As the weather changes, so does digital behavior. People are out of their houses and on their smartphones, looking for places to go and things to grill. What they’re searching for (and how) provides a window into consumer interests this season and beyond.

We looked at Google data to see what’s on the rise for summer (besides the temperature, that is). From the best BBQ to the most sunburned states, here’s what’s trending and what it might mean for your business.
1. Mobile: So hot right now

People are more likely to use a mobile device to go online in the summer months than in other seasons. Whether they're traveling on vacation, lounging on the beach or grilling in their backyards, U.S. consumers are constantly connected.

As they fire up their outdoor grills, more people are searching for “recipes” on a mobile device—the new cookbook. Mobile's share of searches is up 44% year-over-year.

During summer travel season, searches for hotels go up. While we're seeing a general shift to mobile, this shift grew 86% faster in the summer months than any other time last year. People are looking for everything from deals to directions.

Are you capturing demand across screens? Are you showing consumers the type of content they're looking for? Is your marketing contextually relevant?

2. Burnt out on summer, people are looking for relief

What are people looking for when it's warm out? A nice tan, of course. At the start of summer, we see a bump in searches for “suntan.” But as the weather heats up, so do searches for “sunscreen,” followed closely by a big spike in “sunburn” searches. Now consumers are in the market for “aloe vera” to soothe those burns.
The ways the consumer journey so clearly plays out on search are fascinating. So are the regional differences. Google searches for “suntan” are most popular in Kentucky, while Hawaii is tops for “sunburn” and “sunscreen.” Californians appear to look after their skin the most, searching for “sunscreen” and “aloe vera” more than people in most other states.

**Searches for Suntan, Sunburn, Sunscreen and Aloe Vera**

![Graph showing search trends for suntan, sunburn, sunscreen, and aloe vera](image)

*Source: Google Data, January 2011–June 2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States*

How is weather affecting demand for your products? What can you learn about the consumer journey based on search patterns? How are you using this information to shape your messaging and distribution strategies?

**3. Kansas City wins the BBQ battle**

Summer is BBQ season, and it’s a hotly contested cuisine. Which town is most popular this summer? If we look at searches, Kansas City is the clear winner, with Memphis and Austin vying for second place. Interestingly, Buffalo, New York (home of Oinktoberfest) makes the top five.
Top Cities for “BBQ” Searches

- Kansas City, MO
- Memphis, TN
- Austin, TX
- Dallas-Ft.Worth, TX
- Buffalo, NY
- St. Louis, MO
- Nashville, TN

Source: Google Data, January 2011–June 2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States

Can you nuance your messaging or tailor your product offerings based on location?

4. A taste of summer throughout the year

Grilling is certainly seasonal, but it's becoming less so. More people are looking to get a taste of summer in the colder months. Meat lovers seek out the top BBQ destinations year-round, especially during events such as the World Series of BBQ and SXSW.

“BBQ” Searches by City

Source: Google Data, January 2013–July 2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States
They’re also grilling more during non-summer holidays, including on Thanksgiving, President’s Day and even Christmas.

**Searches for “Grilling”**

![Searches for “Grilling”](image)

*Source: Google Data, 2012–2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States*

This opens the door for marketers to promote these traditional “summer” activities during new moments of consumer interest.

Similar patterns occur across products, and finding them can help you extend the life of a seasonal product. Look at ski towns. Rather than close shop, they often reinvent themselves as summer destinations, adapting their marketing accordingly. Ad coverage of “Ski Resorts and Lodges” keywords is actually high in the summer months, capturing a healthy bump in search interest.
Searches for Major Ski Towns in the U.S.

If your product is seasonal, can you make it relevant during other times of the year? Are there new moments of consumer interest that you can explore?

5. Gaming becomes a daily habit

Views of video game content on YouTube, such as trailers and walk-throughs, go up a bit in the summer—no surprise there. What’s more interesting is when. During the school year, views of gaming content spike on weekends. But when kids are home from school, gaming content is watched much more consistently throughout the week.

Average Views of Video Game Content on YouTube

Source: YouTube Data, January 2013-June 2014, Indexed Video Views, United States
Has your media strategy shifted with consumer behavior? Are you accounting for seasonal changes in media consumption?

Each season brings interesting, nuanced market dynamics that businesses need to consider. The key is to plan accordingly. Dig into the data to uncover seasonal trends in your category while keeping your eye on broader shifts in behavior. Develop a strategy based on what you’re seeing, but allow some flexibility to adapt as new opportunities arise.

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