

mustard

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Top 10 jars that cut the mustard

Whether it's dijon, hot English, American or boutique, these off-the-shelf offerings add some zing.

A Frenchman, an Englishman and an American walk into a restaurant. They're all chefs and each has something very different to say about mustard.

Jacques Reymond, originally from a village close to Dijon, doesn't endorse a particular mustard brand, so long as he knows the origin. No prize for guessing which country makes the best.

"It would have to be France," says Reymond, "because it's the best climate to grow mustard and they have proper vinegar. It's done naturally, not with chemicals."

At L'Hotel Gitan and Bistro Gitan, Reymond's kitchens incorporate mustard into condiments, brines and sauces – the same way they do in France.

Martin Benn of Sepia, in Sydney – our Englishman – grew up with mustard in a different way, spreading it thick at the dinner table to cut through hearty English dishes such as pork sausages.

"I love all mustards but I really love hot English the most," he admits. Benn adds it to Japanese miso paste, mixes in a splash of lime or yuzu juice and serves the result with rich braised meats, such as brisket and short ribs.

Predictably, North Carolinian Casey Wall (Melbourne's Rockwell & Sons and Bar Liberty) swears by French's yellow American mustard – although being a classically French-trained chef, he uses dijon, too.

"I use mustard heaps," Wall says. "We use a lot of dijon and a lot of American in the restaurant. It's a great condiment for everything, even if you're just eating mortadella out of the fridge with cheese and pickles."

But visit Coles or Woolies and it's almost exclusively MasterFoods and Maille on the shelf. The latter is largely responsible for modern mustard as we know it. Although the earliest evidence of domestic seeds dates back to 3000BC, the condiment really took off in 1747 when Maison de Maille opened in Paris. England's Keen & Sons (think "keen as mustard") didn't turn up until 1814.

Down Under, Menora Foods has had exclusive distribution rights to Maille for 34 years. There are two La Maison Maille Boutiques in Oz, both in Ritchies IGAs (Mount Eliza, Victoria and Mosman, NSW), where dijon mustard is pumped into refillable sandstone pots. For \$100 you can also buy 100 millilitres of Maille mustard with Chablis white wine and black truffles (or \$500 for 500 millilitres), available during the French truffle season, around October to March.

According to Mark Gluck from Menora Foods, the volume of Maille sold in France every year is about equivalent to what is sold worldwide, even though Maille has 30 per cent of the mustard market share in Australia (the largest for the brand globally).

Despite Maille's authenticity, there are other mustards out there if you venture beyond the major supermarkets to independent and gourmet grocers.

Here are 10 that, well, cut the mustard.

1. A taste of tradition: Pommery Moutarde De Meaux

\$19 for 250 grams

Meaux, a region north-east of Paris, lends credibility to mustard the same way



champagne does to bubbles. Pommery is the only family left producing "Moutarde de Meaux", a robust and nutty wholegrain mustard that dates back to the religious order of Meaux in 1632. The family have kept

the recipe secret since it was passed on to them in 1790. Look for the earthenware pot. **Try it** in vinaigrettes or with hard cheeses and roasts.

2. USA pride: Bone Suckin' Sauce

\$14.95 for 340 grams



Bone Suckin' Sauce came about when an average Joe tried to copy his mum's North Carolina-style barbecue sauce nearly 30 years ago. The mustard came later and the sweet and hot version is dangerously tasty. A generous 340-gram jar demands to be sloshed on generously – sweet

pickle flanked by a decent kick of spice. **Try it** in a ham and cheese jaffle, or use to pimp any sandwich.

3. Good for kids: French's Classic Yellow Mustard



\$2.92 for 226 grams
Dubbed "America's favourite mustard" and the choice of Daniel Wilson in his Huxtaburgers, this is as classic as it gets. There's a little tang and a touch of sweetness but no spice, making it a great condiment for kids. Turmeric is responsible for the canary yellow colour and French's is no exception – it's hard to believe there are no

artificial colours or preservatives when it spurts from the squeeze bottle.

Try it with hamburgers and franks, or add to coleslaw.

4. Fit for royalty: Colman's Old English

\$3.40 for 100 grams

Colman's Mustard is too small. Hundred-gram jars are frustrating, especially when



you don't adhere to the two-gram serving size of the hot English. This is the real stuff that stings the sinuses while remaining smoother than Daniel Craig. Founded more than 200 years ago, it was granted a Royal Warrant in 1866 and became Queen Victoria's condiment of choice. To this day,

homesick Poms have been known to carry Colman's jars in their handbags.

Try it with steak.



Photo: Marina Oliphant

5. The best of Provence: Marcel Recorbet Dijon Mustard with Herbs of Provence

\$7 for 200 grams

Lifting the Provencal-patterned lid from this jar releases a whiff of southern France.

Rosemary and thyme are peppered throughout the creamy mustard, which pleasantly surprises with a sharp, vinegary finish. Made by Marcel Recorbet in the Alps near Grenoble; you might as well be enjoying lunch in a cobblestoned village surrounded by lavender fields.

Try it added to mayonnaise with cruditees or with roast lamb and potatoes.



6. Sharp and sweet: Honeycup Stone Ground Mustard

\$8.95 for 227 grams



Nearly 50 years ago in Canada, Pauline Wayne mixed together a mild, palatable mustard for her three-year-old son. After some trial and error, the original Honeycup Mustard was born.

Despite pioneering the honey mustard category, Honeycup doesn't actually contain any honey – the molasses-like sweetness comes from brown sugar.

Try it with chicken, ham or as a glaze on salmon.

7. For a kick: Delouis Fils Mustard with Green Peppercorn

\$5.90 for 200 grams

Delouis Fils mustards range from balsamic apple to champagne and are made in

burgundy using a closely guarded recipe. Mustard seeds are soaked in verjuice before production, which gives them a delicate flavour. Mustard with green peppercorn is one of their standouts: a thick, dijon-style base with the satisfying, grassy sting of green peppercorns.

Try it with pork, steak or incorporated into a creamy sauce over white fish.



8. Celebrity-endorsed: Luke Mangan's Wasabi Mustard

\$9.95 for 125 grams

This hulk-tinged mustard may not have decades of history behind it, but it has the

backing of Australian Michelin-star trained chef Luke Mangan. Developed at home and in the kitchen at Sydney's Glass Restaurant,

this mustard evolves the same way wasabi does when you mop up too much with your sushi – the initial sweetness is quickly replaced by a lingering, ear-prickling heat that eventually rounds out.

Try it with seafood.

9. Not for the faint-hearted: Mad Dog Chilli Mustard

\$9.50 for 190 grams

The only mustard in the list that comes with a warning on the label. Mad Dog (manufactured by Yarra Valley Gourmet Foods) adds Tabasco and chilli for mustard that goes beyond tangy to fiery. The earthy scent, which is almost tomato-like, is deceiving.

Bask in the pulsating heat until it settles and unlocks the herbs and spices.

Try it combined with peanut or olive oil as a marinade for pork or with gourmet snags.

10. Something flashy: A Taste of Paris Gold Mustard

\$12.50 for 130 grams

Made in France and imported by Parisian expats to Australia, this gold mustard is a foolproof way to add festivity to a table. The truffle scent is there, but at about \$12.50 a pop with the words "truffle flavour" listed as an ingredient, this is not genuine truffle. Not that it matters – this velvety,

mild mustard goes with just about anything.

Try it with root vegetables and roasts.

