

# UNDERSTANDING ALABAMA HOT SAUCE HEAT RATINGS



**A Guide to the Meaning and  
Application of Hot Sauce Ratings**





## UNDERSTANDING SAUCE HEAT RATINGS

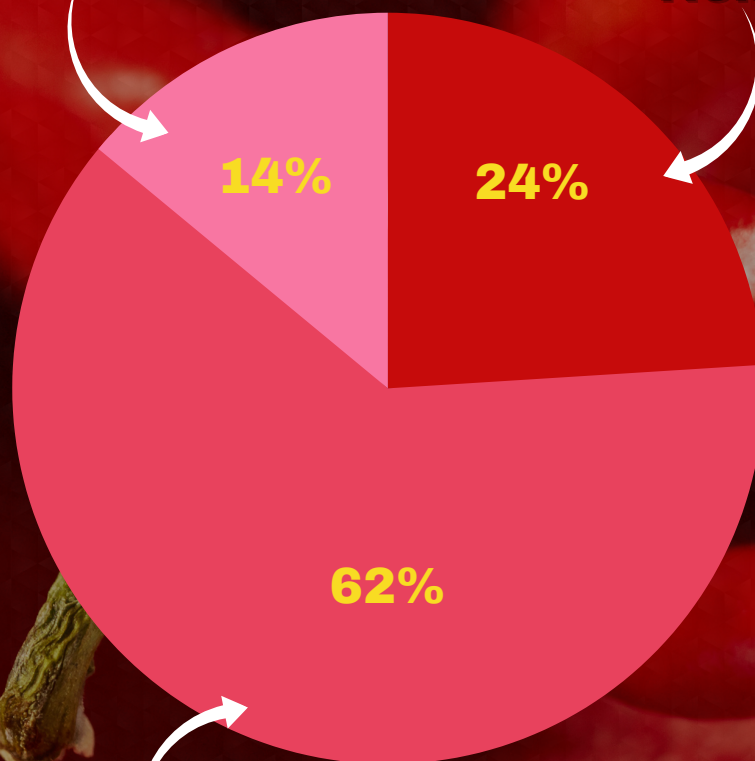
**NON-USERS** - Do not use hot sauce at all.

**PEPPERHEADS** - Use hot sauce on everything, and have an extremely high tolerance for heat. They can seldom find sauce hot enough.

**AVERAGE USER** - They use hot sauce 1 to 2 times per week. They prefer 'regular hot' sauces, typical of original store brand levels. The meaning of 'hot' varies greatly in this group. **THIS** is the primary target group for my hot sauce ratings.

**Pepperheads**

**Non-Users**



**Average Hot Sauce Consumers**





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**Common sense would dictate that any type of rating system for a food item would need to be targeted at the 'typical' consumer of that food. Hot sauce is no different.**

**The sauce heat labels on all Alabama Hot Sauce recipes do just that. They are intended to be used by the average hot sauce user. Clearly, the word 'hot' means different things to different people. The average hot sauce user states that they like "regular hot" sauces. You have to assume that this understanding is relative to the heat levels in typical broad market sauces, which tend to be rather 'gentile'.**

**Clearly, my hot sauce ratings mean nothing at all to those people in the 24% of the population who do not use hot sauce. They have no need for the ratings.**

**Just as likely, my heat ratings do not mean as much for the pepperheads. This group defines 'hot' in a whole different way. They can glean some understanding of how my various sauces compare to one another, but they cannot infer that any particular rating means it is hotter than some other sauce or brand they may use or make at home.**

**Alabama Hot Sauce ratings are awarded based on a determined set of standards, but they certainly cannot be used in a vacuum. They are subjective ratings, based on my own logic and the taste testing of my heat judges. My sauce that is given a 'Dangerously Hot' rating will be too much for the average user, but the true pepperheads may find it lacking in heat. Such is the way of life for everything subjective.**





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**I determine the proper rating label to apply to a new sauce using common sense, knowledge of the desires of the average consumer, and a couple of defined characteristics that control the "hot" sensation. I DO NOT consider the base pepper used to make the sauce.**

**I may alter the rating given to a particular sauce in subsequent production runs based on feedback provided to me by my customers.**

### RATING CRITERIA

**These are all considered and used in combination.**

- I sense the general heat level delivered by the sauce when compared to average sauces available on the market, and compared to my 'Alabama Red' sauce. This sauce is a good indicator of what a hot sauce means to the average user.**
- I sense the location, in the mouth, of the burning sensation. Localized heat makes me lean lower on the scale and whole-mouth and throat burn would favor higher on the scale.**
- I sense the lingering impact of the burning sensation. Immediate or short lingering impacts would favor a decrease in heat level, with a long, lingering burn favoring an increase in heat rating.**





## UNDERSTANDING SAUCE HEAT RATINGS



**SUPER HOT. ONLY FOR THE MOST HEAT TOLERANT HOT SAUCE USER. EXTREME HEAT AND LONG LASTING BURN. NOT FOR CASUAL USERS.**



**VERY HOT EVEN TO THOSE WHO TOLERATE HEAT VERY WELL. EITHER VERY HIGH HEAT, LONG LINGERING HEAT, OR BOTH.**



**EXCEPTIONALLY HOT EVEN TO THOSE WHO TOLERATE HEAT VERY WELL. VERY EXPERIENCED HOT SAUCE USERS WILL ENJOY THIS.**



**LIKELY THE UPPER LIMIT OF HEAT FOR THE AVERAGE FREQUENT HOT SAUCE USER. BURN DOES NOT LINGER LONG.**



**ALL REGULAR HOT SAUCE USERS CAN ENJOY THIS SAUCE. NOT TERRIBLY HOT AND HAS ALMOST NO LINGERING HEAT.**



**A TRACE OF HEAT THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY ANY REGULAR HOT SAUCE USER AND ALMOST ALL CASUAL HOT SAUCE USERS.**



**VERY LOW HEAT LEVEL. HEAT MAY NOT BE NOTICEABLE TO MANY USERS AND CAN EASILY BE ENJOYED BY ALMOST EVERYONE.**



**HAS NO OBSERVABLE HEAT, EVEN FOR PEOPLE WHO CANNOT TOLERATE ANY PEPPER HEAT. SPICY FROM OTHER INGREDIENTS.**



**ZERO HEAT WITH A TASTE THAT IS MORE SWEET THAN PEPPERY. HAS A PEPPER TASTE MUCH LIKE BELL PEPPERS/SWEET PEPPERS.**