familiar handheld formats, there are an array of street foods throughout the region, each offering satisfaction and variety to those opting for smaller bites. Beyond the beloved taco and even elote, savory and sweet items like the pupusa (stuffed corn cake), buñuelos (deep-fried fritters) and Agua de Jamaica (hibiscus water) are ripe for exploration.

“Street food in Latin America is often hand-held and easy to eat on the go, contributing to the culture’s lively, community-based spirit. This cuisine is made up of bold flavors and is typically quite affordable.”

- [INTERNATIONAL FRESH MARKET MAY 2025](#)



photo: International Fresh Market

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[DEL REAL FOODS](#) has a line of fresh, never frozen pupusas, a Salvadoran dish. Flavors include Birria & Cheese and Carnitas & Cheese.



[LA GLORIA](#) is a restaurant with locations in Texas that celebrates the rich and delicious street foods found across the diverse regions of Mexico. Patrons will find familiar tacos along with lesser-known dishes like sopes and molcajetes.

Celebrating Cinco

Cinco de Mayo (the fifth of May) commemorates the Mexican army's victory in the 1862 Battle of Puebla in the Franco-Mexican war. In the U.S. the holiday has become a celebration of Mexican culture and cuisine. According to Kantar, retailers and brands that lean into Cinco de Mayo are likely to be rewarded by an enthusiastic shopper base, especially since more than one-third of those celebrating say they are willing to splurge. From spirits and sweets to meals and snacks, brands can excite their consumers with special offerings that celebrate Mexican flavors.

44%

of U.S. shoppers plan to celebrate
Cinco de Mayo in some way.
Kantar, 2025 ShopperScape®



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TACO CABANA (U.S. Fast Casual Chain) debuted limited-time items for Cinco de Mayo 2025 including a New Chicken Bacon Ranch Taco and Cholula® Rita. [Learn more.](#)



MOSER ROTH Cinco de Mayo Chocolates were released in May 2024. Flavors included: Horchata; Dulce de Leche; Spicy Mango Chili; and Cinnamon Hot Chocolate.

Dulces Mexicanos

Mexican sweets (dulces) are having a moment, with consumers increasingly drawn to the diverse tastes of Latin desserts and baked treats. Bakeries that feature traditional Mexican treats like churros, conchas (colorful sweet bread) and polvorones de canele (cinnamon cookies) are gaining recognition. Brands are also infusing their offerings with vibrant Mexican flavors—from tropical flavors like guava and hibiscus to the warmly spiced profiles of café de olla and horchata.

Sweetmore Bakery, U.S. premium bakery manufacturer, acquired Azteca Bakeries, a wholesale manufacturer of Mexican pastries and baked goods.

-SNACK FOOD & WHOLESALE BAKERY, JAN 2025



www.aztecabakeries.com

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COMADRE PANDADERÍA (Austin, TX) was voted one of the best bakeries in the country by NY Times. The Mexican-American bakery rotates its menu with new flavors, such as Pistachio Guava Cake, which combines local Texan ingredients with classic Mexican tropical flavors.



SAN DIABLO ARTISAN CHURROS offers a variety of churro products, including home baking kits and frozen churros available at Target. Fillings include Nutella, red berry, and dulce de leche, as well as sugar toppings like cinnamon and cinnamon cayenne.

THE TAKEAWAYS

As consumers continue to embrace the foods and flavors of Latin America, brands have an opportunity to deliver authentic profiles or fun fusions to their offerings. Fire-kissed flavors from Latin BBQ traditions can elevate savory meals or snacks. Consumers' quest for global tastes collides with their love for comfort food, and Latin street foods that often incorporate cheeses, fried notes and other rich flavors are sure to please. Appeal to consumers interested in celebrating Mexican culture by showcasing the flavors of the country's dishes, drinks and sweets. Mexican sweets are renowned for their lavish nature, look to Mexican sweets that blend creamy textures with warm spices and fruits to redefine indulgence.

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BUÑUELOS

Most Latin American countries have some variation of buñuelos, deep-fried fritters that are popular around Christmas and New Year's Day. [Check out a recipe](#) from our culinary team for a Mexican version that is coated in cinnamon sugar and if desired, drizzled with an anise-spiced syrup.



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