



Trends Report

Authenticity, portability and incredible flavor – what’s not to love? International street food has come to America, but this on-the-go culinary movement has deep roots in almost all cultures around the globe. Originally considered peasant food, it was sold on the streets or in public places where urban populations could affordably access a variety of prepared foods.

American street food culture used to mean hot dog and pretzel carts.. But in 2008, Roy Choi changed the landscape with his Korean-Mexican taco truck, Kogi, in Los Angeles. Considered a founder of the modern food truck trend, Chef Choi showed Americans that street food really had no limits. Kogi’s food was thoughtful, delicious and evoked a sense of place and nostalgia. Combined with the rise of Twitter and other social media outlets, the trend quickly swept the nation. And because Kogi’s launch coincided with the recession, people’s minds and wallets were open to comfort foods from all cultures. The opportunity for emerging cooks to open their own kitchen and create their own style of cuisine at a fraction of a brick and mortar startup also helped fuel the growth of trucks and carts joining the fray.

Today, food trucks can accurately be called a national phenomenon. From the humble beginnings of one taco truck roaming the streets of LA, the street food scene has exploded – consumers flock to food stalls, food cart pods, and independent trucks as a culinary destination for unique meals, or simply to enjoy some really good food. As more consumers grab lunch on the corner, chefs are looking to amp up the creativity and excitement of menus – and pork is king when it comes to grabbing attention and appetites. According to Food Genius, among meat types in street food menuing, pork is the most widely used at 68%, compared to chicken or beef (62% and 57%, respectively). They also show trucks are using pork in innovative ways, pairing it with different cheeses, spices, or in unique cuisine concepts.

Here’s a look at some of the operators who are filling stomachs across the country:

Independent Food Trucks:

In an industry where location is key, independent food truck operators have flocked to social media platforms like Twitter, Yelp and Facebook to let fans know where they're heading and when they'll be there. Building a following is paramount to trucks that don't have a consistent berth in a stall or market, and many operators are posting before the truck even takes to the road. Many trucks also use social media to feature menu specials or promote events. Take a look at some of the top trucks in action around the country

- Food cart parks are the norm in Austin, but the East Side King franchise mixes it up by partnering with bars as the backyard food option. The latest from Paul Qui and co-owner Chef Thai Changthong is Thai-Kun, newly named to *Bon Appetit's* 2014 The Hot 10, is parked in the back of Wonderland bar in Austin and serves an 8-item menu



- The Waterfall Pork is a fan favorite – grilled pork shoulder with fiery Tiger Cry sauce. To balance the heat, the dish is served with pickled cabbage, cooling fresh herbs, and sweet rice

- Miami-based Gastropod trailer, by Jeremiah Bullfrog who cooked at El Bulli and wd-50, made a recent appearance at Bonnaroo music festival in Tennessee. The cart doesn't serve daily in Miami, but is known to make appearances at festivals and other big gatherings – followers monitor Bullfrog's movements closely on Twitter, so as not to miss out on the rotating haute cuisine menu – past items include:



- Curry Pork Tacos – pulled pork, corn tortillas, cilantro
- La Porchetta Cubana – Duroc pork belly and loin with mojo pickled fennel
- Dirty Chips – kettle chips cooked in pork fat, spicy mayo, and slaw bits
- Triple Decker Slider Burger – stuffed with shaved pork belly on a potato bun with onions cooked in bacon
- Benton's Bacon Fried Rice – everything bagel with furikake shake, poached egg, and scallion
- El Chinito Cubano – Benton's ham, pork belly terrine and Hoisin mustard



- Mama Chow's Kitchen in downtown Portland was recently voted one of the best in the city. This stand-alone food cart offers Chinese American comfort food. The Kalua Pork is served with garlic noodles and chayote squash. The truck uses Facebook posting to encourage consumer engagement
- In Las Vegas, NV Sausagefest has garnered a following through social media and partnering with local music festivals. Offering gourmet sausages, the truck features a Longanisa bánh mì, combining Filipino and Vietnamese street food into one amazing bite

Food Cart Pods:

Unlike food trucks, food carts don't travel under their own power so mobility isn't as easy. Thus, many carts tend to congregate in pods, offering consumers a one-stop shop to sample a variety of delicious cuisines.

Portland, OR has a flourishing pod culture and carts are set up in permanent structures. Offering a range of sophisticated fare, including a variety of global cuisines, there are over 600 in the city. Favorite pods include the largest collection at Adler Street, Fifth Avenue, Mississippi Marketplace, and Southeast Portland.

- The People's Pig in the Adler Street pod owns the market for porchetta sandwiches and serves them with arugula and green apple
- "The Original Schnitzelwich" hails from the acclaimed Tábor Czech Food
 - It features breaded pork loin in a Ciabatta roll with lettuce, paprika spread, sautéed onion and horseradish
- In Southeast Portland, Umai Ramen is one of the city's favorite ramen carts.
 - Their namesake dish features cart-made alkaline noodles topped with steamed greens, Umai pork shoulder, marinated egg, pickled shiitake, and scallion in a house double broth – an addictive chicken-pork broth that's finished with duck fat

Austin may be known for its barbecue but it also offers up some intriguing street food fare. You'll see trailers, carts, trucks and wagons on parking lots, sidewalks, in groups or standing by themselves – they are everywhere! If that seems overwhelming, don't worry – there's an app for that! The AustinFoodCarts app was developed to engage the community and make it easier for locals and tourists alike to follow their favorite stops.

One of the most notable stops is the South Austin Trailer Park, which features a group of food trailers, a pavilion full of picnic tables, strung lights and foosball and ping pong gaming tables – the perfect environment for a party! There is even a unique barn for special events.

- Torchy’s Taco Truck is the founder of this park, and often considered the main attraction. The truck suggests adding a fried avocado to any dish for an adventurous twist, and they’ve even created the *Taco Anatomy System* on their website to allow consumers to find their perfect taco combination. Users click their preferences and the website matches them with a perfect palate-satisfying taco!
 - Their menu features Green Chile Pork – slow roasted pork carnitas simmered with green chilies – as well as jalapeño pork sausage.

Off the Grid, in San Francisco, boasts that they are the largest network of gourmet mobile food markets anywhere. This unique collaboration showcases hundreds of vendors each week in dozens of locations around the Bay Area, bringing communities together through a shared food experience. The market uses social media and a robust website to track all the delicious food whereabouts, with a motto of “Making street food happen... all the time”



- Reminiscent of the original Asian street food, The Chairman offers steamed buns and baked buns filled with your choice:
 - Tender Pork Belly with turmeric pickled daikon and green shiso
 - Coca-Cola Braised Pork with savoy cabbage and preserved yellow mustard seeds
- Sanguchon serves Peruvian street food, like hearty sandwiches stuffed with classic and contemporary Peruvian ingredients
 - Pan con Chicharron – pork loin sliced, fried yams, marinated onions in lime juice and cream de rocoto
 - Barbacoa – pulled pork barbecue with Inka-Cola sauce, potato chips, coleslaw and aji rocoto sweet sauce

Though it’s newer to the scene, Atlanta’s Food Truck Park has become the South’s everyday place to come together as a community to experience food and drink, and browse local art. Truck vendors rotate so there’s always something new and delicious to choose from any day of the week.



- Potentially the first food truck in Atlanta, Yumbii serves Korean, Mexican and American fusion. Highlights include:
 - Spicy Pulled Pork Tacos with red Asian barbecue sauce
 - Yumbii sliders – spicy pulled-pork topped with cucumber, kimchee sesame-salad, and shredded Mexican cheese
- Sweet Auburn Barbecue offers a variety of slow-smoked meats, where classic southern barbecue goes hand in hand with modern eclectic influences:

- Pimento Cheese Wontons made with bacon marmalade and sweet Thai chili sauce
- Sweet Auburn Country Picnic Plate – shaved Benton’s Country Ham, homemade pickles, pimento cheese and candied bacon crostini



- Coconut Lemongrass Pork Spare Ribs
- Auburn Bacon Pork Burger topped with pulled pork, candied bacon, Jack cheese, lettuce, tomato, and onion
 - Mighty Meatballs food truck takes the Italian sandwich global, offering a variety of flavor profiles including a bánh mì-style pork meatball sandwich

Market Squares and Food Stalls

Public markets used to be a mainstay in cities across the country, but they fell from prominence. Now, they’re making a comeback. These community hubs feature specialty shops, eateries, local artisans, and regional food vendors, usually in an open-air environment. These establishments are helping to move public markets back into the spotlight.

In operation since 1917, **LA Grand Central Market** has a decidedly updated vibe in addition to some of its well-worn classics, thanks to a 2013 renovation that added space for a dozen or so new vendors. The market offers an eclectic mix of everything you need – from old tacos and Chinese food to new choices like breakfast sandwiches, pupusas, butchered meats and specialty cheeses. The market is a centerpiece of what LA has to offer and reflects the population of the downtown area, with people from all walks of life enjoying the mix of cultures and cuisines.

- Belcampo Meat Co. is a farm, processing plant, neighborhood butcher shop and restaurant. The Grand Central Market location offers premium pork cuts from porterhouse and sirloin pork chops to breakfast and lunch specialties like:
 - Pork Cochinita – avocado, pickled onion and fried egg
 - Cabeza Frita Cemita – deep-fried pork head and trotter, avocado, salsa and queso
 - Poblano Pork Cemita – braised pork shoulder, chipotle, avocado, salsa and queso



- Berlin Currywurst serves the number one street food in Germany. If you visit Berlin by night, you can enjoy the vibrant corner Currywurst stand, a popular neighborhood meeting point

- Visitors select a made-to-order bratwurst, paprikawurst, or currywurst on a bun, plus a sauce and heat level

- Roast to Go has sold tacos, burritos and combination plates since 1952, as well as meats by the pound for parties and catering

- Meats include: carnitas, chicharron, el pastor and trompa pork nose
- Sarita's Pupuseria serves Salvadorian cuisine based on family recipes from owner Sara Clark, serving handmade pupusas with a dozen different fillings, as well as fried plantains, yuca con chicharron, stews, and other dishes
 - The Revuletas o Mixtas de chicharron is a combination of pork, queso and beans

Oxbow Public Market, located in the Oxbow District of Napa, has become the local gathering place for great food and wine in downtown Napa and throughout the Napa Valley. The 40,000 square foot marketplace, which includes a scenic outdoor deck with seating along the Napa River, features a diverse tenant mixture of local food vendors, and artisan cafes.



- Fatted Calf is a charcuterie and butcher shop dedicated to the details that produce incredibly tasty food. Featuring multiple varieties of fresh sausage and cured meats, the store also offers many enticing daily options:
 - Early Girl Tomato and Ham Tart made with Fatted Calf's smoked brown sugar ham with basil, melted onions and comte cheese in a flaky tart
 - Heritage Pork Shoulder with fennel pollen, chili and garlic
 - Toasted Fiscalini Cheddar and Bacon Jam sandwich
- C Casa offers a fresh approach to tacos, with chalkboard specials including the pork carnita tostada with white beans, corn relish, poblanos, micro greens, romaine, lime crema and cotija cheese

Seattle's Pike's Place Market was established in 1907 to connect citizens and farmers and it continues its "Meet the Producer" tradition with a year-round farmers market, owner-operated bakeries, fish markets, butcher shops, produce stands and specialty food stores. There are more than 80 restaurants within the Market boundaries, from take-out counters to fine dining establishments.



- Piroshky Piroshky brings a taste of Russia to the Northwest, serving the Russian version of the stuffed hand-held pie in both sweet and savory variations
 - Favorites include the ham and cheese and salmon pate.
- Seatown Seabar & Rotisserie's sandwich shops offers The Three Little Pigs – porchetta, premium Kassler ham, and whipped lardo
- Mee Sum Pastry, a family-owned business, serves a variety of steamed or baked hombows, or filled sweet bread rolls
 - They're best known for the BBQ Pork filling made with sweet and savory BBQ pork mixed with spices and onions

Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market occupies the former Reading Terminal train shed in the heart of Center City. After being revitalized in the

1990s, the Reading Terminal Market now features more than 80 restaurants, shops, and farm stands.



- DiNic's, now in its fourth generation, serves classic Italian sandwiches stuffed with Italian-style pulled pork
 - Their famous roast pork, broccoli rabe and provolone sandwich was crowned The Best Sandwich in America by *Travel Channel* in 2012
- Salumeria, an Italian deli and grocery, also serves lunch including hoagies filled with their charcuterie
- Molly Malloy's, the market's first gastropub, sources from their neighbors in the market and offers pork pot stickers drizzled with spicy szechuan oil
- Beck's Cajun Café is a New Orleans original and offers classic Cajun cuisine
 - Favorites include the Muffaletta – salami, ham, mortadella, sharp provolone, and olive salad served on Italian bread.

Street food is the perfect way to deliver authenticity and amazing flavor on the go. No longer peasant food, this fare is now a driving force in the culinary scene, impacting concepts, flavors, and applications of up-and-coming trucks and pods as well as brick-and-mortar locations. As this trend evolves and expands, America's street food scene will continue to raise the bar on taste and creativity, inspiring a whole new generation of chefs and operators.