



EU Flavours Set to Spice Up the UK BBQ Market in 2025

‘More Than Only Food & Drink’ campaign advisors share inspiration
for al fresco drinking and dining

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Despite the ever-unpredictable British weather, the UK BBQ market is set to reach £173 million in 2025, with forecasts predicting growth to £205.6 million by 2030¹. In 2024, supermarkets and food retailers looked to global flavours to help spice up the UK market², and this trend is expected to continue into 2025, according to Rupert Claxton, consultant and meat advisor to the European Union’s ‘More Than Only Food & Drink’ campaign.

Here, Rupert and other industry experts share their insights into how EU food and drink will shape the UK BBQ season in 2025.

A taste of tradition from the EU on the grill

“The EU’s Member States are the perfect place to look for grilling inspiration this summer”, Rupert begins. “The marinades and cooking methods rooted in traditional BBQ culture allow for the use of more affordable cuts while still delivering bold flavours. Right now, the EU offers competitively priced, high-quality meats that are perfect for BBQ season.

¹ <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/the-united-kingdom-barbeque-grill-market>

² <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/category-reports/bbq-trends-2024-can-world-food-put-the-bang-back-in-bbq/689669.article>



“Southern Europe, where outdoor communal dining is a way of life, boasts a wealth of BBQ traditions. Unlike American grills, which often rely on heavy rubs and marinades, Spanish ‘barbacoa’ (slow cooking) and ‘parrillada’ (BBQ) focus on fresh, high-quality ingredients. The grill often features cuts such as **lomo** (sirloin), **solomillo** (tenderloin), **T-bone** steaks, and **Iberian pork**, seasoned simply with ingredients like smoked paprika.

“For those seeking low-and-slow BBQ options, Belgium’s premium pork, with its higher fat content, that ensures tender, flavourful meat when cooked for longer periods, is a delicious and great-value choice for the BBQ.

“Meanwhile, Ireland is a leading source of high-quality, sustainable beef, thanks to its grass-fed farming practices and the Origin Green³ initiative—the pioneering food and drink sustainability programme. By bringing together the government, the private sector, and the entire supply chain, Origin Green enables the industry to set and achieve measurable sustainability targets. Eighty percent of Ireland’s natural landscape is dedicated to grasslands, providing ideal pastures for beef and other livestock to be reared on a grass-fed diet – resulting in a fuller, meatier flavour and more evenly distributed fat and marbling.”

Beyond burgers: meatballs and skewers offer taste and value

Rupert continues: “Beyond burgers and hot dogs, EU BBQs offer a variety of lesser known but equally delicious dishes. One standout is **Ćevapčići**, a Croatian speciality made from minced beef, lamb, and pork, mixed with garlic, onion, smoked paprika, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. These small, flavourful meatballs are a barbecue staple in Croatia.

“Skewers are also a cost-effective way to feed a crowd. **Ražnjići** are a popular type of grilled meat skewer from the Balkan region, particularly in Croatia. The word “ražnjići” translates to “skewers” in English. These skewers typically consist of chunks of marinated meat - usually pork, chicken, beef, or lamb - threaded onto sticks and grilled. The marinades vary but often include a blend of herbs, spices, garlic, and sometimes vinegar or lemon juice to enhance the flavour of the meat.

“Greek **Souvlaki**, another BBQ favourite, is widely recognised in the UK and should not be confused with **Gyros**, which is cooked on a vertical spit rather than over a grill. Souvlaki can be made with chicken, lamb or pork and is traditionally served in pita bread with vegetables and tzatziki.”

Toppings, meat-free mains and side dishes

“When it comes to accompaniments, a quality beef burger deserves a quality topping”, says Patrick McGuigan, cheese expert and advisor to the ‘More Than Only Food & Drink’ campaign.

“For those looking for something a bit different this BBQ season, **Fourme d’Ambert PDO** from France is a round, creamy blue cheese that melts beautifully on a burger.

³ <https://www.origingreen.ie/>



“**Taleggio PDO** from Italy and **Raclette de Savoie PGI** from France are both washed-rind cheeses that melt well and bring a meaty, savoury flavour.

To add freshness and provide something more substantial for non-meat eaters, Patrick suggests: “Serve Italian **Burrata di Andria PGI** with roasted peaches, fresh herbs like basil, toasted fennel and coriander seeds, and hazelnuts or pistachios for a summer salad. **Crottin de Chavignol PDO** from France is also ideal for salads - it's a small, button-shaped cheese that can be easily sliced up and combined with asparagus, leaves, broad beans, and peas in a spring salad. For a delicious side dish, a few chunks of juicy watermelon offer a refreshing counterpoint to tangy goat's cheeses or a salty **Feta PDO** from Greece – finish the dish with a light sprinkle of fresh mint leaves.”

Perfect drink pairings for al fresco dining

When the warm summer weather arrives, al fresco drinking presents a major opportunity for both the on- and off-trade⁴.

Mark Dredge, beer presenter, author, and advisor to the ‘More Than Only Food & Drink’ campaign, highlights lagers as the go-to summer drink, with a particular recommendation for German pale lagers. “They are still light and refreshing but have more depth, making them a natural match for grilled meats,” says Mark.

“For low-and-slow BBQ meats, pale ales and IPAs, with their citrusy characteristics, cut through the richness and smoky flavours. Meanwhile, Irish stouts pair surprisingly well with dishes like miso aubergine and even grilled banana with melted chocolate—a bold but delicious BBQ dessert idea.”

When it comes to wine, Neil McAndrew, a wine industry expert and advisor to the ‘More Than Only Food & Drink’ campaign, predicts that pale rosé will continue to dominate summer 2025. “The demand for Provence-style pale rosé remains strong, and winemakers across France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and even Germany are producing fantastic examples—many from organic vineyards,” says Neil.

Beyond rosé, sparkling alternatives to Champagne are set to be increasingly in demand this summer, including a wide variety of **Crémant** sparkling wines produced across France, such as **Crémant d’Alsace PDO** and **Crémant de Limoux PDO**. Spanish **Cava PDO** is also re-establishing its pre-eminent position following several years of dominance from Italian **Prosecco PDO**.”

From premium meats and cheeses to craft beers and wines, the EU offers an incredible variety of high-quality food and drink for the BBQ season – rain or shine.

⁴ <https://cgastrategy.com/total-drinks-sales-up-7-as-heatwave-hits-the-country/>



Notes to editors

In 2024, the European Union launched the 'More Than Only Food and Drink' campaign to promote the EU's incredible range of food & beverages across the UK market.

The campaign aims to promote European food & beverage products to food and drink professionals in the UK, highlighting the key characteristics of the products (safety, quality, authenticity, and sustainability), with a focus on EU quality schemes - Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) - as well as the EU organic label.

The main objective of the campaign is to shine a light on the high sanitary and phytosanitary regulations in place in the EU as well as drive recognition and understanding of the EU quality schemes, encouraging the use of unique and authentic EU agricultural food and beverage products in the UK.

For any further queries, please visit our website or contact: morethanfood_UK@agripromotion.eu

