Food & Travel® MAGAZINE

SPRING 2025

EXPLORING CULINARY ARTISTRY WITH CHEF

SEAN STAGGS

& EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

ANTONIA LOFASO

THE FIESTY & CHARISMATIC ITALIAN

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Food & Travel MAGAZINE

SPRING 2025

To the Curious, the Hungry, and the Brave

We believe the world is worth knowing—and so are you.
Not just its flavors and frontiers, but its people, its rituals, and the stories that make a place unforgettable.

In a time when everything moves fast, we believe in slowing down to savor what matters.
A perfect bite. A hidden alleyway. A laugh shared between strangers.
Because connection isn't a luxury—it's a necessity.
And curiosity isn't a phase—it's fuel for the soul.

We believe that a society benefits from the small moments created in our everyday interactions with others.
And what brings about more interactions than experiencing new cuisines and venturing into new lands?

We're here to inspire more than wanderlust.
We want to empower a generation to eat better, travel deeper, and live fuller.
To step off the path and into the culture.
To care about where your food comes from—and who it comes with.
To explore not just the globe, but your place within it.

This magazine is more than a guide.
It's a passport to perspective.
A table set for everyone.
A journal of wonder stitched together by shared humanity.

So whether you're booking flights or flipping pages at home,
know this: You belong here.

Because the world is waiting.
And it's hungry for someone like you.

Discover yourself.

– The Food & Travel Team

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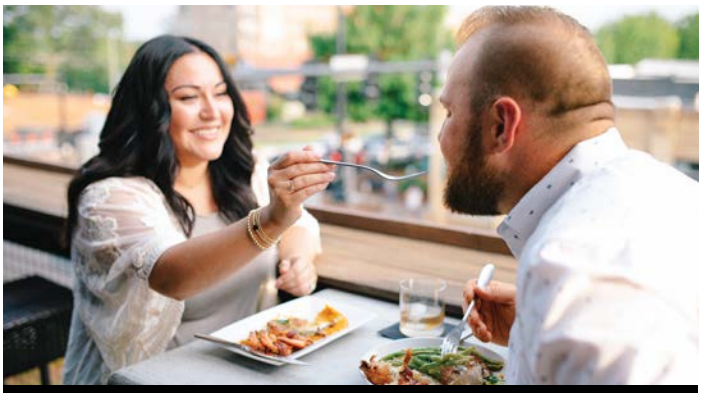

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BRAGG ORGANIC VINEGAR

SUPER CHEF

ANTONIA LOFASO

THE FEISTY ITALIAN WITH CHARISMA

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Margie Goldsmith

Chef Antonia Lofaso is the executive chef and owner of three acclaimed Los Angeles, California, restaurants: Black Market Liquor Bar (Studio City), Scopa Italian Roots (Venice), and DAMA (Downtown Los Angeles). Though diverse in cuisine and style, each of her restaurants combines deep-rooted, personal culinary traditions with the influence of her globetrotting adventures and formal French training. In addition, Lofaso is a TV personality, mother, and cookbook author of *The Busy Mom's Cookbook: 100 Recipes for Quick, Delicious, Home-Cooked Meals* (Penguin).

The young chef cut her culinary teeth as manager at rapper Sean Combs's restaurant, Justin's, in New York City, and then attended a one-year program at New York City's French Culinary Institute. Her next stint was working for Wolfgang Puck at L.A.'s Spago, and Foxtail in Beverly Hills. In 2008, she made her TV debut by participating in the fourth season of *Top Chef* and came in fourth. She then won third place in *Top Chef: All-Stars* and next won the title "Duel" in *Top Chef Duels*. Presently, Lofaso is the co-host of Food Network's *Worst Cooks in America*. She is widely recognized from *Celebrity Edition: Heroes vs Villains Tournament of Champions* (Seasons 1-5) and as the host of *Beachside Brawl*. She has served in recurring roles on *Guy's Grocery Games* and *Supermarket Stakeout*, has beaten Bobby Flay, and has been in *Chopped, Cutthroat, The Kitchen Restaurant Startup, Bravo's Top Chef*, and CNBC's *Restaurant Startup*.

Besides her thriving restaurants and TV career, Lofaso has launched two specialized business endeavors: Chefletics, an athletic-inspired line redefining the traditional fit and function of kitchen apparel, and Antonia Lofaso Catering, executing high-end dining events for up to 2,000 people.

I caught up with the busy entrepreneur in Los Angeles:

You are a TV personality, a cookbook author, a chef, and a mother. Which has been the most difficult?

The cookbook was the easiest. Being a mother has been the most challenging but also the most rewarding. But only having been a mother would never have been enough for me. I always wanted a career that was mine, something I worked hard for, and that I could show my daughter that she could do anything

You were born on Long Island and later moved to L.A. with your family. Did your parents cook?

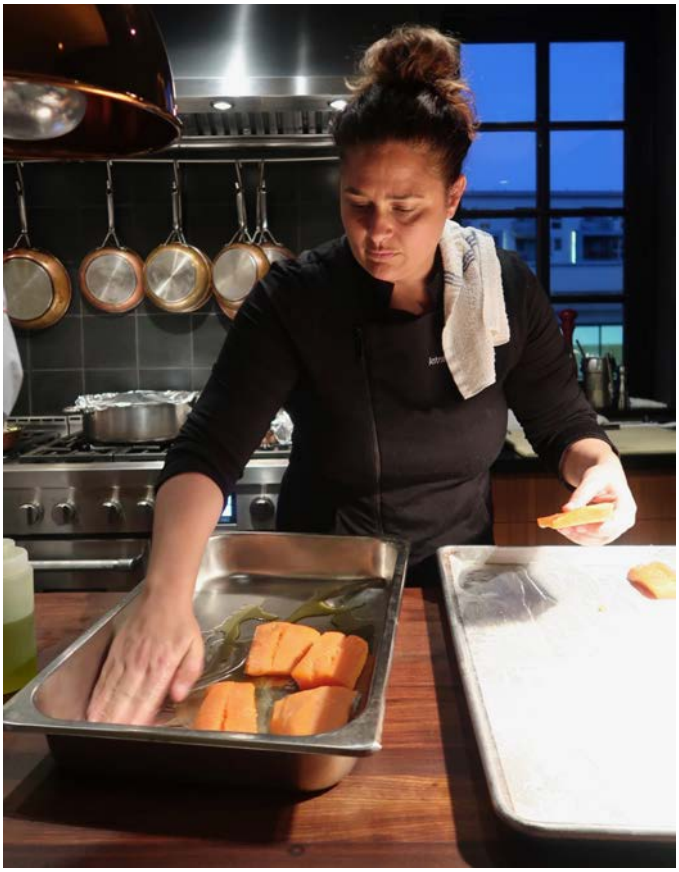
I come from a line of pizzeria owners, third generation from Naples and Sicily, who owned delis and pizzerias on Staten Island and Long Island. So, there was always food-service history in my family. We moved from New York to Las Vegas and then Los Angeles when I was 11. I worked in L.A. in my parents' "New York deli" from the time I was 13.

You went to college in New York City; what did you want to do?

I didn't know. I took random classes and still worked in restaurants as a server, manager, and hostess to pay my bills. I then worked at a restaurant with a woman chef, with no real roadmap to understanding the culinary world; I just knew there was an opportunity to go to school and cook.

How did you get the job working for Wolfgang Puck at Spago in Beverly Hills?

What most people don't know about the food service is that you don't need a big résumé to apply at these restaurants. They prefer it when you're straight out of school and have no real history because then they don't have to worry about any bad habits you may have picked up from other restaurants. They get to train you from the start.



"I always wanted a career that was mine, something I worked hard for, and that I could show my daughter that she could do anything."

-LOFASO

How long did you stay at Spago?

Almost 10 years. I spent a year doing salads before I was allowed to move on to pasta and worked my way through every station. I learned everything I could and then left to go out on my own.

What did you learn from Wolfgang Puck?

He taught me how to make the perfect omelet. He was very hands-on, and once he caught me making an omelet that he didn't approve of, so he made it his mission for over a year that every time he saw me, he made me make an omelet. It was an entire tutorial, and now I actually make one of the greatest French omelets because of that situation.

As a cook, he stressed me out so much about this omelet. But about a year into it, he walked into the kitchen, and I was working a separate station, and he said there was a certain V.I.P. in the dining room, and that we had just gotten winter Italian truffles, and that this V.I.P. wanted an omelet immediately. He glanced across the entire line of cooks, probably about 15 of us, and he told me to go make the omelet. That moment was the most terrifying but also the most gratifying because every single cook knew that I was chosen to make the omelet, which meant I knew what I was doing. It was a brilliant moment.

What came after Puck?

I started working for SBE to open the very first supper club. At the same time, a PR company was looking for women for the next season of *Top Chef*. Having no idea what I was getting into, I went on my very first reality television show in 2006 and ended up making it to the finale. I came home and had done so well that SBE decided that instead of making their new restaurant a little supper club, it would be a full-fledged restaurant.

I wasn't prepared; the kitchen wasn't big enough, and they were trying to do it last minute. Because of my appearance on *Top Chef*, they knew they'd get press. The restaurant stayed open for only about a year. I was demotivated and humbled, but it was probably the best thing that ever happened to me because, since then, my three restaurants have all been under my direction.

I'm always the loudest person screaming in the room, and that's what's worked out for me. But you know, it's one of those very, very hard lessons that you learn, and sometimes the way you don't want to learn it. So even though it was a very hard, unhappy lesson to learn, it was a very, very important one. So, the restaurant had failed. They called me to do *Top Chef: All-Stars*. They said I was so good on the first one, didn't I want to do it again? That was the most torturous thing I've ever done in my entire life. And at the same time, I was getting ready to sell my book, and my manager said, 'You go on *Top Chef* and do this again, the book is going to sell for more money than it would have had you not been so current.' So, I did *Top Chef Four*, and then *Top Chef Eight*, which was *All-Stars*. I made it to the final three. At that time, I started working for Eddie Murphy because I was like, 'Oh, let me just do some private chef work on the side. Let me try and get my mojo back,' as I was feeling really, like, sad and upset about what happened at the restaurant. I worked for him for about a year and enjoyed cooking again. Got back into my life, got back into the love of cooking.

"Having no idea what I was getting into, I went on my very first reality television show in 2006 and ended up making it to the finale."

-LOFASO ON *TOP CHEF*

Now you have three California restaurants. How did that happen?

I met some people looking for a chef, which led to us opening Black Market Liquor Bar in Studio City, an American eclectic restaurant, now open for 13 years. Two years later, we opened Scopa Italian Roots in Venice, California, a quintessential American Italian restaurant with a California flair, open 11 years. DAMA, my third restaurant in L.A., is Latin-inspired but a mixture of Spanish, Mexican, Portuguese, Cuban, and Colombian.

What is your favorite food to make?

That's like trying to pick your favorite child. But one of my most favorite foods to make and eat is tacos. I'll wrap anything in a tortilla and eat it.

How would you describe your technique?

It's rooted in French basics because of my work with Wolfgang Puck. My technique is disciplined, very focused, and about the execution of everything, whether it's a sauce, a protein or produce – it's taking care of each of those things the way I learned the basics from the best.

Where did you develop your sense of taste?

I always just knew good food. I think that chefs have a lot of skills in the same way artists do. Whether you're in music or painting or architecture, we don't always know where it comes from, but I think my ability to taste food is a lot of intuition and a lot of something I was born with.

Where do you get your inspiration?

From anything. I mean, I get inspiration from the street taco dude and from seeing what other chefs do under duress, trying to cook something quickly. I get inspiration from eating in other people's restaurants, reading cookbooks, traveling the world, eating everything from street food to fine dining. There's no limit and no book to follow. I look at food everywhere.

How do you know that the flavor you create is what people want?

Because I know what I like to eat. When I build the menus, I build them based on what I want.

What is your philosophy about food?

It doesn't have to be that serious, it just has to be good. I remember when Instagram started, they said, 'your food needs to look better.' I'm not going to compromise the way a dish should be constructed, because the way you construct it is the way you want someone to eat it. For me, it just needs to be the most delicious thing I've ever done. •

Food&
TravelL
Anton Lofaso

GET YOUR CULTURE ON

EXPLORE New BEDFORD

MASSACHUSETTS

As Massachusetts commemorates 250 years of revolutionary moments, there's no better time to visit New Bedford. Once known as the "city that lit the world" for its dominance in the whaling industry, New Bedford continues to shine as a **must-visit destination filled with history, art, cultural** festivals and events, and a diverse culinary scene.

Artur Bordalo ii
Photo by Josh Souza

New Bedord Whaling Museum
Photo by Josh Souza

Historical Charm

New Bedford is a city known for its historical charm, picturesque views, and cultural diversity. In the 19th century, the city was a safe haven for freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad, with abolitionist Frederick Douglass making it his first home as a free man. Today, visitors can explore landmarks that played a crucial role in the fight for freedom along New Bedford's Black History Trail.

At the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, walk along cobblestone streets, historic 19th-century buildings, and engaging exhibits at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. In the city's south end, visitors can enjoy the salty sea air at Fort Taber Park. This public park has a playground, a walking path around a Civil War-era fort, and the Fort Taber-Fort Rodman Military Museum and Veterans Memorial.

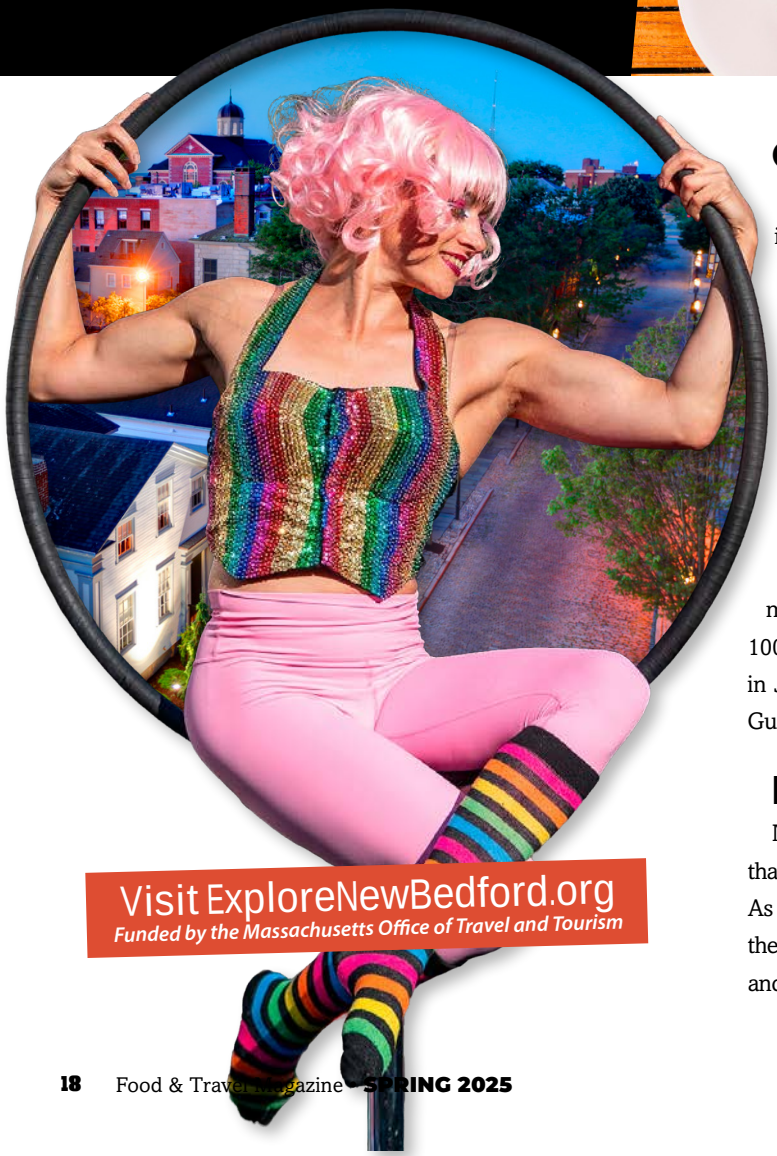
For those eager to experience maritime history firsthand, join a tour of the working waterfront led by the Fishing Heritage Center, dedicated to sharing the stories of New Bedford's fishing industry. For a unique on-the-water experience, climb aboard the Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey for a sunset sail. This National Historic Landmark, gifted to the city by Cabo Verde, has served as a fishing vessel, an Arctic exploration ship, and even a transatlantic immigrant transport.

The Black Whale
Photo by Maggie Howland

Taste the Tradition

As the number-one fishing port in the nation, visitors can enjoy a robust "boat-to-table" dining scene that celebrates the freshest seafood available, with local favorites such as New Bedford scallops, stuffed quahogs, and cod.

At The Black Whale, visitors can enjoy fine dining and fresh seafood overlooking the working waterfront. The city offers a surprising array of international flavors in family-owned restaurants. For a truly local experience, join New Bedford Food Tours to explore the restaurants on Acushnet Avenue, known as "The Ave," serving dishes from Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and more. The whaling era brought cultures from fishing communities around the world including Portugal and Cape Verde. Visitors can enjoy several Portuguese and Cape Verdean restaurants and festivals.



Visit ExploreNewBedford.org
Funded by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism

Celebrate Art & Culture

Find art on every corner, from murals and monuments, outdoor installations, museums, and galleries to live music, theater, and the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra. The New Bedford Art Museum curates exhibitions that celebrate regional and global talent and has a stunning Chihuly Chandelier in their permanent collection. The New Bedford Public Library has a museum-quality gallery that houses the city's historic art collection including pieces from Albert Bierstadt, William Bradford, Robert Swain Gifford and more.

The Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, the largest Portuguese feast in the world, has filled the streets with music, dancing, and Portuguese cuisine every August for over 100 years. Other events include the annual Pride Block Party in June, the Cape Verdean Recognition Parade in July, and the Guatemalan Festival in August.

Explore New Bedford

New Bedford has always been a city of visionaries. It is a city that embraces its past while looking toward an exciting future. As Massachusetts marks 250 years of revolutionary moments, there's no better time to explore New Bedford's visionary voices and moments that make it an unforgettable destination. •

In New Bedford seafood is more than a meal; it is a way of life. Generations of fishing families have made the city the #1 fishing port in the nation for over twenty years. We invite you to taste the tradition and savor the experience of boat to table dining in our seaport city rich with maritime and cultural history.

ExploreNewBedford.org/Visionary-Voices

MA 250

MASSACHUSETTS250.ORG

RUN FOR THE HILLS

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE IN LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

By Laura Lee

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lynchburg is affectionately known as the City of Seven Hills. A revitalized riverfront, lush green spaces and scenic mountain trails beckon visitors outdoors all summer long. After a day of adventure, visit one of the area's charming neighborhoods, where local restaurants dish out warm hospitality and fresh cuisine to renew the body and spirit.

TAKE A HIKE

While the nearby Appalachian Trail is a bucket-list item for avid hikers, Candlers Mountain is another must-visit. The city's tallest mountain features a 65-mile network of scenic trails, earning Lynchburg a spot among Trail Runner magazine's "Top Trail Towns" and a "Runner-Friendly City" designation by Road Runners Club of America.

With 40 miles of urban flat trails, there's a hike for every skill level and terrain preference. For a great summer hike, check out Dirty Ridge and Lake Trail Loop. Be sure to stay for the sunset — the mountain offers some of the best views in town.

Refuel: Head down the mountain for upscale Mexican cuisine at Papa Gallo, located in the popular River Ridge lifestyle center. Start with a skinny margarita and a basket of chips with four fresh salsas made in-house.

GET OUT ON THE WATER

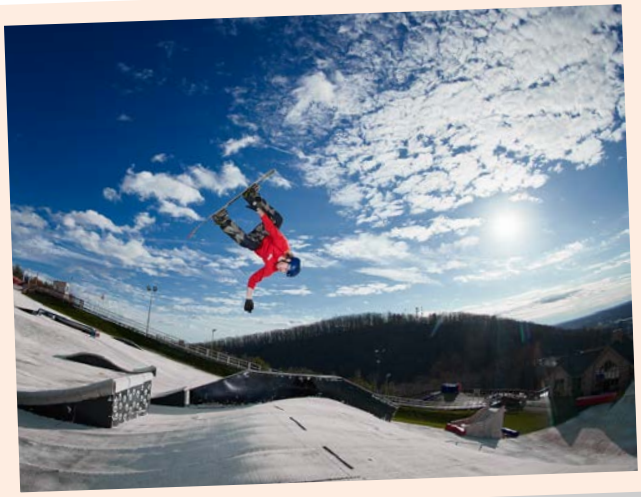
Grab an innertube and go with the flow on the historic James River. Take off on a three-mile river trip with one of the city's outfitters, splash through gentle rapids, and stop off at one of several islands. Kayaking and canoeing trips can also be arranged either on the James River or at Ivy Creek Park's Clemmons Lake.

Refresh: Check out Lynchburg's new dining hotspot, Trailhead, named for its prime location on Percival's Island Trail. Sit outside on the covered patio for casual fare, buckets of beer, and Sunset S'more Kits for the kids. Another go-to is Jo Jo Pizza, where locals can't get enough of the authentic Sicilian dishes, specialty pastas and cheesesteaks.

GO FOR A RIDE

Lynchburg might be known for its mountain biking, but the city is also home to one of Virginia's most unique urban trail systems. Part of the James River Heritage Trail System, Lynchburg's 40 miles of paved and natural pathways wind through urban forests, in the heart of downtown, and over the James River. Start at the Blackwater Creek Trail, built along a former railway and continues three miles to the popular RiverWalk trail. Don't miss the Awareness Garden, a peaceful green space dedicated to those affected by cancer.

Re-energize: Located in a charming cottage right off the trail, Farm Basket gift shop serves gourmet sandwiches, salads, and boxed lunches perfect for a picnic. Or sink your teeth into the city's best cheeseburger and a side of seasoned fries at The Cavalier, a Rivermont Avenue institution since 1940.



HIT THE SLOPES

Lynchburg is the only spot on the East Coast offering snow skiing, sledding, snowboarding and tubing all four seasons. The slopes feature Snowflex, an innovative material that closely mimics snow, while a misting system helps boards and skis glide — and a padded subsurface eases falls. The state-of-the-art venue boasts jumps, rails, and a quarter pipe along with a bunny slope for beginners.

Open seven days a week, Liberty Mountain Snowflex also offers rentals, lessons, and other outdoor activities, like an Olympic-grade trampoline.

Revive: Head to Montana Plains' family-owned bakery and café, where breads, sandwiches, and dessert are all made from scratch. Be sure to save room for their mixed berry pie or a chocolate eclair — you've earned it! •

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CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND *Virginia*

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE, COASTAL CUISINE, HISTORY & WILD PONIES ARE A ROAD TRIP AWAY

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

As you wind your way across the five-mile causeway connecting Chincoteague Island to the mainland, the vibrant colors of the marsh and unique sounds of over 300 species of birds and waterfowl greet you, guiding you to this secluded little paradise island. Truly living up to its moniker, the "Beautiful Land Across the Water," this peaceful village moves at a quieter pace, giving the traveler respite with its Southern hospitality. As the marshland gives way to the Atlantic Ocean, you will find yourself in nature's playground.

Known for the world-renowned wild pony roundup, swim, and auction, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2025, Chincoteague offers something for everyone. From pristine natural beaches, miles of nature trails, kayaking and boating, to shopping, dining, and adventure, there are so many things to love.

Drive, bike, or walk over the bridge from Chincoteague Island to Assateague Island, Virginia, home to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore. Explore the outdoors on the beautiful beaches that are perfect for surfing, swimming, fishing, beachcombing, and relaxing. Search for the world-famous Chincoteague Ponies while hiking or biking the miles of nature trails or kayaking or boating the waterways, and witness the migratory birds as they travel the Atlantic Flyway during the spring and fall. Don't forget to visit the majestic Assateague Lighthouse, with its bold red-and-white stripes and stunning views.

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

Photo by Rob Osterrmaier

While there is so much of the outdoors to explore, this little island offers many other activities and experiences. Explore the wide variety of unique galleries, boutiques, specialty shops, and bookstores. Immerse yourself in the rich history of the area by taking a guided or self-guided walking tour or visiting the museums. Take a walk on the adventurous side with water parks, adventure parks, amusement parks, or mini-golf.

They even have rocket launches for all the space lovers! On nearby Wallops Island, home of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, Electron rockets fulfill deep space missions, and sounding rockets conduct scientific research. Chincoteague Island offers several launch viewing locations for the numerous missions scheduled throughout the year.

They also have plenty of annual events to enjoy, including fireworks displays, the carnival, and parades. The spring Seafood Festival and the award-winning fall Oyster Festival showcases their local cuisine, and the Easter Decoy & Art Festival features local decoy carvers as well as a variety of artists and artisans.

Start your day by enjoying the breathtaking sunrises, and end it with incredible sunsets. Experience the history, legend, and natural beauty of this serene fishing village located on Virginia's Eastern Shore. This small island will take you away to another time - a time where the pace is slower, the fun is simpler, and the memories are priceless! •

While you are there, enjoy the rich culinary history of the island. The waters surrounding Chincoteague boast an abundance of fresh seafood, with oyster and clam shoals, the bivalves of the aqua farms in Tom's Cove, blue crabs, and a wide variety of fish; you will taste the freshness in each bite. Depending on the season, the catch of the day can be rockfish, flounder, drum, shark, or tuna. Whether you are preparing your own food at your vacation rental or enjoying one of the many amazing restaurants on the island, pair your seafood with veggies grown on the Eastern Shore, and you will have an unforgettable farm-to-table coastal meal. Top it off with homemade ice cream or soft serve from one of their local premier ice cream shops!

IT'S TIME TO DISCOVER WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT CHINCOTEAGUE! PLAN YOUR 2025 VACATION GETAWAY AT VISITCIVA.COM

DISCOVER
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SMALL TOWN CHARM | HISTORY | FESTIVALS | EVENTS
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JEFFERSON COUNTY WHERE ALMOST HEAVEN BEGINS WEST VIRGINIA

Photo by Joshua Lykins

Just an hour west of Washington, DC, Jefferson County, West Virginia, is famous for the saga of John Brown and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. However, visitors have discovered that this piece of almost heaven delivers equally well on outdoor recreation venues and an incredible dining scene throughout five unique and memorable small towns: Bolivar, Charles Town, Harpers Ferry, Shepherdstown, and Ranson.

Photo by Joshua Lykins

The legendary **Appalachian Trail** runs right through Harpers Ferry, near the headquarters and visitor center of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Miles of scenic hiking and biking trails traverse the county. The Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers are home to great fishing, whitewater rafting, kayaking and tubing. An assortment of professional outfitters can take care of all the logistics and equipment for any adventure and guide you on a memorable experience.

When it is time to relax, have some great food and reminisce about your day. The neighboring towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar offer a variety of great options. **Kelley Farm Kitchen** is the first area vegan restaurant and provides mouthwatering meals that will be appreciated by vegans and non-vegans alike. **Battle Grounds Bakery & Coffee** is known for amazing sandwiches, great coffee, pastries and frozen custard. Wander to **The Rabbit Hole** gastropub for a Blue Ridge Burger and a drink from its impressive craft beer selection, all enjoyed with a gorgeous view at one of its outdoor tables overlooking the river. At the end of the evening, head to **The Barn of Harpers Ferry** for some live music and cold beer. Stop in the **Country Café** for a good old-fashioned, homemade breakfast. Nothing fancy, just delicious food like your grandmother used to make. Or find a range of fresh goods, including cinnamon rolls, biscuits, scones and West Virginia's best pepperoni rolls at **Bolivar Bread Bakery**.

Photo by Joshua Lykins

Photo by Joshua Lykins

Photo by Joshua Lykins

Photo by Joshua Lykins

Since 2013, **Ortega's Taco Shop** has been famous for the "best taco in Charles Town." Featuring locally sourced meats, cheeses, and produce, Ortega's is a favorite stop for more than just tacos. If a cold beer and pub food is more your style, look no further than **Abolitionist Ale Works** for fun, flavorful, and unique beers for every palate. Specialty pizzas, sandwiches, and appetizers complement the brews. Adjacent to Charles Town is the town of Ranson. A popular spot to meet friends, grab a bite, and watch the game is always **Glory Days Grill**.

Shepherdstown is a foodies' delight. For almost 50 years, the **Bavarian Inn & Brewing Company** has been a European inspired boutique resort and is a favorite gathering spot for locals. From a 4-Diamond experience in the Potomac Room to a casual craft beer and apps in the brew pub, the Bavarian always delivers. **Bistro 112** re-opened in January 2023 and has been receiving rave reviews. This neighborhood favorite offers French cuisine from locally sourced ingredients. The outside garden seating space is magical. Whether you need a reminder of home or a crash course in Appalachian cuisine, **Alma Bea** is the place to go for the traditional and reimagined tastes of regional favorites, featuring duck, catfish, fried green 'maters, cornbread, paw paw, and more. •

For more information on creating your own Jefferson County getaway, visit WhereAlmostHeavenBegins.com

WHERE

Flavors

BEGIN

HARPERS FERRY
BOLIVAR
SHEPHERDSTOWN
CHARLES TOWN
RANSON

As you explore Jefferson County, welcoming towns will make you feel right at home. Sometimes a voice from the past will echo in the breeze. Endless scenic beauty surrounds historic streets rich with authentic flavors, original shops, and a breath of fresh air. Come see us soon.

Jefferson County, West Virginia
it's Where Almost Heaven Begins.

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Jefferson County
WHERE ALMOST HEAVEN BEGINS™

Save the Date

SOUTHEASTERN BBQ SHOWDOWN

RETURNS TO COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

APRIL 24-25, 2026!

BARBECUE ENTHUSIASTS, FOOD LOVERS, AND LIVE MUSIC FANS MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Southeastern BBQ Showdown is gearing up for its highly anticipated return to Columbia, South Carolina, on April 24-25, 2026. Following the resounding success of its inaugural event in September 2024, which garnered national attention and aired on Bally Sports, the excitement continues to build as the event is set to debut on the Cooking Channel in April 2025. This will provide audiences with a tantalizing preview of the mouthwatering BBQ and thrilling experiences planned for 2026. This fiery celebration of BBQ culture is gearing up to be even bigger and more unforgettable!

Capital City
Lake Murray
Country

DISCOVER
South Carolina

A FLAVOR-FILLED WEEKEND TO REMEMBER

The Southeastern BBQ Showdown isn't just another food festival—it's a food sport competition that brings together the best pitmasters from across the country to battle it out for the coveted Grand Champion title. At the 2024 event, teams from states like Texas, Georgia, and across South Carolina, and even Japan, lit up the competition with bold flavors and mouthwatering dishes. With the bar set high, 2026 promises an even fiercer contest, featuring elite BBQ teams and a new crop of celebrity judges ready to crown the champions.

This weekend-long celebration of food, music, and fun offers something for everyone. Guests can sample world-class BBQ, explore interactive exhibits, and enjoy live music. Whether you're a die-hard foodie or just looking for an unforgettable weekend, this is the place to be.

LOOKING BACK AT THE 2024 CHAMPIONS

The 2024 Southeastern BBQ Showdown set the stage for greatness with First Class BBQ from Texas taking home the Grand Champion title and $10,000 in prize money. Led by Head Chef Robert Smith, the team impressed judges with their unbeatable flavors and flawless techniques. Will First Class BBQ return to defend their crown in 2026? Or will another team rise to claim the title? The competition is wide open, and the anticipation is already building.

STAR-STUDDED JUDGES PANEL

The 2024 Showdown made history with its impressive lineup of celebrity judges, including WWE Hall of Famer Mark Henry, known as "The World's Strongest Man," and Chef Brian Duffy, a renowned culinary expert from Food Network's Bar Rescue. Alongside Mayor Daniel Rickenmann of Columbia, SC, they brought expertise, excitement, and flair to the judging panel, further elevating the competition's prestige. Their involvement underscored the Showdown's commitment to celebrating BBQ culture on a grand stage.

As the 2026 competition approaches, one can't help but wonder: Who will take a seat at the coveted judges' table this time? Will another culinary icon join the ranks, bringing their expertise to the showdown? Could there be a surprise guest—a celebrity with a secret passion for BBQ? Stay tuned for exciting announcements leading up to the event.

PLAN YOUR 2026 BBQ ADVENTURE

Tickets for the Southeastern BBQ Showdown will go on sale early next year, and if the 2024 event was any indication, they'll sell out fast. General admission and VIP packages will be available, with exclusive perks and reserved seating.

For out-of-town visitors, Columbia offers plenty of hotel options to suit every budget. Make it a weekend getaway and explore everything the **Capital City/Lake Murray Country** region has to offer, from scenic lake views to vibrant downtown attractions.

DON'T MISS THE 2026 SHOWDOWN

The Southeastern BBQ Showdown is more than an event—it's a celebration of community, culture, and the irresistible allure of BBQ. With award-winning teams, live music, and unforgettable experiences, it's a must-attend weekend for anyone who loves great food and great times. Mark your calendars for April 24-25, 2026, and stay tuned for more details. Follow **@SoutheasternBBQShowdown** on social media and visit **SoutheasternBBQShowdown.com** for the latest updates. •

GET READY TO EAT, DANCE, AND CHEER—BECAUSE THE 2026 SOUTHEASTERN BBQ SHOWDOWN IS COMING, AND IT'S BRINGING THE HEAT!

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Capital City Lake Murray Country

DISCOVER South Carolina

Exploring Culinary Artistry with Chef

Sean Staggs at Sandia Resort & Casino's Bien Shur Restaurant

By Camille Rodriguez

Photo by CRS Social

At the grand opening of Sandia Resort & Casino's new Sportsbook—an innovative venue that combines dining, sports betting, game coverage, and entertainment—guests are welcomed with the warmth of New Mexico hospitality. The event featured a culinary showcase curated by Chef de Cuisine Sean Staggs of the resort's fine dining restaurant, Bien Shur. Known for blending local flavors with refined techniques honed over years of experience, Chef Sean brought his distinctive touch to the menu. Hosted in a lively, cocktail-style setting, the grand opening allowed attendees, including professional athletes like Brian Urlacher and Notah Begay III, to savor Chef Sean's unique creations. Known for his inventive dishes and fresh perspective, Chef Sean's approach combines high-end technique and local flavors, making Bien Shur a standout in Albuquerque's dining scene.

Photo by CRS Social

CHEF SEAN STAGGS' CULINARY BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY

Chef Sean's culinary journey is marked by a commitment to innovation and mastery of diverse techniques. Early in his career, he trained at Chicago's legendary Moto Restaurant, a hotspot for molecular gastronomy that pioneered the fusion of science and fine dining. Moto Restaurant introduced Chef Sean to the science of flavor transformation, using techniques like liquid nitrogen and edible paper to create playful and memorable dishes. As a result of his training, Chef Sean loves bringing elements of molecular gastronomy into Bien Shur as special features, explaining, "it [molecular gastronomy] really needs to not be used at the forefront, but something to accomplish these dishes versus just making that the standard." Chef Sean says he loves to surprise guests with the unexpected amidst familiar flavors by having a creative take on traditional dishes.

An Albuquerque native, after time as a private chef in Arkansas and Colorado and working in exclusive destinations like Alaska, he returned to Albuquerque, motivated to contribute to the local culinary scene. At Bien Shur, Chef Sean celebrates New Mexico's culinary heritage while pushing boundaries.

Photo by CRS Social

A PREMIER ALBUQUERQUE DINING EXPERIENCE AT BIEN SHUR

Chef Sean's focus at Bien Shur is on reimagining classic dishes through seasonal ingredients and creative presentation. "I love to always be creative. So I'm always changing the menu," he shared. Each dish is crafted to reflect a balance of flavors and a hint of surprise, from the visually stunning short rib pot pie with puff pastry to the expertly prepared Japanese Wagyu, served as a memorable dining experience.

Bien Shur's breathtaking rooftop setting and fine dining atmosphere are ideal for special occasions or a night out. The farm-to-table philosophy is a foundational aspect of the menu. Chef Sean curates a menu emphasizing locally sourced ingredients often from Sandia Pueblo's farm, reinforcing his commitment to quality and sustainability. He creatively adjusts the menu to match ingredient availability, relying on seasonal ingredients without compromising quality. With its rooftop views and focus on locally inspired cuisine, Bien Shur is deeply rooted in local culture but elevated in presentation and technique, making it a unique dining destination in Albuquerque.

MENTORSHIP AND GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Through mentorship and involvement in local nonprofits, including the Rio Grande Agricultural Land and Trust, the 505 Food Fights, and Kitchen Kids, Inc., Chef Sean seeks to inspire and guide emerging chefs to follow their dreams and overcome the challenges of the culinary industry. His mentorship emphasizes resilience and creativity, qualities he believes are essential for success in the culinary world. "Keep your head up. You're going to make mistakes over and over again. And that's the best part of it. Making those mistakes. You learn how to not make those, how to do things the right way. Just keep your head up. It's a hard, hard industry. You've got to have a thick skin." he advises.

For Chef Sean, mentorship is a way to give back to the industry that shaped him. He finds inspiration in culinary icons such as Rick Bayless and Jacques Pepin, whom he admires for their straightforward, timeless approach to cooking.

Photo by CRS Social

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ART OF STAYING AUTHENTIC

In today's digital age, social media has become a powerful tool for chefs. While Chef Sean maintains a presence online, he admits that he's more focused on substance than style. Rather than chasing trends or aiming to be "Instagrammable," he uses social media as a digital portfolio, documenting his dishes and drawing inspiration from his past creations. For him, social media is a practical tool to keep track of his evolving menu and revisit previous dishes for new inspiration.

Chef Sean explained that he uses social media as a digital archive for his dishes, saying, "I'm horrible at social media. I'll post three or four times and then just forget for a week. So, I'm hit and miss on social media, but I use it more for a food platform. For me, my social media is strictly professional. So it's just all of my dishes. So I can go back and be like, Hey, what did I make here? How can I do this again?" While his beautiful presentations are certainly "Instagram-worthy," he aims to create food that speaks for itself, ensuring each plate is memorable for more than its visual appeal, combining elegance with the charm of New Mexico's flavors.

WHAT DINERS CAN EXPECT FROM BIEN SHUR

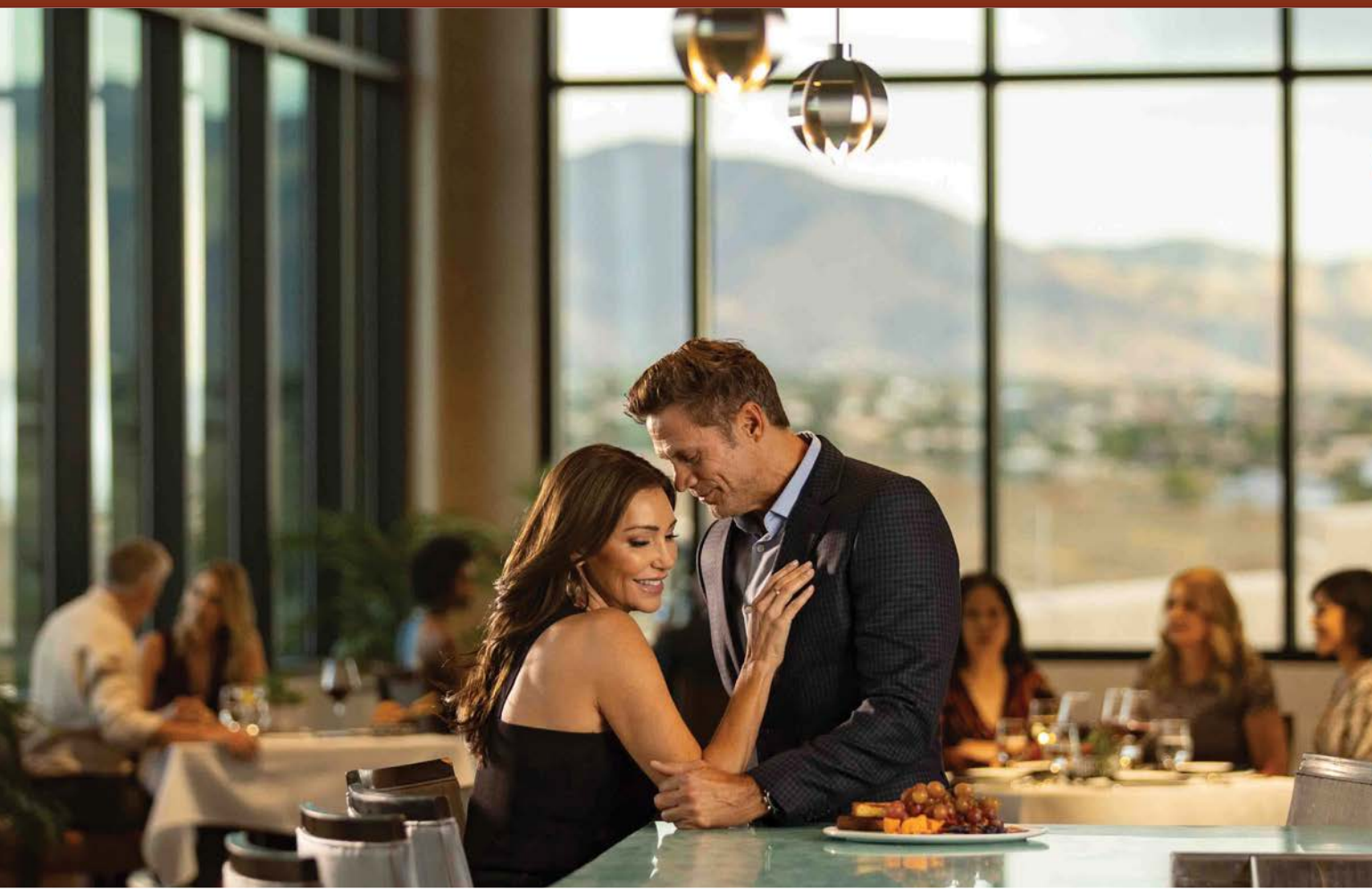
Located on the rooftop of Sandia Resort & Casino, Bien Shur offers a fine dining atmosphere with sweeping views of the Sandia Mountains that make every visit memorable. Chef Sean describes the Bien Shur experience in two words: "enjoyment, and different." He aims to create an atmosphere where guests can relax, savor the flavors, and connect with Albuquerque's unique culture, saying "We're about feeding you really, really good food and giving you experience that you're not going to get anywhere else." For him, success is not just about feeding people but crafting an experience that stays with them long after leaving the restaurant.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF ALBUQUERQUE'S CULINARY SCENE

Chef Sean is dedicated to continuously evolving Bien Shur's offerings, ensuring that every visit brings something new and exciting for guests. Chef Sean sees Bien Shur as bringing a fresh approach to fine dining that combines the traditions of New Mexico with the innovation of global techniques, saying he aims to give every guest "the excitement of having something that is so unique and different and that you can't get anywhere else." Whether experimenting with new techniques or curating fresh seasonal menus, his passion for culinary innovation guarantees that the dining experience remains dynamic and unforgettable. "You're coming to get good ingredients, you know, really take the time to enjoy," says Chef Sean.

As Albuquerque's foodie culture continues to grow, Chef Sean is optimistic about the future and excited to be part of a city that is gaining recognition for its culinary talents. With his dedication to local ingredients, commitment to creativity, and unwavering focus on quality, Chef Sean Staggs and Bien Shur are set to make an enduring impact on New Mexico's dining scene.

In the words of Chef Sean, Bien Shur is a place where guests can expect not just to be fed but to experience the joy of truly great food. For those looking to experience Albuquerque's culinary evolution firsthand, a visit to Bien Shur promises a taste of what makes this region—and Chef Sean's cooking—so special. •



SANDIA
Resort & Casino

I-25 & TRAMWAY | ALBUQUERQUE, NM | SANDIACASINO.COM

As the golden hues of autumn settle over North Texas, a quiet kind of magic takes root just outside the city limits of Wichita Falls. At Morath Orchard, the evening sun casts long shadows over rows of pecan trees and vegetable gardens, and the hum of conversation floats through the crisp country air. This is where the Morath family has been feeding the community for over four decades, and where, each fall, guests are invited to slow down, gather around the table, and savor a farm-fresh feast under the open Texas sky.

Farm-to-Table dinners at Morath Orchard offer a one-of-a-kind evening rooted in tradition and hospitality. Hosted seasonally on their 90-acre orchard, each dinner begins with a guided tour led by members of the Morath family, who have farmed this land since 1981. Guests stroll past rows of seasonal crops, many of which will appear on their plates later that evening, while learning about the family's sustainable practices and their deep commitment to growing local, healthy food. The experience is a window into a way of life built on hard work, shared meals, and a deep respect for the land.

After the tour winds its way through the orchard, guests make their way to a long, family-style table set in the heart of the farm. The late afternoon light begins to soften, casting a golden glow over the landscape. The mood is unhurried, the company warm, and the setting picture-perfect. Laughter mingles with the clinking of glasses as guests settle in for a meal that feels both familiar and special. The menu, thoughtfully planned by the Morath family, features hearty entrees, seasonal vegetables picked at their peak, and handmade desserts that would make any grandmother proud.

The menu changes seasonally, guided by the rhythm of the harvest and what the farm has ready to share. Every dish is made from scratch using the freshest ingredients available, prepared with care and served in generous portions. The focus is on quality and flavor, with dishes that balance comfort and craftsmanship. There's a quiet kind of joy in knowing that what's on your plate was grown just steps away. It's the kind of meal that invites you to slow down, linger a little longer, and truly savor the moment.

While the food takes center stage, it's the spirit of the gathering that lingers longest. These dinners are meant to bring people together, offering a chance to reconnect over shared plates and good conversation. It's the kind of hospitality that unfolds slowly, with no need to rush. Guests often arrive as strangers and leave as friends, brought together by the joy of a delicious meal in a beautiful place.

Long before the dinner bell rings, the orchard hums with its own kind of energy. During the day, families enjoy the open-air setting, selecting pumpkins from a festive display of farm-grown gourds. Nearby, the six-acre corn maze invites guests to lose track of time in its winding paths and playful turns. Those seeking a quieter moment can stroll through the vibrant zinnia patch and cut a bouquet to bring home. Between photo ops and laughter echoing from the maze, it's easy to see why fall is such a beloved time at the orchard.

A fall visit to Morath Orchard offers something lasting. It's an invitation to step into the rhythm of the farm, enjoy a meal made with care, and share in a tradition that brings people together. Whether you come for the corn maze, the pumpkins, or a seat at the table, you'll leave feeling full in more ways than one. •

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TOP 5 RESTAURANTS TO CHECK OUT IN RIDGELAND THIS SPRING

MISSISSIPPI

Ridgeland, Mississippi, is known for its breathtaking views of the Natchez Trace Parkway and a sprawling 33,000-acre lake. But what really sets this charming town apart? The food. Whether you're there for a weekend getaway or just passing through, these top Five restaurants offer mouthwatering meals that will make you want to plan your next. Here's a taste of Ridgeland's culinary scene!

1. ELY'S RESTAURANT & BAR

Tucked in the heart of the historic Railroad District, Ely's Restaurant & Bar is a shining example of Ridgeland's local charm. Opened by Richard Shapley in 2008, this upscale steakhouse has become a favorite for those craving mouthwatering steaks and fresh seafood. The sleek, contemporary ambiance sets the stage for an unforgettable dining experience, where every bite is cooked to perfection. Whether you're indulging in a juicy ribeye or savoring expertly prepared seafood, Ely's guarantees a meal that's rich in both flavor and atmosphere. Richard's motto, "Our service and friendships go hand in hand," rings true here, making Ely's feel like a special gathering spot for locals and visitors alike. If you're in the mood for an upscale dinner or a celebratory meal, Ely's is a must.

Photo by Minnie Morklithavong

2. AMERIGO

For a taste of Italy in the heart of Ridgeland, look no further than Amerigo. With over 30 years of culinary tradition, this beloved spot has been serving up rich, flavorful Italian dishes that keep guests coming back. The menu features crispy pizzas, savory pasta, and fresh seafood—all prepared with an Italian twist. The warm, inviting atmosphere is perfect for everything from a quiet dinner to a lively weekend brunch with friends. Don't miss their gluten-sensitive options, which let everyone enjoy the flavors of Italy without compromise. A local favorite, Amerigo has earned its reputation as one of Ridgeland's top spots for delicious, Southern-Italian fare.

explore RIDGELAND

3. LOCAL 463 URBAN KITCHEN

For Southern comfort food with a modern flair, Local 463 is a standout. Helmed by James Beard Award finalist Chef Derek Emerson, this restaurant celebrates the best of Mississippi's local ingredients. Every dish is a nod to Southern classics, but with a twist—think Florida Rock Shrimp Pizza, or a decadent Mississippi Fruit Cobbler to finish the meal. The restaurant also doubles as a vibrant art gallery, with local artists' works adorning the walls, adding to the lively, contemporary vibe. Whether you're enjoying a relaxed lunch or celebrating a special occasion, Local 463 offers a dining experience where Southern comfort meets big-city creativity.

4. APLOS SIMPLE MEDITERRANEAN

Next to the serene green space at Renaissance at Colony Park, Aplos offers a fresh take on Mediterranean-inspired cuisine. Drawing influences from Italy, Greece, and the Middle East, Aplos delivers vibrant, flavorful dishes perfect for a casual yet elevated dining experience. Their Neapolitan pizzas, with perfectly crisp crusts and fresh toppings, are a standout, as are their Mediterranean wraps and salads. Aplos nails the balance between fast-casual dining and fine flavors, all while offering an unbeatable view of the Malco Theater show fountains. Whether you're popping in for a quick bite or a leisurely lunch, Aplos offers a taste of the Mediterranean with a Ridgeland twist.

5. CW ORGANICS APOTHECAIRE & TEA ROOM

Sometimes, the best meals are found in the simplest things—like a perfectly brewed cup of tea. CW Organics Apothecaire & Tea Room is Ridgeland's go-to spot for tea lovers. Known for its exceptional loose-leaf tea blends, CW Organics takes tea to a whole new level, blending herbs, fruits, and spices for unique and satisfying flavors. From rich black teas to light, refreshing green teas, each cup is designed to deliver an aromatic experience that calms the mind and soothes the soul. Whether you're a tea aficionado or just looking for a cozy afternoon escape, this charming tea room is the perfect retreat.

These five spots offer a diverse array of flavors and experiences, each promising to make your visit to Ridgeland an unforgettable one. From upscale steakhouse, authentic Italian comfort food, to relaxing tea breaks, Ridgeland delivers dining experiences that are as memorable as the stunning Mississippi landscapes. •

If you're ready to explore the culinary scene, along with high-end hotels, premier shopping, and Mississippi's only Topgolf, start planning your trip today! Learn more at ExploreRidgeland.com

explore dining
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CW Organics
apothicaire &
tea room
Spring into tea time with an escape to Ridgeland's newest culinary gem. Enjoy exceptional service and a curated selection of holistic teas and appetizers. Experience the art of conversation & Southern hospitality! Start planning your culinary escape today at **exploreRidgeland.com.**
explore
RIDGELAND

Springtime In TISHOMINGO MISSISSIPPI

As spring awakens in Mississippi's northeastern corner, Tishomingo County bursts into life with vibrant wildflowers, flowing waterfalls, and inviting waters. Home to Tishomingo and J.P. Coleman State Parks, this region is a paradise for nature lovers. Hike among ancient sandstone bluffs, paddle Bear Creek's winding waters, or fish on the sparkling expanse of Pickwick Lake.

Beyond the outdoors, history runs deep along the Natchez Trace Parkway, where travelers follow the footsteps of Native Americans and pioneers. Woodall Mountain, Mississippi's highest point, offers sweeping springtime vistas, while charming towns like Iuka and Belmont invite visitors to browse boutiques, savor Southern flavors, and enjoy local festivals.

Tishomingo County's commitment to preserving its natural and cultural assets ensures that it remains a pristine and inviting destination year-round. Efforts to maintain the integrity of its parks, waterways, and historic sites allow visitors to experience the region's beauty and history in their most authentic forms.

With over 50,000 acres of waterways, scenic trails, and a welcoming community, Tishomingo County is the perfect spring retreat. Whether you're seeking adventure or relaxation, GO Explore the arrival of spring in Tishomingo County, where the beauty of nature, the warmth of Southern hospitality, and a rich tapestry of history and culture await. •

tishomingo COUNTY

DAVID L NICHOLS MEMORIAL BRIDGE

Explore!

Enjoy Local Cuisine...

Hike a Mountain

Play on Over 50,000 Acres of Lakes...

Visit Our State Parks...

Explore the charm of Tishomingo County, situated on the picturesque Natchez Trace Parkway. Civil War and Native American history weaves throughout these Appalachian foothills. Discover natural wonders of our award-winning state parks - Tishomingo State Park and JP Coleman State Park, or amidst the 50,000 acres of pristine lakes, and atop Woodall Mountain, the highest peak in Mississippi.

Whether you're a foodie, history buff or an outdoor enthusiast, Tishomingo County invites you to uncover our treasures that make us a unique and captivating destination.

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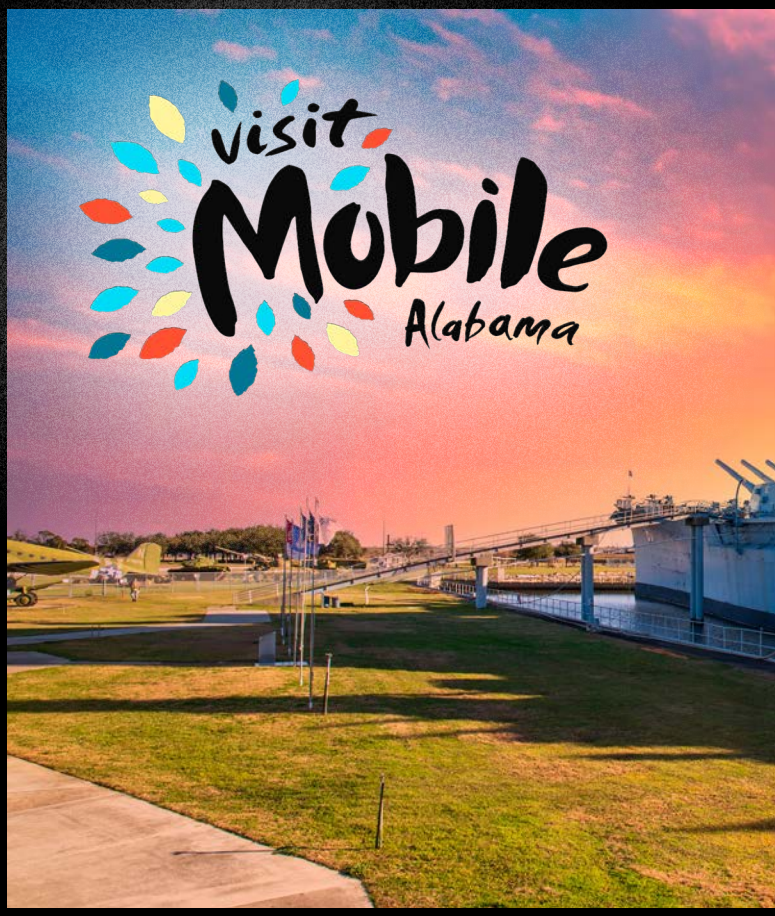
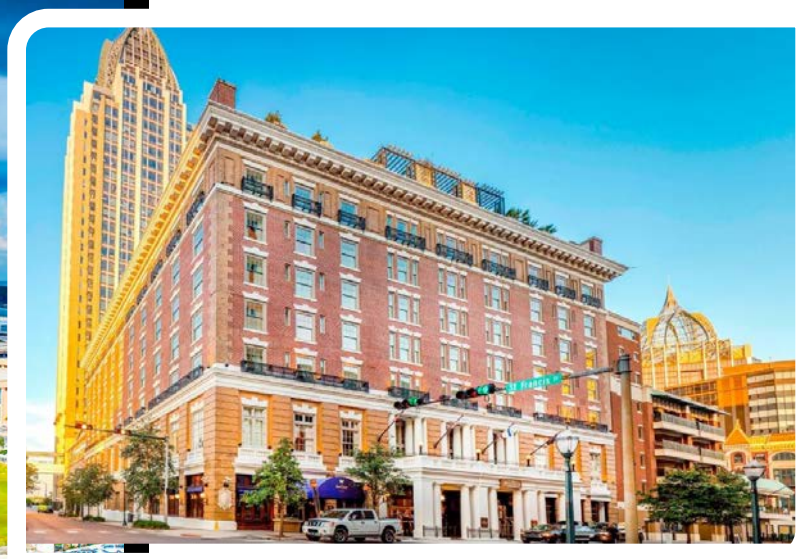
LUXURY TRAVEL

IN MOBILE, ALABAMA

Upgrade your expectations in Mobile, Alabama, where you'll find a mix of luxurious experiences, blending Southern charm with upscale amenities. With its distinct coastal appeal, Mobile's history, culture, and cuisine stem from the birthplace of Mardi Gras in a city that's flown under six flags. At nearly 325 years old—older than the State of Alabama—there are unparalleled choices to personalize your experience and recharge your focus.





STAY

The historic **Battle House Renaissance Hotel & Spa** features elegant accommodations, a high-end spa with valuable package deals and fine dining options. The rooftop pool and stunning views of the Mobile skyline add to its appeal. The hotel is located just steps from Mobile's walkable downtown entertainment district.

Discover downtown Mobile's luxury boutique hotel, **The Admiral**. The hotel exudes cosmopolitan sophistication and features newly renovated guest rooms. Other fine amenities include Le Moyne's Chophouse, the Living Room lounge and a luxury pool. Immerse yourself in the city's vibrant core and experience a one-of-a-kind escape unique to Mobile's French heritage.

Nestled in its own village, **Fort Condé Inn** is an indulgent bed-and-breakfast in a beautifully restored historic home. Across the street is the property's restaurant, Bistro St. Emanuel, where brunch is served daily. With elegant rooms and a quaint atmosphere, it's ideal for a romantic getaway.

EAT

In Mobile, the catch of the day may be fish, shrimp, crabs or oysters and you can guarantee it's Gulf-to-table fresh. Our local chefs are celebrated for their eclectic takes on cuisine, whether it's old-school, Southern contemporary or the family-secret BBQ recipe.

Located on the 34th floor in downtown Mobile, **Dauphin's** truly is Southern hospitality elevated. Enjoy magnificent views of Mobile Bay while savoring a menu full of classic coastal cuisine with a hint of Caribbean. The restaurant's name is a tribute to the region's storied French history and a nod to owner Bob Baumhower's former NFL team, the Miami Dolphins.

Indulge in the best plates Mobile has to offer while experiencing lessons in history, culture and architecture on a **Bienville Bites Food Tour**. This locally-owned, nationally-recognized team exudes gracious Southern charm. Take the pressure off deciding what and where to eat, knowing the eclectic food scene has been curated just for your taste.

A Mobile favorite with a uniquely elevated menu, the **Royal Scam** is the ideal backdrop for the dynamically paired dishes to savor each bite. Locals always go for the fresh catch, and you can't go wrong with the coffee-braised short ribs or filet and crab cakes. The cocktail menu and wine list will likely make you visit more than once.

PLAY

Bellingrath Gardens and Home is a 65-acre estate with beautifully manicured gardens and a historic home with views of Fowl River. It's an elegant, serene escape, perfect for restful strolls and you can often book special luxury experiences like private tours or exclusive garden events.

Attending a performance or concert at the historic **Saenger Theater** provides extraordinary entertainment surrounded by European-style architectural beauty. You'll discover enriching experiences, from national musical acts to Mobile Ballet, Mobile Symphony Orchestra and performance arts.

While Mardi Gras might not immediately scream "luxury," Mobile offers a more historical, cultural and exclusive festival experience. Mobile is home to the original Mardi Gras in the U.S., and private tours or VIP experiences during the season can include luxury accommodations, exclusive viewing areas for the parades and behind-the-scenes access.

When it is time to reset, recharge, and refocus, Mobile is your destination for discovering enrichment in a culture that's distinctly different at every turn. •

upgrade your expectations

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THINK TIFTON *Georgia*

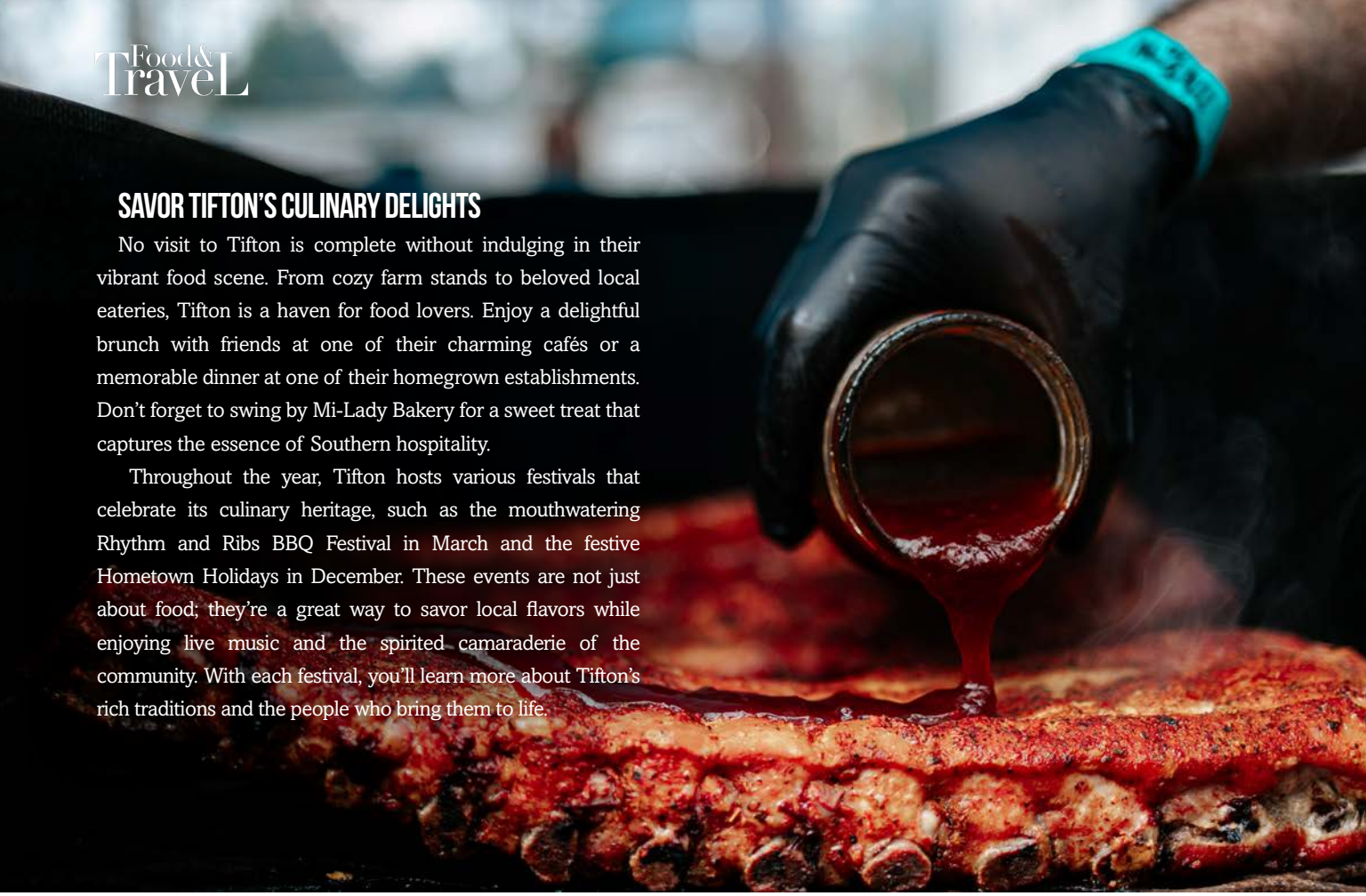
THE CROSSROADS OF AGRICULTURE & ADVENTURE

Nestled in the heart of South Georgia, Tifton invites you to experience the perfect blend of agricultural adventure and Southern charm. Tifton offers visitors a delightful array of activities that celebrate its rich heritage and vibrant community. Whether you're seeking a fun family outing or a romantic escape, Tifton is the ideal destination for every traveler.

EMBRACE TIFTON'S AGRICULTURAL HEARTBEAT

At the core of Tifton's allure is its deep agricultural roots. There, you can enjoy authentic farm experiences that connect you to the land. Step back in time at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture, where you'll discover farm life in the Wiregrass area during the early 1900s. This immersive experience showcases the history and significance of agriculture in the region. For hands-on fun, visit a variety of U-Pick farms for seasonal fruit and nut picking, or take the family to Rutland Farms for a delightful day at the petting zoo and fishing excursions.

Nature lovers will find Tifton's scenic landscapes perfect for outdoor activities. Stroll through their vibrant public art scene, featuring stunning murals, or discover over 20 charming painted "Georgia Dawgs" that cleverly represent local businesses. Golf enthusiasts can enjoy traditional courses or try their hand at disc golf beneath the majestic pines of Fulwood Park. The park also provides tranquil picnic spots, making it an ideal place to unwind and enjoy the outdoors.



SAVOR TIFTON'S CULINARY DELIGHTS

No visit to Tifton is complete without indulging in their vibrant food scene. From cozy farm stands to beloved local eateries, Tifton is a haven for food lovers. Enjoy a delightful brunch with friends at one of their charming cafés or a memorable dinner at one of their homegrown establishments. Don't forget to swing by Mi-Lady Bakery for a sweet treat that captures the essence of Southern hospitality.

Throughout the year, Tifton hosts various festivals that celebrate its culinary heritage, such as the mouthwatering Rhythm and Ribs BBQ Festival in March and the festive Hometown Holidays in December. These events are not just about food; they're a great way to savor local flavors while enjoying live music and the spirited camaraderie of the community. With each festival, you'll learn more about Tifton's rich traditions and the people who bring them to life.

EXPERIENCE CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Tifton's cultural offerings ensure that there's never a dull moment. Catch a captivating performance at the Historic Tift Theatre for Performing Arts, where you can laugh the night away at a comedy show or immerse yourself in live theater. The theater is a centerpiece of Tifton's community, hosting everything from musicals to special events that showcase local talent. If music is your passion, don't miss concerts at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center, where local and regional artists showcase their skills in a welcoming environment.

Art enthusiasts will love the Plough Gallery, featuring pottery experiences and rotating exhibits that tell the stories of Tifton's vibrant community. Tifton's art scene is not just about viewing; it's about experiencing and participating. Engage in workshops, attend art openings, and connect with local artists who are passionate about sharing their craft.

Easily accessible via I-75, Tifton is just 2.5 hours south of Atlanta, making it a convenient getaway for travelers from all directions. Whether you're there with the kids, your significant other, or for a family reunion, Tifton offers a welcoming atmosphere and an array of amenities to ensure your stay is enjoyable. •

So why wait? Think Tifton for rich agricultural heritage, delightful cuisine, and vibrant arts and culture!

ThinkTifton.com

CULTIVATING THE PERFECT GETAWAY

THINKTIFTON.COM

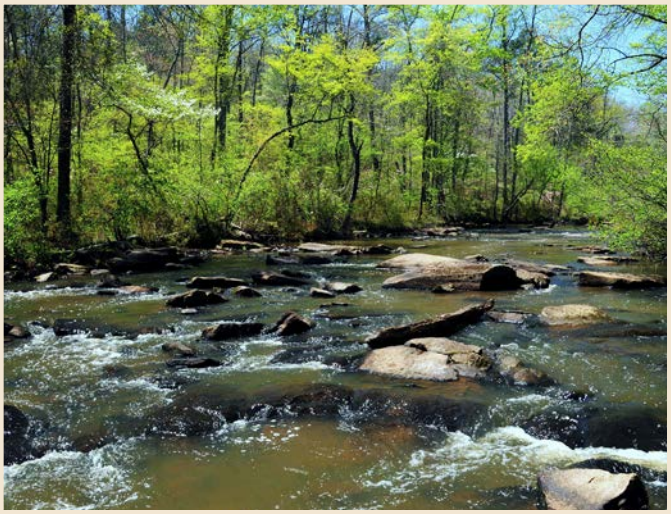
FROM GEORGIA'S ONLY MUSEUM OF AGRICULTURE TO U-PICK FRUIT ORCHARDS TO LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS, YEAR-ROUND AG-VENTURE AWAITS! TO EXPERIENCE LOCAL FLAVOR AT ITS FINEST IN A DESTINATION THAT'S EASY TO REACH —THINK TIFTON!

think TIFTON

DISCOVER PEACHTREE CITY GEORGIA

Where Charm, Adventure and Convenience Await

Just 25 miles south of the world's busiest airport, explore Peachtree City at your own pace. Peachtree City offers a unique blend of Southern hospitality and modern convenience, making it an ideal destination for families, foodies, and travelers. Its proximity to Atlanta also means residents and visitors can easily enjoy day trips to popular attractions like the Georgia Aquarium, Atlanta Botanical Garden, and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park. After a day in the city, you can return to Peachtree City's serene environment, where you can unwind in peace or continue the fun with local evening events and entertainment.



EXPERIENCE THE BEAUTY OF PEACHTREE CITY

Peachtree City's extensive network of multi-use paths, stretching over 100 miles, offers a perfect way to explore by foot, bike, or golf cart, creating a unique sense of freedom and adventure. The community takes pride in its lush parks and green spaces that offer recreational activities for all ages. Families can spend quality time at Drake Field or Line Creek Nature Area, while sports enthusiasts enjoy the many amenities, including a highly anticipated indoor pickleball court set to open in late 2025.

A CULINARY DESTINATION FOR FOOD LOVERS

With various eateries offering everything from classic Southern fare to international cuisine, there's something to satisfy every palate. Enjoy Southern favorites with a modern twist at local establishments, or savor authentic flavors from around the world at the diverse array of restaurants throughout the city.

Check out the exclusive PTC Culinary Tour, which shuttles guests via golf carts to sample delicious treats at restaurants throughout the city. This popular tour runs once a month from spring through fall. For a casual dining experience, visit one of the many family-friendly cafés or bistros, where you can enjoy a leisurely meal or grab a quick bite before heading out shopping. For an upscale option, Peachtree City has fine dining restaurants that showcase local and seasonal ingredients and innovative dishes crafted by talented local chefs.

After enjoying a delicious meal, make your way to Line Creek Brewing Co. to sample a selection of locally crafted brews. As a featured brewery at the annual Peachtree City Hops and Props Beer Festival, Line Creek Brewing Co. offers a flavorful stop that's well worth a visit during your stay.

Photo by Terence Rushin

EMBRACE THE PEACHTREE CITY LIFESTYLE

Peachtree City is more than a place to live or visit; it's a lifestyle. The sense of community is palpable, with friendly neighbors and a variety of events that bring people together. From live outdoor music events and wine and beer festivals, Peachtree City's calendar is filled with activities that celebrate the arts, local talent, and seasonal traditions. Is history more your thing? Check out CAF Airbase Georgia, home to a collection of historic warbirds, including World War II-era planes.

Whether you're exploring scenic paths, dining at charming local eateries, or taking advantage of easy access to Atlanta, Peachtree City combines relaxation and fun effortlessly. With eight hotels—two of which feature full-service restaurants and event spaces—you're sure to find the perfect place to unwind and enjoy their resort-style atmosphere.

Come and experience why so many are drawn to this gem of Georgia. With its stunning landscapes, diverse dining options, and ideal location, Peachtree City is truly a place where you can create memories, find adventure, and experience the best of Southern hospitality.

Make Peachtree City your next destination—a place that feels like home, even if you're just passing through.

Visit PeachtreeCity.com to learn more! •

VISIT Peachtree CITY

Located just 25 minutes from the world's busiest airport, explore Peachtree City, Georgia, at your pace and along 100+ miles of paved multi-use paths connecting you to shopping, dining, retreat-styled hotel/conference centers, leisure sports, and other recreation. Rent a golf cart, bicycle, or take a leisure stroll around the this picturesque community.

FEATURED UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 26 — Hops and Props Beer Festival
- Spring/Summer — Concerts at The Fred Amphitheater
- May 23 - 25 — The Camp Celebrity Meet & Greet
- October 4 — Wine and Warbirds
- October 17 - 19 — Multiverse Convention
- October 26 - 27 — The Atlanta Airshow

SCAN ME!

VisitPeachtreeCity.com

Adventure Meets Flavor ON THE TRAIL IN CHEROKEE!

Nestled in the foothills of the North Georgia mountains, Cherokee County offers a blend of scenic beauty, craft beverages, and culinary delights. The charm of small-town living meets the convenience of city life right *where metro meets the mountains*. Whether a nature lover, beer enthusiast, or foodie, you will enjoy amazing views and quality tastings on your visit.

SAVORY FLAVORS AND BREATHTAKING VIEWS

Begin your morning at one of the stops on the ***Beans, Barrels, & Bottles Trail***, which guides you through Cherokee County's best coffee shops, breweries, beer gardens, and wineries. **Barrel House Coffee** is a cozy café offering expertly brewed coffee in an inviting atmosphere. Before your adventure, fuel up with bold espressos or smooth lattes in the indoor café or outdoor pet-friendly spaces.

Next, immerse yourself in nature at **Gibbs Gardens**, one of the Southeast's most breathtaking gardens. Spanning over 300 acres, this floral paradise recently was voted the **#1 Daffodil Festival by *USA Today*** and hosts peaceful Japanese gardens with cascading waterfalls and bridges. Soak in the natural beauty and stunning vistas while strolling through six featured gardens, then head into town for lunch.

WIND DOWN WITH BURGERS, BREWS, AND BOTTLES

After your refreshing garden walk, satisfy your appetite at the **Burger Bus**, a unique restaurant housed in a converted vintage bus. Known for its creative burger selections and crispy sweet potato tots, it's a must-try!

For wine lovers, visit **Dot's Fine Wine & Craft**, a charming shop offering a curated selection of fine wines and craft beers. Whether you sip a glass on-site or grab a bottle to-go, Dot's is delightful.

Prefer beer? **Rock Solid Brewing Co.**, offers a rotating selection of craft beers, from hoppy IPAs to smooth stouts. Their taproom is the perfect place to unwind before heading south.

AFTERNOON:
ALMA COFFEE AND THE BEANS, BARRELS, AND BOTTLES TRAIL

Next stop, **Alma Coffee**. This family-run business specializes in farm-to-cup coffee. Enjoy handcrafted lattes while learning about their sustainable farming practices; then continue along the trail to Woodstock.

In downtown Woodstock, **Reformation Brewery** offers space to gather and enjoy a local beverage. A community-focused gathering spot known for its innovative brews and welcoming pet-friendly atmosphere; Reformation proudly serves some of the best craft beer in Georgia. They also offer house-made, hand-crafted cocktails, spirits, non-alcoholic beverages, and locally roasted coffee. With nearby food options and a continual lineup of special events and live music – there's something for everyone.

EVENING:
ELEVATED DINING & ROOFTOP VIEWS

Cap off your day with an upscale dining experience at **Century House Tavern**, a historic spot that blends Southern tradition with modern flavors. Their carefully curated menu features dishes made with fresh, local ingredients. Or choose **Prime 120**, a steakhouse offering prime cuts and seafood in an elegant environment.

In the mood for a cozy yet refined atmosphere? **Rootstock** features an impressive rooftop bar, stunning views of downtown Woodstock, and is a perfect place to relax. Known for its exceptional wine list, craft cocktails, and exquisite small plates, this restaurant offers the perfect spot for winding down your day. Staying over? Indulge in gourmet brunch selections while listening to live jazz music on Sundays.

PLAN YOUR CHEROKEE COUNTY ADVENTURE

From the serene landscapes of Gibbs Gardens to the lively breweries of Ball Ground and Woodstock, Cherokee County offers an unforgettable blend of natural beauty, craft beverages, and culinary excellence. Whether you're following the ***Beans, Barrels, and Bottles Trail*** or simply exploring at your own pace, these locales promise adventure, flavor, and relaxation. •

Explore. Experience. Enjoy. Plan your trip today at DestinationCherokeeGA.com!

plan your adventure

CHEROKEE

Beans, Barrels, & Bottles Trail Passport

Embark on a flavorful adventure connecting coffee shops, breweries, wineries, and more along Cherokee County, GA's scenic I-575 corridor. Sip, savor, and explore five cities - Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska, and Woodstock - while discovering the best local pours and brewing experiences!

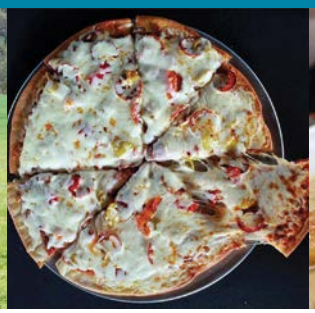
SCAN ME

DestinationCherokeeGA.com

DESTINATION Cherokee GEORGIA
BALL GROUND • CANTON • HOLLY SPRINGS
WALESKA • WOODSTOCK

West Virginia Plays Here!

Centrally located in the heart of West Virginia, Greater Bridgeport is home to some of the finest indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in the region. After a day of play, discover a rich variety of authentic and culturally diverse restaurants known throughout the state for great food and friendly service.



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