



S1E19 Script

Hello chefs, today we talk condiments; How to make and use them to elevate your cooking. I am Mark Grigsby, your chef and guide through this experience, and this.. Is the Incredibly Discourse.

So as always we start the show with an update about what we're up to, and boy it feels like a lot. First.. I wanna announce that this will be the one of the last shows recorded in our home base of South Florida. My family and I have decided to pack up and head out West. We will be relocating to a town right outside of Houston. We've always wanted to move out of state and we just felt like this was our chance. I will elaborate a little more towards the end of the show.

Next, I am continuing on with the planning of season 2. I know I mentioned that in the last episode, and I'm reinforcing it here. IT WILL BE AMAZING! I feel like I have a ton of ideas and content that will make next season even better than this one. So I hope you all stay tuned and locked in. If you liked this season, you'll love the next one.

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Now let's get down to business, yes? You tuned in to get a hell of an episode, right? So let's get it.

So.. You know those bottles crammed in the fridge door? The mystery sauces you bought for one recipe... two years ago? Yeah — those aren't flavor. That's clutter.

A real condiment isn't a crutch — it's a weapon. It's concentrated, deliberate, and it changes everything it touches. One spoonful can balance acid, punch up umami, bring heat, or turn a plate from fine to unforgettable.

Today, we're talking flavor bombs — what they are, how to build them, and how they'll change your game whether you're cooking for two in your kitchen... or for two hundred behind the pass.

Let's load up your arsenal.

So let's set the record straight here — a flavor bomb isn't just a 'nice extra' you toss on a plate to make it look fancy. It's not garnish. It's not filler. It's concentrated flavor — built to hit fast, hit hard, and change the whole personality of a dish in one bite.

Think of it as your kitchen's ace card. When the rest of the plate is playing nice, this is the thing that brings the drama. It's acid that cuts through fat. It's umami that makes everything taste deeper. It's heat that wakes up your palate without burning it off. It's texture that keeps every bite interesting.

Need examples?

How about..

- A bright, herb-packed salsa verde dripping over a perfectly grilled steak — suddenly, that steak's not just meat, it's an experience.

Or..

- A creamy, spicy gochujang mayo smeared on a crispy fry — that's not just a snack, it's a hook your taste buds can't stop humming.

Or what about..

- A spoonful of chili crisp on a soft scrambled egg — the heat, the crunch, the garlic punch — it turns breakfast into a mic drop moment.

The key here is intention. Every flavor bomb you make has a job to do. And when you build them right, they're not just part of the dish — they become the reason people remember the dish.

Here's the thing — condiments aren't just about slapping on extra flavor. They're strategic. They have jobs. When I build a flavor bomb, I'm asking one question: what is this going to do for the plate?

Will it..

- **Balance acidity** where you've got a rich braise or a fatty cut of meat. A squeeze of acid — lemon, vinegar, pickled veg — cuts through and keeps your palate from waving the white flag.
- **Add umami depth:** That savory, "I can't put my finger on it" taste that makes you go back for another bite. A little miso, anchovy paste, fish sauce — it's the secret handshake of great cooking.

- **Or will it provide heat or brightness:** Not just fire for fire's sake. But the right chili oil, a dash of harissa, even fresh jalapeño — they wake up your taste buds and make the rest of the flavors pop.
- **Or could it add a contrasting texture:** Silky soup? Give me a crunchy topping. Tender fish? Hit it with a crisp herb oil. Texture isn't just mouthfeel — it's rhythm for your palate.

Now, once you understand the jobs they can do, you start to see the buckets they fall into. Every condiment I've ever made lives in one — or more — of these five categories. Acid-Based, Umami-Rich, Heat-Based, Sweet & Savory or Texture-Driven. Let's define these so we know exactly what we're talking about.

Acid-Based are your bright notes, your palate cleansers. They cut richness and make heavy dishes feel lighter. Think: tangy pickled red onions on a taco, chimichurri dripping over charred lamb.

Umami-Rich are the backbone flavors. They make a sauce feel like it's been simmering all day even if it hasn't. Miso butter melted over roasted veg. Anchovy-garlic paste whisked into a vinaigrette. The stuff that makes people ask, 'Why is this so good?'

Heat-Based is a controlled burn. Fermented hot sauce with depth, not just sting. North African harissa for smoky, earthy heat. The goal? Kick up excitement, not burn down the house.

Sweet & Savory is bridging two worlds. Bacon jam on a burger — you get smoke, salt, sweet, and fat in one hit. Onion marmalade over grilled cheese now that's flavor contrast doing the tango.

Texture-Driven means sometimes it's about the crunch, the chew, or that slick richness. Chili crisp hits you with garlic chips and pepper flakes swimming in oil. Roasted garlic aioli wraps your tongue in velvet.

So you see, everything is deliberate. You don't guess. You think about the dish. What your end game is and what you're trying to get the person eating it to experience. These are the things that make the experience interesting and keep them going bite after bite.

And here's a pro tip — most great condiments straddle categories. Chili crisp? Heat and texture. Miso butter? Umami and richness. Don't be afraid to blur the lines — that's where the magic lives.

You want to know the real reason most home kitchens and even some professional lines fall flat? It's not because they can't cook — it's because they don't have the ammo ready when the moment calls for it. You can't build flavor bombs if you don't have the parts in stock.

So here's your arsenal. This is the stuff that lives in my kitchen — always within arm's reach — because these are the raw materials for damn near every condiment worth making.

Acids.

These are your lifters, your brightness, your reset button.. Remember? Vinegars — white wine, red wine, sherry, apple cider — each has its own personality. Citrus? Always. Lemons, limes, oranges, even grapefruit. Acids cut through richness, they wake up tired flavors, and they keep your palate from getting bored halfway through the plate.

Heat.

These are the spark plugs. Fresh chilies, dried chilies, chili flakes, chili paste — and yes, they all hit differently. A fresh serrano in a sauce brings sharp, clean heat. Dried ancho or guajillo? Smoky, deep, round heat. Even your hot sauces — homemade or store-bought — can become the backbone of another condiment.

Sweet.

Balance. People forget sugar is a seasoning. Honey, maple syrup, brown sugar — they all have different edges. The right sweetness rounds out acidity, tames bitterness, and can make spicy heat feel warm instead of aggressive.

Umami.

Think depth charges. This is the stuff that makes you stop mid-bite and say, 'Oh... that's good.' Miso paste for earthiness. Soy sauce for salt and savor. Anchovies for.. now don't roll your eyes, they melt in and disappear, leaving behind pure depth. Just a drop of fish sauce can transform an entire dish. These aren't just ingredients — they're bass notes.

Aromatics.

These are the perfumes. Garlic, shallots, onions, fresh herbs. These are the scents that hit you before the plate even lands on the table. They set the stage before you take a bite. In a condiment, they're the difference between 'tasty' and 'I need this recipe now.'

Now here's the part most cooks miss — you've got to treat your pantry like a toolbox, not a graveyard. Batch prep when you can — roast a whole tray of garlic and mash it into oil so you've got roasted garlic aioli on standby. Make your chili crisp on Sunday and it'll carry you through the week. Seal pickles or dressings under a thin layer of oil to keep oxygen out and extend life. Label everything with dates — because if you don't, you're playing condiment roulette. And don't lock them into one dish. That chimichurri you made for a steak? Spoon it over roasted carrots. Swirl it into mayo for a sandwich spread. Let your condiments work overtime — they're not one-trick ponies.

Now, I'm not gonna give you a list of fifty just to make it look impressive. I'm giving you five. Five condiments I actually use in my own kitchen — at home and on the line — because they deliver every single time.

Roasted Garlic Aioli

This is liquid velvet. Take whole heads of garlic, roast them until they collapse in their skins, and mash that sweet, nutty paste into mayo with a squeeze of lemon, or make the aioli from scratch. It's rich, it's smooth, it's got that slow-cooked depth that tastes like you worked all day... even though it's maybe twenty minutes of hands-on time. Slather it on sandwiches, toss it with roasted potatoes, or drag a piece of seared fish right through it. This shit doesn't miss.

Pickled Shallots or onions

Your acid assassin. Thinly sliced shallots dropped into a quick pickle brine of vinegar, sugar, and salt. Ten minutes in, they're already working. An hour in, they're deadly. Bright, sharp, and just sweet enough to stop them from being harsh. Toss them on tacos, burgers, grain bowls, or any dish that feels like it's missing a 'ping' in the flavor radar.

Spicy Gochujang Mayo

This one's the heat with finesse. Creamy mayo base, a good spoon of gochujang, a splash of rice vinegar, maybe a touch of sesame oil if you're feeling fancy. You get spice, but also fermented sweetness and umami from the chili paste. Fries love it. Burgers love it. Hell, cold fried chicken needs it.

Herb-Loaded Salsa Verde

This is your freshness bomb. Parsley, cilantro, maybe a little mint if you've got it — chopped fine and swimming in olive oil with garlic, capers, lemon zest, and a hit of vinegar. Trust me, it's green lightning. Cuts through fat like a blade and makes roasted anything taste like it was kissed by sunshine. Meat, fish, vegetables — doesn't matter. Salsa verde is universal law.

Crispy Garlic Chili Oil

This one is the closer. The heavy hitter. Garlic sliced paper thin, fried gently until golden and crisp, then submerged in hot oil with chili flakes, sesame seeds, and a little soy. You get texture from the garlic chips, slow burn from the chili, and that deep roasted aroma that fills the kitchen before it even hits the plate. Spoon it over eggs, noodles, dumplings — hell, put it on ice cream if you're feeling bold. It works.

The magic with these five is range. Each one hits a different corner of the flavor map, and they all play well with others. You don't need to make all five at once — just have one in your fridge and suddenly your Tuesday leftovers eat like a Saturday night special.

Look — condiments are powerful, but they're not magic. You can still screw them up. And I've seen it happen more times than I can count. So before you go whipping up a batch of your new

'house sauce,' let's make sure you're not stepping on the same landmines I've watched take out perfectly good food. Here are some common mistakes made when making condiments.

Overseasoning — Killing the Balance Before It Even Lives

This one's brutal. A condiment is meant to enhance a dish, not hijack it. Too much salt, sugar, or acid, and suddenly it's all you taste. Remember — you can always add more, but once it's in, you're married to it. Respect restraint. Make it bold, but don't make it bossy.

Poor Storage — This One's The Silent Killer

You spent all that time getting the flavors right, then you left it in a half-open jar shoved behind last month's takeout. Now it smells like the fridge instead of the food. Oxygen, light, and time are not your friends here. Store it in clean, airtight containers. Use oil seals when you can. And for the love of flavor, label and date everything. If you can't remember when you made it, you probably shouldn't be eating it.

Making Too Much — This is The Shelf Life Trap

I get it — you're on a roll, you've got the cutting board out, you're feeling inspired, so you triple the batch. But here's the problem: even the best condiment has an expiration date. Overstay it, and that flavor you built starts to fade, separate, or worse — grow fuzz. Make enough to use at its peak, then make it fresh again. You want a greatest hit, not a stale B-side.

Ignoring Balance — One-Note Wonders

A condiment with only one flavor note gets boring fast. Too acidic without fat to smooth it out. All heat with no brightness. All sweet with no salt to give it structure. Balance is what makes a condiment addictive. You want the person eating it to chase the next bite because they can't quite pin down what's making it so good. Don't make one note wonders, balance that shit.

Bottom line is — treat your condiments with the same respect you give your main dish. They're not just the sidekick. In the right hands, they are the show.

So now that we have the lay of the land down as far as condiments go..

It's time for... food for thought. Or what I like to call.. Pro tips from a chef's lips

Alright, so now you know what flavor bombs are, why they matter, and how to build your arsenal. But here's where it gets fun — because you don't have to be running a professional kitchen to make this work for you. In fact, if you're cooking at home, you might actually have the *biggest* advantage.

Here's the truth — at home, you're the chef, the customer, and the critic. Nobody's telling you to cut corners, nobody's making you use the cheapest bulk product in the walk-in, and nobody's sending your plate back if you take an extra five minutes to get it right.

Homemade condiments give you complete control. You pick the quality of the oil, the freshness of the herbs, the exact amount of heat. You're not dealing with stabilizers, mystery sweeteners,

or whatever was needed to keep a squeeze bottle shelf-stable for eighteen months. You make it, you taste it, you tweak it — and you know exactly what's in it.

The other win? Small-batch flexibility. In a restaurant, we're making gallons at a time — we can't just test something for one or two plates. But at home? You can make enough for the week, keep it fresh, and move on to something new when the jar's empty. That means your condiments never get boring, they never die a slow death in the back of the fridge, and you're constantly upping your flavor game without wasting food.

Simple starting points for the home cook aren't about going full-blown fermentation lab or stocking every obscure chili paste on the planet. It's about having a few quick wins in your back pocket that deliver big results with almost no fuss.

Quick pickles are the easiest way to see how fast acid can transform flavor. Slice red onions paper thin, toss them in vinegar, salt, and a touch of sugar, and within ten minutes you've got a bright, tangy condiment that wakes up tacos, salads, grain bowls, or even a plain sandwich. Cucumbers work the same way, and you can change the vinegar or spices to match whatever you're cooking.

Flavored butters are pure versatility. Mash roasted garlic into softened butter for instant richness, whip in fresh herbs for a punch of green brightness, or blend in miso for that deep, savory umami. Keep it in the fridge, and you've got a ready-to-go finishing move for grilled steaks, roasted vegetables, or a loaf of fresh bread.

Easy mayo-based sauces are where most people can step up their condiment game overnight. Start with a good mayo, then build. A roasted garlic aioli brings creamy depth to fries or sandwiches. Stir in gochujang and a splash of rice vinegar for a spicy-sweet kick that loves fried chicken or roasted potatoes. These sauces come together in minutes, but the payoff is huge, and you can tweak them to fit the exact vibe you're going for.

Boosting weeknight cooking with flavor bombs is where you start to see the magic. You've got a jar of pickled onions, a tub of miso butter, or a small container of chili crisp in the fridge — suddenly Monday's leftover roast chicken isn't just reheated protein, it's the base for something brand new. Toss that chicken in salsa verde and pile it over rice with a handful of fresh herbs. Mix roasted garlic aioli into yesterday's mashed potatoes and turn them into creamy croquettes.

One condiment can easily work across multiple meals without tasting repetitive. That chili crisp you spoon over eggs in the morning can also bring life to a grain bowl at lunch and make a simple noodle dish dinner-worthy. It's about rethinking leftovers as blank canvases instead of tired repeats.

Even quick weeknight proteins get a huge lift. Pan-seared salmon becomes restaurant-level when it's finished with a swipe of herb butter. Pork chops that might have leaned on applesauce in the past can take a spoonful of bacon jam instead — suddenly you've got a savory-sweet hit that tastes like you planned it all week. Flavor bombs keep you from falling into the rut of “same

thing, different night,” because with the right condiment, no two plates ever have to taste the same.

Budget and waste control with condiments is where home cooks can really win, because it's not just about flavor — it's about stretching ingredients and keeping money in your pocket. When you make condiments part of your weekly kitchen rhythm, you start finding uses for scraps that would normally hit the trash. Herb stems get blended into a salsa verde. Citrus peels can be candied, zested, or infused into vinegars. That last handful of chilies from the farmers market? They're not dying in the crisper drawer — they're becoming a chili oil that lasts for weeks.

Condiments also cut down on the urge to buy a dozen different specialty sauces that take up fridge space and collect dust. Instead of stocking bottles you'll use once, you invest in a few core pantry ingredients — vinegars, oils, chilies, miso, soy — that can be recombined into endless variations. You're getting more mileage out of what you already own, and you're cutting out the filler.

It's also portion control in disguise. Make enough for the week, and you're naturally keeping your food fresh while avoiding the “oops, I forgot about that jar” moment. When you're in control of the batch size, you're in control of the freshness, the waste, and the budget. And the best part? The food tastes better because you're always working with something at its peak.

We've covered how flavor bombs give home cooks control, flexibility, and a serious upgrade in flavor without breaking the budget. But the truth is, the rules don't stop there. In a professional kitchen, condiments aren't just a bonus — they're part of the system. They're the tools we reach for in the middle of a slammed service to bring a plate to life in seconds. And the way pros use them can teach you a lot, even if you never set foot behind the line.

In a busy kitchen, there's no time for slow fixes. If a plate tastes flat during service, you can't pull the sauté pan back, deglaze with wine, reduce for 10 minutes, and then rebuild the sauce. You need something that can go on instantly and do its job without killing the flow. That's where condiments are worth their weight in gold.

They give you speed — a jar of preserved lemon purée on the station can brighten a grilled fish plate in seconds. They give you consistency — if the chili crisp was made in a controlled batch that morning, every guest gets the same balanced hit of heat and texture. And they give you a signature — a house-made condiment that shows up on multiple dishes becomes part of your restaurant's identity, something guests talk about and come back for.

Condiments on the line are also about control under pressure. A perfectly seasoned salsa verde, a calibrated miso dressing, or a tightly balanced aioli doesn't just make food taste better — it keeps the team from overcompensating in the moment and throwing off the plate. In a rush, a line cook might reach for too much salt, too much acid, too much heat. A prepped condiment eliminates that guesswork.

In a professional kitchen, condiments aren't just something you make when you've got extra time — they're built into the mise en place the same way proteins, sauces, and garnishes are.

Every station has its flavor bombs lined up, ready to go, because in service you don't have time to improvise.

Mise en place integration starts with placement. A condiment that's used every other plate should be right in front of the cook who needs it — not buried in the lowboy under three sheet pans. The setup is intentional. Hot line cooks might keep chili crisp, salsa verde, or compound butters on the rail where they can grab and go. Cold side might have aiolis, pickles, or vinaigrettes in squeeze bottles, perfectly labeled.

Labeling and rotation are non-negotiable. Date labels are as much about flavor as they are about food safety. That perfect chili oil you made on Monday? It's still fine on Thursday, but by next week it's lost its punch. Rotation ensures you're serving it at its peak, not just when it's technically safe to eat. In a pro kitchen, flavor quality drops long before food safety becomes an issue — and the guest can taste it.

Scaling recipes for service is where pros really separate from home cooks. You can't just double or triple a recipe and hope it behaves the same. Heat levels, acid intensity, and even viscosity can shift when you scale up. That's why every house condiment gets a tested, service-size recipe — big enough to last through the rush, small enough to stay fresh until the next prep. And the cook making it isn't winging it — they're following that recipe gram for gram, tasting at the end, and adjusting to match the standard.

These systems don't just keep service running smooth — they keep the flavor consistent night after night, cook after cook. Guests don't come back for a "close enough" version of your signature condiment. They come back for the exact bite they had last time.

In a pro kitchen, condiments aren't just finishing touches — they're opportunities. A well-made condiment can anchor a menu item, inspire a special, or even become a revenue stream on its own. If you've got a house-made chili crisp that's blowing people's minds, why not build a dish around it? Noodles tossed in that oil, fried eggs finished with it, roasted veg drizzled in it — suddenly it's a signature flavor thread tying the menu together.

The same goes for sauces like salsa verde, miso butter, or bacon jam. You can feature them across multiple plates without it feeling repetitive, because they interact differently depending on the base. It's smart menu engineering — one prep item, multiple applications, consistent flavor identity. And when guests start asking if they can "buy a jar to take home," you're looking at an upsell. Retailing your signature condiment lets them take the experience beyond the restaurant and keeps your brand in their kitchen.

Here are some pitfalls of condiments in a pro kitchen. Overcomplication is the first trap. Too many condiments on the menu might look creative, but each one has to be made, stored, and maintained. If the prep list starts drowning your cooks, consistency suffers and corners get cut. A few dialed-in, well-executed condiments will always outperform a dozen half-hearted ones.

Poor shelf life tracking is another killer. In a fast-paced environment, it's easy to assume something is fine because it looks okay. But every day it sits, flavors change. Oils go flat, herbs

lose their brightness, and fermented elements can tip from balanced to harsh. Without strict dating, you're gambling with quality and reputation.

And then there's misuse on the line. A condiment's balance can be destroyed in one careless squeeze bottle overpour. If the team doesn't know why it's there and how it's supposed to be used, it's just another garnish. Training is non-negotiable — cooks need to know the purpose, portion, and placement for every condiment on the board.

Today's final thought leads us back to the simplest truth in this entire episode — a condiment is never just a condiment. It's a tool, a signature, and in the right hands, it's the thing that makes a dish unforgettable. Whether you're in a home kitchen with one cutting board and a chef's knife or on the line with a full brigade and a ticket rail full of orders, flavor bombs are the equalizer. They give you speed, consistency, and the power to shape the eating experience bite for bite.

If you're cooking at home, start with one. One quick pickle, one infused butter, one chili oil. Use it all week and see how many different meals it transforms. If you're running a station, treat your condiments like part of your mise — know what they're for, keep them dialed in, and never let them slip.

Because here's the thing — food isn't just about feeding people, it's about making them feel something. And the right condiment, at the right time, can take a plate from “good” to “I can't stop thinking about this” in a single bite. That's not extra. That's the job.

So this week, make one. Taste it. Use it. Share it. And when you do, tag me and let me see what you're building with it.

I'd like to take a moment to say thank you to everyone in South Florida. All the chefs and restaurants that I've worked at and all the people who came along for the ride throughout these last 18 years. The next chapter is going to be a big one and everything and everyone who took part in getting me here, I just wanna say thank you. All the memories, the creativity and the learning.. It was all a dream. I actually got to do everything I always said I would do in this industry and now it's time to cross another off of that list. Work in a different state for a huge company that legitimately is going to give me things I've been working for my entire life. You guys can always get at me on the website, many of you have my personal phone number.. If there is anything you ever need, have a question for or need a mentor.. I'm never farther than a message.

Anyway..

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And remember, a great condiment turns good cooking into great eating — and it's always within your reach, whether your kitchen is at home or behind the pass.

Now get in the kitchen and load up your arsenal.

I am Mark Grigsby, and this has been another amazing episode

Of the incredible discourse.