

HOT SAUCE SUMMER!

July 11, 2022



ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

By Zoe Singer

First, the alarming news about hot sauce: In April, Huy Fong Foods, which produces the widely adored large squeeze bottles of sriracha, announced that severe weather had impacted their main ingredient. With deliveries delayed until after Labor Day,

we're in for a sriracha shortage this summer.

As of this writing, several brands of sriracha, including the delectable Three Mountains yellow sriracha, are still on the Coop's shelves. (Hey, now, no hoarding—remember when we had to cap toilet paper purchases?) On a brighter note, a plethora of other fiery sauces made by area artisans are in stock as well, just waiting to spice up your summer picnics! Here's a roundup to pique your interest in piquant flavors beyond your go-to picante.

The local, woman-owned Queen Majesty brand produces its hot sauces in Long Island City in small batches using fresh ingredients. The bottles, which boast gorgeously illustrated labels, contain unusual, intriguing flavor combinations like Red Habanero and Black Coffee, and the searingly delicious Cocoa Ghost. Recipes on their website for salad dressing could inspire many a summer meal.

“AS TEMPERATURES RISE AND SRIRACHA LEVELS DWINDLE THIS SUMMER, WE CAN LOOK TO THE AGE-OLD WISDOM THAT EATING SPICY FOODS CAN KEEP YOU COOL.”

Up in the Hudson Valley, Ric Orlando emphasizes that his hot sauce recipes are “balanced,” with more flavor than “shock.” His Purple Haze Psychedelic Sauce is based on the habanero chile, combined with pineapple, herbs, ginger, cider vinegar and red cabbage, which lends its color and, he claims, makes the habanero easier to digest. A bit milder, with a warming sweetness and complexity from clover honey, grapefruit, and turmeric, the Dirty Blonde also makes a fantastic glaze for grilling.



Ithaca, New York is home to Mojo's Sauce, which showcases Finger Lakes produce in their Smokin' Hot Heirloom Hot Sauce (try it in your next Bloody Mary!) and Sunshine Carrots, a medium-spicy, sunny-tasting concoction of Scotch-bonnet peppers, lemongrass, ginger and roasted carrots that will perk up your next sandwich.

Closer to home, Brooklyn Delhi's Guntur Sannam hot sauce puts this whole sriracha crisis in perspective. Made from a single-origin heirloom variety of the Guntur Sannam chili pepper from Andhra Pradesh, along with tomatoes, garlic, tamarind and asafetida, it's a mix of savory, smoky and sweet spice that I recommend on eggs, noodles, rice, tofu, lentils, chicken...you get the idea.

Brooklynite Auria Abraham, owner of Auria's Malaysian Kitchen (full disclosure: our kids were in school together and I have been hooked on her sambal ever since), imports fermented shrimp paste from Malacca, a coastal city in Malaysia, for her intense

Hot Chili Sambal. I've been adding tiny amounts of the condiment to my stir-fries for years, where the seafood flavor blooms, lending added depth and savor. Auria's homey, approachable recipes are an online cooking class in themselves.

The preserved lemon harissa from New York Shuk is another pretender to the sriracha throne, with a rich tanginess that makes it more versatile than many spicier versions of the North African and Middle Eastern hot sauce. The super simple recipe for grilled eggplant salad on their website is a perfect showcase for the combination of salty preserved lemons and traditional harissa spices (chili, garlic, coriander, caraway and cumin).

As temperatures rise and sriracha levels dwindle this summer, we can look to the age-old wisdom that eating spicy foods can keep you cool. What better time to explore the Coop's diversity of local, artisanal hot sauces?

Zoe Singer is a former food writer and recipe developer turned grant writer. She is a lifelong Brooklynite and longtime Coop member.