

Review - Gunther's Gourmet Salsas

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Gunther's Gourmet was one of the highlights of the [2009 Weekend of Fire](#). A large percentage of vendors at that show featured products that were all over the map; some were excellent, while food items had totally missed the mark with what they were attempting to accomplish. Thankfully for Gunther's Gourmet they were not in that "hit-or-miss" category. Most of the 10+ salsas the company had on display for sampling were above average and were never anything less than high-quality. And although they produce a handful of admirable marinades & vinaigrettes, it was Gunther's wide selection of salsas that impressed me.

Mike Lampros, one of the two brothers that run Gunther's Gourmet, had recently provided a sampling to me of a quartet of salsas (three of which are award-winning): **Jalapeño Salsa Fresca**, **Spicy Ginger Pineapple Salsa**, **Fiery Peri-Peri Dark Cherry Salsa**, and **Fiery Cranberry Habanero Salsa** Here are my thoughts on these:

Jalapeño Salsa Fresca



Ingredients: Diced Tomatoes, Diced Onions, Tomato Paste (Vine Ripe Tomatoes), Jalapeño Peppers, Lime Juice, Lemon Juice, Fresh Garlic, Salt, Sugar, Spices and Herbs.

This particular salsa racked up a 2nd place 2010 Scovie Award and a 1st place 2010 Fiery Food Challenge Award. Jalapeño Salsa Fresca has the aroma closer to traditional tomato salsa with strong performances from onions, garlic and tomatoes. Cumin is also quite noticeable. It's texture and appearance gets high marks from me, as I love salsa that's hefty and chunky. This has a dazzling taste that's fresh, tart and peppery. I've eaten tomato-based salsas that try to incorporate spices like cumin in its mix and end up going way overboard. Thankfully, Gunther's has put in just the right amount to balance out all the flavors harmoniously. This has a slight amount of heat, which is delayed by approximately three seconds after it touches your tongue. The warmth builds to a comfy medium level and stays there, so it's safe for most mouths. There is not much to complain about. This salsa would be fine for a varying number of food applications, including having a snack with good ol' tortilla chips, Mexican dishes, omelets, and more.

Overall: 4.5 out 5.

Spicy Ginger Pineapple Salsa



Ingredients: Diced Tomatoes, Pineapple Bits, Bermuda Onions, Yellow Bell Peppers, Fresh Ginger, Jalapeño Peppers, Lemon Juice, Fresh Garlic, Sugar, Salt, Spices and Herbs

Gunther Gourmet's Spicy Ginger Pineapple Salsa garnered a 2nd place 2010 Fiery Food Challenge Award earlier this year. The scent is a combo of vegetables and ginger, with something sweet laying underneath that's fruit-like but not distinguishable as pineapple. The most hearkening visual attribute of this concoction is the enormous size of the pineapple chunks. When dipping straight out of the jar, it's difficult to get a piece of fruit with it falling off your chip from it's weight or breaking the chip altogether. I would have reduced the size of the chunks a bit. The taste is decent, with an interesting tomato/ginger combo highlighted by light herbs and spices. I think this salsa would be best paired with some steamed white rice and grilled fish.

Overall: 2.5 out of 5.

Fiery Peri-Peri Dark Cherry Salsa



Ingredients: Diced Tomatoes, Cherries, Peri-Peri Chilies, Bermuda Onions, Red Bell Peppers, Sugar, Lime Juice, Lemon Juice, Fresh Garlic, Habanero Chilies, Salt, Spices and Herbs.

This one earned a 3rd place 2010 Fiery Food Challenge Award. It smells nice and fruity, with sweet, rich, and almost dark smokey overtones. This has the thinnest texture of all four salsas I've reviewed here. I loved the Peri-Peri chile and cherry taste, even though I'm not a fan eating cherries by themselves. Good overall flavor with high "addictability", which means that I could sit here all day and chomp on tortilla chips and this salsa and still want more. Other food uses would be as a great topper for pork or chicken. Try using some of this when you want to impress the in-laws when they're over for dinner. This is also probably the spiciest heat-wise of the four (although the Fiery Cranberry Habanero Salsa below comes close), with a quicker burn that hits the back of the tongue. Don't let that scare you; none of these Gunther's Gourmet salsas will create an inferno in your mouth. But in the case of Fiery Peri-Peri Dark Cherry Salsa, there is a small smoldering. Great stuff here.

Overall: 4.5 out 5.

Fiery Cranberry Habanero Salsa



Ingredients: Diced Tomatoes, Cranberries, Tomato Paste (Vine Ripe Tomatoes), Bermuda Onions, Red Wine Vinegar, Yellow Bell Peppers, Habanero Chilies, Lime Juice, Aged Cayenne Pepper, Sugar, Salt, Fresh Garlic, Spices and Herbs.

The aroma contains heavy tomatoes, light onions and a dash of pseudo-smokiness, almost as if these habaneros were roasted over a low heat. The consistency was fine, but if I had my druthers, I'd druther this salsa be a little chunkier. That's being nit-picky, though. Taste-wise it has an all-around nice blend of ingredients with a tiny twinge of sweetness, but this is not by any means sugary. I think what Gunther's has done by combining cranberries and habanero peppers is noteworthy, but since most capsicum chinense have a fruity taste anyway, it may be a natural fit. The burn this contains is more of a blunt heat as compared to the Fiery Peri-Peri Dark Cherry Salsa's sharp but sweet heat; the fire covers your tongue more but isn't as strong. I think poultry would be tasty with a few spoonfuls of Fiery Cranberry Habanero Salsa dolloped on top.

Overall: 3.5 out of 5.



Labels and Presentation

4 out of 5. I like the smooth and classy graphics on each of these labels. They're not flat or boring, yet give the impression that a quality, gourmet product resides inside of each of these jars.

For more information or to order, visit www.gunthersgourmet.com.