

## Words used to describe taste

The flavour of your food is what most customers focus on when they are deciding what to eat. **How you present the dishes on your menu** can help build anticipation, and a good menu description could even convince a hesitant customer to try something new. With this in mind, it's important to be precise and thorough when choosing words to describe your food's flavour.

Here are some words that are commonly used to describe food:

- **Acidic:** A food with a sharp taste. Often used to refer to tart or sour foods as well.
- **Bitter:** A tart, sharp, and sometimes harsh flavor.
- **Bittersweet:** A less harsh taste than bitterness. Couples tartness with sweetness.
- **Briny:** Another word for salty.
- **Citrusy:** A bright flavor like that of lemons, limes, oranges, and other citrus fruits.
- **Fiery:** A taste that feels as though it gives off heat. Another word for spicy.
- **Fresh:** A light and crisp taste. Often used to describe produce or herbs.
- **Nutty:** Any taste similar to the flavours of nuts. Often used to describe cheeses.
- **Rich:** A full, heavy flavour. Often used to describe foods containing cream.
- **Sour:** A biting, tangy, tart flavour.
- **Spicy:** A burning taste from hot spices.
- **Sweet:** A sugary flavour.
- **Tangy:** A tart, biting taste that feels tingly in the mouth.
- **Zesty:** A fresh, vivid, or invigorating flavour.

## Words to describe texture

Another consideration when describing your food is texture. **Matching the right texture words to your dishes** helps your guests to imagine what it will be like to eat your food before they order it.

Here are some words that are commonly used to describe texture:

- **Creamy:** A smooth and rich texture that usually comes from the incorporation of dairy.
- **Crumbly:** The texture of a food with a loose structure that falls apart into small pieces or crumbs.
- **Delicate:** A light, fine texture that may come apart easily.

- **Doughy:** A soft and heavy texture that is often coupled with pale colouring.
- **Fluffy:** A light and airy texture.
- **Goosey:** A viscous, sometimes sticky texture arising from the presence of moisture in a dense solid food.
- **Juicy:** A succulent, tender texture characterized by the presence of liquid in a solid food.
- **Smooth:** A consistent texture free of grit, lumps, or indentations.
- **Succulent:** A tender, juicy texture.
- **Tender:** A soft texture that is easy to break down.
- **Velvety:** A smooth and rich texture.

## Words used to describe how it was prepared

One of the best ways to describe food on your menu is by indicating how it was prepared. So long as your customer recognizes the words you choose, it will give them a clear picture of your food's flavour and appearance.

Here are some words that indicate preparation method:

- **Baked:** A food that was cooked in an oven, often resulting in a crispy outer coating.
- **Caramelized:** A food that has been cooked slowly until it is browned and becomes sweeter in taste.
- **Charred:** Food that is grilled, roasted, or broiled and gains a blackened exterior coupled with a smoky flavour.
- **Glazed:** A food that becomes moistened by having a flavorful coating dripped or brushed onto its surface. May result in a glossy appearance and thin, crisp outer layer.
- **Infused:** A food that has been steeped in liquid with another ingredient in order to extract the flavor of the ingredient. Often used with herbs.
- **Marinated:** A food (usually meat) that has been soaked in liquid containing flavourful ingredients like herbs, spices, vinegar, and oil.
- **Poached:** Food that has been cooked in nearly boiling liquid. Often results in a tender, moist texture.
- **Roasted:** Food that has been cooked with dry heat in an oven or over a fire. Often results in a browned exterior and crisp coating.
- **Sautéed:** A food that has been cooked quickly in a small amount of fat.
- **Seared:** A food that is cooked in a small amount of fat until caramelized and then finished by roasting, grilling, or another method. Results in a crisp outer texture and tender interior.

# Choose Positive Words to Describe Your Food

Before you put a word in your menu description, take a moment to think about how that word is commonly used. Does it bring a positive image to mind, or is it unappetizing? Additionally, the positive alternatives to negative words are often more specific, so they give your customers a more precise idea of what your food is like.

Here are some examples of negative describing words and the positive adjectives that you can use to replace them:

- **Dry vs. crispy:** *Chicken with a dry breading* compared to *Chicken with a crispy breading*
- **Greasy vs. velvety:** *Pasta in a greasy sauce* compared to *Pasta in a velvety sauce*
- **Sugary vs. honeyed:** *Pears with a sugary drizzle* compared to *Pears with a honeyed drizzle*
- **Burned vs. blackened:** *Burned salmon* compared to *Blackened salmon*
- **Tough vs. hearty:** *A piece of tough bread* compared to *A piece of hearty bread*
- **Mushy vs. tender:** *A mushy crabcake* compared to *A tender crabcake*