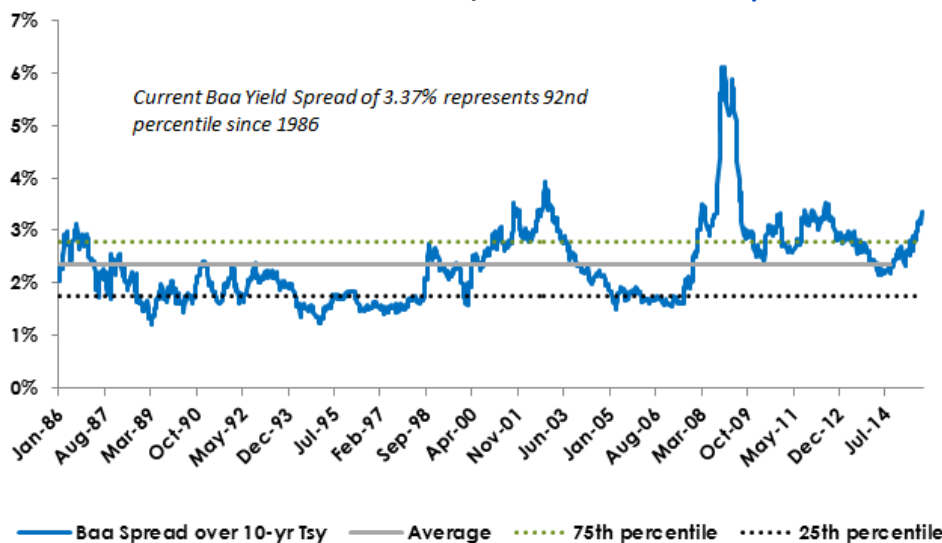


# WHAT DO THE FED AND BBQ HAVE IN COMMON?

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The phrase “low and slow” commonly refers to the proper method for cooking barbecue. Cooking over low heat for a long, long time is the pathway to BBQ bliss. These days it feels like the Fed is applying the same philosophy to normalizing rates—the terminal rate being lower and the process taking much longer. So what are fixed income investors to do while the Fed simmers? Search for [yield](#). As long as weakness abroad is counterbalanced by improvement domestically, Treasury rates are likely to trade stepwise within ranges. Additionally, the [credit cycle](#) will be extended. Corporate [credit spreads](#) should provide value, and even though they may be less attractive on a [valuation](#) basis, residential and [commercial mortgage-backed securities](#) (MBS and CMBS) should supplement the income offered by [Treasuries](#). Corporate credit spreads have recently been pushed higher by [liquidity](#) and growth concerns to attractive levels, in our view. As shown by the graph below, [yield spreads](#) over Treasuries have risen to levels typical for a recession; at quarter-end, current [10-year Baa spreads](#) ranked in the 92nd percentile relative to their history since 1986. While this is a concern, we would argue that a recession is not imminent. The domestic economy as a whole has been more resilient, and global leaders are willing to initiate policies to reduce financial distress and volatility. [Baa rated Corporate Bonds](#) over [10-Year Treasuries](#)



Past performance is not indicative of future results. You cannot invest directly in an index.  
Source: Bloomberg, as of 9/30/15.

Credit ratings apply to the underlying holdings of the Index, not to the Index itself. Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch study the financial condition of an entity to ascertain its creditworthiness. The credit ratings reflect the rating agency's opinion of the holdings' financial condition and histories. The ratings displayed are based on the highest of each portfolio constituent as currently rated by Standard & Poor's, Moody's or Fitch. Long-term ratings are generally measured on a scale ranging from AAA (highest) to D (lowest), while short-term ratings are generally measured on a scale ranging from A-1 to C.

Given this view, the recent sell-off in [corporates](#) seems overdone; we expect this sector of the fixed income market to outperform. In particular, clipping Treasury coupons seems less attractive when some [investment-grade](#) corporates are currently offering over twice the income. But back to our low and slow analogy: The world is still a little fragile, and blindly grabbing yield could still be risky. A

more prudent approach may be to add yield gradually. At each step, investors should consider if the increase in income potential is going to materially alter their portfolio's [risk](#) profile. The [Barclays U.S. Aggregate Enhanced Yield Index](#) (Agg Enhanced Yield) takes this very approach in altering the composition of the Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index (Aggregate). The index first decomposes the Aggregate into 20 different buckets stratified across sector, [credit quality](#), and [maturity](#). It then reassembles the pieces to maximize yield within specified [tracking error](#) limits and bands on relative [duration](#) and sector exposures. Through this approach, the portfolio remains 100% investment grade but enhances the income potential of the portfolio. In most environments, this methodology will lead to allocations that have more credit exposure than the composition of the Aggregate. The guardrails ensure that the approach to adding corporate risk is measured. For example, each major asset sector cannot exceed a variance of 20% to its weight in the Aggregate. Thus exposure to credit-sensitive bonds is capped at 50%, roughly 20% above its current weight in the Aggregate. As we show below, the Agg Enhanced Yield provides an 82 [basis point](#) pickup in yield compared to the Aggregate. The credit allocation increases to 50% (against the 30% currently in the Aggregate), while exposure to U.S. Treasuries is reduced. In our view, this shift in positioning makes intuitive sense in the current environment. **Index Statistics as of September 30, 2015**

	Yield to Worst	Duration	Corporate %	Government %	Securitized %
<b>Barclays U.S. Aggregate Yield Enhanced Index</b>	<b>3.14%</b>	<b>6.56</b>	50.2%	17.3%	32.5%
<b>Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index</b>	<b>2.31%</b>	<b>5.60</b>	24.0%	45.1%	30.9%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>0.83%</b>	<b>0.96</b>	26.2%	-27.8%	1.6%

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Sources: Barclays, WisdomTree, as of 9/30/15.

For the last seven years, we have bumped along in this low-rate environment. If concerns about global conditions keep the Fed lower and slower, increasing your corporate exposure with your core portfolio may tide you over until the BBQ is ready (so to speak.)

**Important Risks Related to this Article**

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You cannot invest directly in an index.

## DEFINITIONS

**Yield** : The income return on an investment. Refers to the interest or dividends received from a security that is typically expressed annually as a percentage of the market or face value.

**credit cycle** : the process in which the pricing of and access to credit evolves over time.

**Credit spread** : The portion of a bond's yield that compensates investors for taking credit risk.

**Valuation** : Refers to metrics that relate financial statistics for equities to their price levels to determine if certain attributes, such as earnings or dividends, are cheap or expensive.

**Commercial mortgage-backed securities** : a fixed income security that is composed of multiple underlying commercial mortgages.

**U.S. Treasury Bond** : a debt security issued by the United States government.

**Liquidity** : The degree to which an asset or security can be bought or sold in the market without affecting the asset's price. Liquidity is characterized by a high level of trading activity. Assets that can be easily bought or sold are known as liquid asset.

**Yield spread** : the amount of incremental income a bondholder receives for assuming credit risk.

**10-Year Baa Spreads** : refer to the difference in yield in Baa rated corporate bonds and the U.S. 10-Year Treasury Bond.

**Baa** : Moody's credit rating that implies the borrower has capacity to meet financial commitments, but may be more vulnerable to adverse economic conditions. This rating includes the lowest level of credit risk while still being investment-grade.

**U.S. 10 Year Treasury Note** : A debt obligation issued by the United States government that matures in 10 years.

**Corporate Bonds** : a debt security issued by a corporation.

**Investment Grade** : A rating given to a municipal or corporate bond. It is a relatively favorable rating by either Moody's or Standard & Poor's indicating a higher chance an issuer performs interest and principal obligations as promised by the terms of the debt issuance.

**Risk** : Also standard deviation, which measures the spread of actual returns around an average return during a specific period. Higher risk indicates greater potential for returns to be farther away from this average.

**Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Enhanced Yield Index** : a constrained, rules-based approach that reweights the sector, maturity, and credit quality of the Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index across various sub-components in order to enhance yield.

**Credit quality** : A measure of a borrowers potential risk of default.

**Maturity** : The amount of time until a loan is repaid.

**Tracking Error** : Can be discussed as both the standard deviation of excess return relative to a specific benchmark, or absolute excess return relative to a specific benchmark.

**Duration** : A measure of a bond's sensitivity to changes in interest rates. The weighted average accounts for the various durations of the bonds purchased as well as the proportion of the total government bond portfolio that they make up.

**Basis point** : 1/100th of 1 percent.