

Hungry? Let us tempt your tastebuds with the unique flavors that Florida eateries have to offer. And for those thirsting for a libation, we've got you covered. Consider this your foodie bucket list as you savor the Sunshine State.



Flavors *of* Florida





10
MUST
EATS
— in —
North
Florida

Lemon ricotta
pancakes are a
specialty at the
Candy Apple Cafe.



1

CANDY APPLE CAFE

This place is whimsically described as “one of the sweetest destinations in the city” — with good reason. The colorful cafe shares the space in a three-story, 1903 downtown building with iconic Jacksonville candy shop and factory, Sweet Pete’s. Despite its name and location, the Candy Apple Cafe offers a grown-up menu of French and Southern-inspired fare from the mother-and-daughter team of Liz and Jennifer Earnest. Jennifer’s husband Jamey Evoniuk is the chef. Fans come for dishes like Evoniuk’s herb-roasted chicken moutarde (with a Dijon mustard sauce), short rib pot-au-feu (a French beef stew), mac ‘n cheese with “candy bacon,” the classic Croque Monsieur sandwich and the bar’s craft cocktails. Not surprisingly, Candy Apple Cafe features a candy apple dessert. Apples dipped in Sweet Pete’s signature sea salt caramel are sliced and topped with vanilla ice cream, white and milk chocolate sauces and an Oreo crumble. If that’s not decadent enough, you can head to the dessert bar at Sweet Pete’s.

400 N. Hogan St., Jacksonville. 904-353-9717. candyapplecafeandcocktails.com

2

CYPRESS RESTAURANT



Cypress
offers a
cucumber
tuna roll with
habanero
puree and
tiger sauce.

The sophisticated restaurant is the place to go in Tallahassee to celebrate a special occasion or to impress visitors, including the state’s movers and shakers. But any excuse will do when diners are looking for a stellar culinary experience in the capital city. Open 17 years, Cypress serves Southern-inspired cuisine with some tropical flourishes, earning the restaurant Florida Trend Magazine’s Golden Spoon Hall of Fame award. Customers can opt for spirits and small plates at the cozy bar. Chef David Gwynn, co-owner with his wife Elizabeth, feature signature dishes such as a decadent starter of oysters with small tea biscuits in a sherry cream sauce, a sugar cane mopped rib-eye, seared grouper and blue crab cakes. Other highlights include the soups and seasonal salads, cheese boards and enticing desserts, like roasted strawberry and cream bread pudding, Key lime cheesecake brûlée and house-made ice cream. Even without a special occasion, Cypress is certainly a favorite Tallahassee spot to sit and sup in style.

320 E. Tennessee St., Tallahassee. 850-513-1100. cypressrestaurant.com

3



Baby Brussels sprouts with house-smoked bacon and smoked Gouda sauce is a signature tapas.

THE GLOBAL GRILL

Chef Frank Taylor and his wife, Jane, have carved a tasty niche in the Panhandle dining scene with their upscale tapas bar and restaurant, a Florida Trend Golden Spoon Award winner. While “tapas” brings to mind a Spanish flair, Taylor, one of the Pensacola Celebrity Chefs, offers a truly international take, using fresh local seafood and produce to express influences from around the globe. The best way to experience it is to order several signature tapas, such as the fried stuffed artichokes with Boursin cheese or the lamb lollipops, and share them while enjoying a cocktail from the well-stocked bar. Main plates include roasted duck breast and filet mignon.

27 Palafox Place, Pensacola. 469-9966. globalgrillpensacola.com.

4



Classic Irish pub fare includes shepherd’s pie and Irish steak and mushroom pie.

MCGUIRE’S IRISH PUB

A meal at McGuire’s is as much about the experience as the cuisine. More than a million autographed dollar bills hang from the walls and ceiling. Irish music serenades you. Kissing the stuffed moose head is also de rigueur. But don’t let the fun distract you from the food. McGuire’s is in Florida Trend magazine’s Golden Spoon Hall of Fame, and is revered for its steaks and wine list, as well as traditional Irish pub fare. Add a bowl of the famous Senate Bean Soup for 18 cents with any meal. McGuire’s brews its own beer and root beer, or order a rum-fueled Irish wake, served in a giant Mason jar.

600 E. Gregory St., Pensacola. 850-433-6789. 33 U.S. 98 East, Destin. 850-650-0000. mcguiresirishpub.com.

5



The Scottish salmon features a house rub, sweet potato hash, bacon and lemon butter.

THE GRAND MARLIN

The stunning beachside views are the icing on the cake at the Grand Marlin’s two Panhandle locations. The gorgeous new location in Panama City is turning heads, while the original location on Pensacola Beach has been going strong for more than five years. Chef Gregg McCarthy writes a new menu daily based on fresh seafood and produce availability; seafood selections, especially, change regularly. There are some don’t-miss standards, though, including the Blue Angel Chips, laden in warm, melted blue cheese. Weekly specials are also offered like the Sunday Prime Rib special.

5323 N. Lagoon Drive, Panama City. 850-249-1500. 400 Pensacola Beach Blvd., Pensacola Beach. 850-677-9153. thegrandmarlin.com.

FLAVORS *of* FLORIDA



A Scotch egg with pork cracklin “breeding” and served with avocado mayo is a signature dish.

UNION PUBLIC HOUSE

In one short year, this “crafty Southern pub” has established itself as one of the Panhandle’s top destinations. The brainchild of two of the area’s most respected young culinary professionals – Chef Blake Rushing and mixologist Patrick Bolster – Union’s food and drink menus are creative, sustainable, locally sourced and delicious. Rushing is famous for doing his own charcuterie as well as off-beat but excellent menu options including a Scotch egg with cracklin’ “breeding” and a grouper and shrimp corn dog. It still comes on a stick, with a cornbread breading and a side of tartar, or ketchup if you’re feeling nostalgic. The menu also features shepherd’s pie, blackened redfish, a smoked brisket sandwich, and steak and eggs. Save room for the addictive Cajun boiled peanuts and one of Bolster’s signature classic cocktails.

309 S. Reus St., Pensacola. 850-607-6320. unionpensacola.com.



The charcuterie board is just one of many items on the seasonal menu at Michael’s Tasting Room.

MICHAEL’S TASTING ROOM

Chef Michael Lugo and his wife Stephanie have created a romantic destination in a historic home that dates back to 1764 with a menu and wine list that blends the city’s Spanish and Mediterranean influences and Lugo’s own Puerto Rican heritage with Florida flavors and ingredients. The seasonal menu features tapas, a variety of entrees and a special five-course dinner (reserve 24 hours in advance) with an acclaimed wine list (Michael’s has been the recipient of the Wine Spectator’s Award of Excellence for the ninth year in a row). Lugo’s signature dishes include chicken fricassee, a traditional meal of his childhood, made with rice, chicken (cooked sous vide) and produce from the region plus the chef’s own house-made soffritto, a fragrant mix of herbs and spices.

25 Cuna St., St. Augustine. 904-810-2400. michaelstastingroom.com



Chef Bert Gill specializes in southern-style cuisine, like these fried green tomatoes.

BLUE GILL

Homey gourmet-quality food elevates this casual restaurant, a hidden gem located on the ground floor of the parking garage at University of Florida Health Shands Hospital. Described as “industrial chic,” Blue Gill is one of three dining venues from Gainesville chef Bert Gill and his wife Tara. Gill, the author of cookbook, “Pickled, Fried, and Fresh,” specializes in Southern-style cuisine, like fried green tomatoes, fried pickles and pork rind fried chicken, shrimp & grits, collards and cornbread. The menu is divided into sections titled “Bird,” “Pig,” “Vegetarian,” “Cow,” and so on. Fans rave about the Blue Gill Burger, the patties made with a combination of ground beef and shredded pork and a topping of spicy pimento cheese spread, bacon, lettuce and tomato.

1310 SW 13th St., Gainesville. 352-872-5181. bluegillqualityfood@gmail.com



ABOVE: La Cuisine’s rack of lamb. BELOW: Chef Patrice Perron and his wife Elodie fell in love with Ocala while on vacation and moved from France to open their restaurant.

LA CUISINE

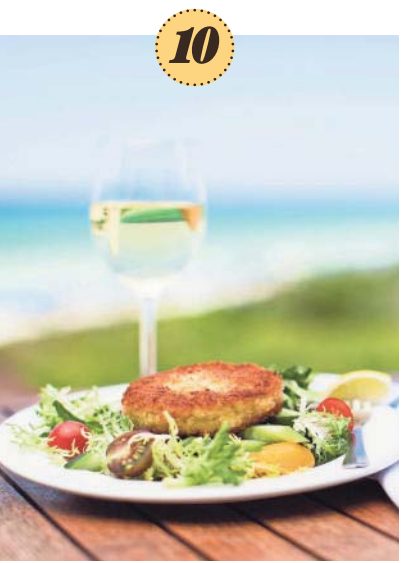
Chef Patrice Perron and his wife Elodie visited Ocala once on vacation and fell in love with the city and its quiet life-style. At the time, Perron had been cooking at renowned Daniel & Denise in Lyon, France under the tutelage of master chef Josef Viola. But Perron wanted to open his own restaurant. So when the Perrons, parents of two young children, decided to start a new life in the U.S., they came to horse country. La Cuisine features classic French cooking at Sunday brunch, lunch and dinner, a full bar and live music a few nights a week. With its red walls and friendly service, the restaurant has the charm of a French brasserie. Perron primarily focuses on traditional French fare like eggs meurette (poached eggs in a burgundy wine sauce which Perron makes with house-cured pork belly), country-style pâté, escargot, charcuterie and beef bourguignon. This is the place in Ocala to find true crème brûlée, chocolate mousse and tatin (an upside down warm apple pie with ice cream and mascarpone), all made in-house.

48 SW 1st Avenue, Ocala. 352-433-2570. lacuisineocala.com



NORTH FLORIDA FESTIVALS

- Smokin’ in the Square:** A KCBS-sanctioned barbecue cookoff and festival. Mid-March, downtown Pensacola
- UnWINEd:** Late March, Panama City Beach
- South Walton Beach Wine & Food Festival:** April 27-30, Miramar Beach.
- Pensacola Crawfish Festival:** April 28-30, downtown Pensacola.
- Lobster Festival & Tournament:** Sept. 11-17, Panama City Beach.
- Taste of the Beach:** Mid-September, Pensacola Beach
- Pensacola Seafood Festival:** Sept. 29-Oct.1, downtown Pensacola.
- Pensacola Greek Festival:** Early October, Pensacola.
- Florida Seafood Festival:** Nov. 3-4, Apalachicola
- Apalachicola Oyster Cook-Off:** Jan.12-13, Apalachicola
- Embers Wood Grill & Wine Festival:** Early April, Gainesville
- Jewish Food and Cultural Festival:** April 9, Tallahassee
- Brick City Beer & Wine Festival:** April 15, Ocala
- Oyster Jam Music Festival:** April 22-23, Metropolitan Park & Marina in Jacksonville
- Taste of St. Augustine:** April 27, St. Augustine
- Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival:** May 5-7, Amelia Island
- Jacksonville/Ponte Vedra Food Wine & Spirits Festival:** May 6-7, Ponte Vedra Beach
- Greek Food Festival:** Mid-October, Tallahassee
- Tallahassee Brewfest:** Mid-October, Tallahassee
- Great Chowder Debate:** Early November, St. Augustine
- Amelia Island Restaurant Week:** Late January, Amelia Island
- St. Augustine Lions Seafood Festival:** Early March, downtown St. Augustine



The casual vibe belies the high-quality cuisine, emphasizing local seafood and farm-to-table freshness.

BUD & ALLEY’S WATERFRONT RESTAURANT

Founded 30 years ago by a pair of surfing buddies, Bud & Alley’s is not named for its founders, but rather for their pets, Bud the Dachshund and Alley the cat. That kind of unpretentious and casual attitude became the staple, and Bud & Alley’s now has a home in the Florida Trend Golden Spoon Hall of Fame. The magazine’s food critic, Robert Tolf, named it one of the 20 best restaurants in the state. The casual vibe belies the high-quality cuisine, emphasizing local seafood and farm-to-table freshness. With a rooftop bar offering stunning seaside vistas and accompanying taco and pizza bars, there’s a lot to love.

2236 E. County Road 30-A, Seaside. 850-231-5900. budandalleys.com.



10
MUST
EATS
— in —
Central
Florida



1



THE WOODS JUPITER

The Woods Jupiter is high end dining in a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. It was established in 2015 by Tiger Woods as a family-friendly sports and dining club at Harbourside Place and attracts people as eager to taste the cuisine as catch a glimpse of the famous golfer. It features booth and table seating as well as an indoor/outdoor lounge and cigar bar. There also is a U-shaped bar with televisions broadcasting up-to-the-minute sports. If you just want to say you've been without committing to a large meal, the happy hour menu has a selection of snacks and cocktails. The salad and sandwich menu has some namesake options. If you are there for the full adventure, the land and sea menu has a variety of dinner selections including rack of lamb, steaks, lobster and seafood. Splurge with the chocolate stout cake for dessert which has hazelnut chocolate ganache infused with chocolate stout beer and is topped with candied bacon and a dulce de leche Baileys sauce.

129 Soundings Ave., Harbourside Place, Jupiter. 561-320-9627. woods.jupiter.com

LEFT: The prime burger features avocado, balsamic onions, lettuce, tomato and smoked mozzarella on a toasted Brioche bun.

AT TOP: The chocolate stout cake has layers of chocolate cake with chocolate butter cream, hazelnut chocolate ganache, infused with chocolate stout beer and topped with candied bacon and a dulce de leche Baileys sauce.

2



A plate of Morgan's salad and Buddy's beef sandwich.

OSSORIO BAKERY AND CAFE

When former President Barack Obama visited Brevard County during a 2012 campaign stop, he had breakfast here, finding out what locals already knew: This busy counter-service café serves one of the best breakfasts in town. While the omelets are great, Ossorio is better known for its flaky croissants and decadent pastries, which absorb just enough smoky goodness from the wood-fired oven in the heart of the dining room. Frequented by weekend warriors, cruise ship passengers and downtown business people, Ossorio serves sandwiches on crisp flatbreads, elaborate salads and homemade ice cream, and house-roasted coffee.

316 Brevard Ave., Cocoa. 321-639-2423. ossorio.com

3



Cedar's Cafe uses filtered water when making grape leaves.

CEDAR'S CAFÉ

Chef Toni Elkhouri wants to put the Space Coast on the culinary map, and she's starting with her own compact restaurant tucked between a department store and a chain eatery in a busy Melbourne shopping plaza. Elkhouri's mother, Marlene, opened Cedar's in 2004, preparing the traditional Lebanese dishes she grew up with. Toni's father got sick in 2006, and she left a job in Philadelphia to help her mother. A decade later, she has made the kitchen her own, adding a contemporary flair to her mother's old-world recipes. In 2016, she earned honors from the James Beard Foundation by placing in the Top 5 in the Blended Burger Competition.

4100 N. Wickham Road, Suite 137, Melbourne. 321-751-0000. cedarscafe.com

4



The paella a la Valenciana is one of many seafood and tapas offerings.

COLUMBIA RESTAURANT

This Cuban mainstay has seven locations across the state. But you're missing out if you've never been to the original in Tampa's Ybor City. Opened in 1905 by Cuban immigrant Casimiro Hernandez Sr., it started as a 60-seat café known for its Cuban sandwiches and coffee. In the past century, the restaurant has grown to include 15 dining rooms and seating for 1,700. The menu has expanded to include extensive salad, seafood and tapas offerings, but you can still get that original 1905 Cuban sandwich. Visit Sarasota, St. Augustine, Clearwater Beach and Celebration, and cafes in the Tampa Bay History Center and Tampa International Airport.

2117 E. Seventh Ave, Tampa. 813-248-4961. columbiarestaurant.com

5



Everything bagel with avocado, tomato and microgreens.

FRUITS AND ROOTS

This has become the vegan food destination in Martin County and is appreciated by all foodies for its creative menu. This very Zen and kitschy restaurant has generous portions made from quality organic and locally grown produce. People flock there for the smoothie bowls, salads, sandwiches, flatbreads and juice bar. Owner and former bartender Amber Eichling had challenges finding vegan options when dining out, so she opened her own cafe in 2015. A bonus is most items on the menu appeal to a variety of palates, even those seeking gluten-free choices, so it's a great place to grab lunch with friends or to stop on date night in downtown Stuart.

724 S. Colorado Ave., Stuart. 772-678-6627. fruitsandrootsvegancafe.com

FLAVORS *of* FLORIDA

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ABOVE: A charcuterie board with house-pickled vegetables pair perfectly with brewmaster Ron Raike's beers. **RIGHT:** The pork sliders are on the full menu of beer-appropriate delights.

PLAYALINDA BREWING COMPANY'S THE BRIX PROJECT

When Playalinda Brewing Company opened its taps in downtown Titusville in 2014, folks in north Brevard County eager to wet their whistles crowded into the rejuvenated hardware store. Two years later, Playalinda's creators expanded on the concept, giving life to another old building about five miles south of the original location. The Brix Project opened in fall 2016 in a former lumberyard, giving Playalinda's brewmaster Ron Raiké additional space to work his magic. While the hardware store location offers a light bar menu, the Brix Project offers a full menu beer-appropriate delights. Chef Justin Medina prepares dishes such as muffedettas on focaccia bread; charcuterie boards with house-made duck and bacon jam; and bright, crisp Scotch eggs.

5220 S Washington Ave., Titusville. 321-567-5974. playalindabrewingcompany.com/brix



CENTRAL FLORIDA FESTIVALS

- Einstein on Food and Wine:** January 2018, Tampa
- Central Florida Rum and Food Experience:** Mid-January, Lakeland
- Fellsmere Frog Leg Festival:** Jan. 18-21 2018, Fellsmere
- Port Salerno Seafood Festival:** Late January, Port Salerno
- Florida Craft Brew and Wing Fest:** Feb. 17, 2018, Vero Beach
- Shrimp Fest and Craft Brew Hulabaloo:** Late February, Sebastian
- Florida Strawberry Festival:** March 2018, Plant City
- Tampa Bay Beer Week:** Early March, Tampa
- Jupiter Seafood Festival:** Early March, Jupiter
- Fort Pierce Oyster Festival:** Early April, Fort Pierce
- Taste of Vero Beach:** Mid-April, Vero Beach
- Festa Italiana Weekend:** Early April, Tampa
- Best of Tampa Bay:** Late April, Tampa
- Taste of St. Lucie County:** Mid-April, Fort Pierce
- Martin County Shrimp and Lobster Festival:** May-12-14, Stuart
- Jupiter Food & Wine Festival:** May 20, Jupiter
- Annual Tampa Bay Margarita Festival:** May 27, Tampa Bay
- Cocoa Beach Uncorked:** June 3-14, Cocoa Beach
- Vero Beach Wine and Film Festival:** June 8-11, Vero Beach
- Tailgate Taste Fest:** Oct. 1, Tampa Bay
- Taste of Martin County:** Oct. 17, Stuart
- Sebastian Clambake:** Nov. 3-5, Sebastian
- Treasure Coast Beer Fest:** Early November, Port St. Lucie
- Downtown Melbourne Food & Wine Festival:** November, Melbourne

7



Pig-tailed shaped doughnuts with chocolate-esspresso dipping sauce.

RAVENOUS PIG

Since 2007, the Ravenous Pig has been a must-visit restaurant for those in Central Florida who seek innovative food and cocktails. The name is a tip-off the menu is heavy on pork and pork products: pork belly, ham jam, pork porterhouse, wild boar chops. There's also an excellent pub burger, steaks and seafood offerings. There's house-made charcuterie, an interesting cheese selection and, for weekend brunch, a bakery board. The Pig family expanded to include the more casual Cask & Larder and Swine and Sons. Cask & Larder moved to the Orlando International Airport, and the Ravenous Pig moved into the roomier C&L address.

565 W Fairbanks Ave, Winter Park. 407-628-2333. theravenouspig.com

8



Date night at 1.2.1 Tapas on the Water in downtown Fort Pierce.

1.2.1 TAPAS ON THE WATER

This downtown Fort Pierce establishment is classy and spotlights sophisticated fare, wines and craft brews. The cozy storefront has a view of Marina Square and the Indian River. It can be an intimate spot for date night or casual for a girls' night. Tuesday is open mic night, where diners can show off their singing chops during dinner. Some prefer ladies' night on Thursdays when they can sit back and let someone else do the singing when there's live entertainment. As the name suggests, this restaurant has a robust tapas menu as well as salads, flatbreads and crostinis. Entrees include seafood, lamb and chicken dishes.

121 Melody Lane, Fort Pierce. 772-781-0943. 121melody.com

9



The ultimate grilled cheese boasts 7 cheeses on crunchy Texas toast.

RIVERSIDE CAFÉ

Folks speak reverently about popular country singer and Vero Beach native Jake Owen, who's known to get up on the stage and perform at Riverside Café when in town. The restaurant was featured in the video for his 2016 hit "American Country Love Song" and inspired the set design for his first headlining tour back in 2014. Owen said he wanted it to look like the shabby chic, little riverfront restaurant and bar in Vero Beach where he started his career. Besides the celebrity connection, enjoy the shrimp pot stickers, grouper piccata, and drunken sautéed mussels while you view of the Indian River Lagoon or all-you-can-eat-brunch on Sundays.

3341 Bridge Plaza Drive, Vero Beach. 772-234-5550. riversidecafe.com

10



Mahi tacos can be enjoyed from your boat or the outside patio.

SAILOR'S RETURN

Located at Sunset Bay Harbour and Marina in Stuart, you can bring your own boat and dock right in front or just sit on the outside patio and admire yachts. The Sailor Salad is a popular lunch time order with its grilled chicken, baby greens, Gorgonzola cheese, roasted pumpkin seeds, Granny Smith apples and tangy key lime dressing. Many people visit this seafood and steak spot for dinner so they can enjoy the spectacular sunsets and complimentary live entertainment, sometimes even with a big slice of Sunset Bay orange cake with strawberries, candied graham crackers, walnuts and whipped cream.

625 S.W. Anchorage Way, Stuart. 772-872-7250. thesailorsreturn.com



10
MUST
EATS
— in —
South
Florida



Grilled mahi with chorizo risotto and tomato vinaigrette at Louie's Backyard in Key West.

LOUIE'S BACKYARD

This longtime Key West fine-dining favorite is loved for its relaxing ocean view and creative Caribbean-American cuisine. Tucked away in a two-story Victorian house off the beaten path, the restaurant's multilevel deck stretches from its "backyard" to the water's edge on the island's south side. The menu features grilled or sautéed local seafood as well as fine steaks, lamb chops, heirloom pork and chorizo-stuffed free-range chicken. Starters feature cracked conch, including conch fritters with hot pepper jelly. Don't be fooled by the restaurant's unassuming name, though. Expect dinner entrees in the \$30-\$40 range and lunch plates \$15-\$20. Reservations are preferred for this romantic getaway with the perfect ambiance.

700 Waddell Ave., Key West. 305-294-1061. louiesbackyard.com



The sweet-corn agnolotti with ricotta, bacon and sweet spring peas.

BUCCAN

Buccan is a chef-driven, ingredient-focused restaurant in an area better known for lobster, caviar and Ralph Lauren. Its menu is as cleverly delicious as it is accessible, with short-rib empanadas at \$6 and pasta dishes starting at \$14 (may we recommend the sweet-corn agnolotti with ricotta, bacon and sweet spring peas; you can thank us later). Buccan's buccan, a wood-fired grill used in Caribbean cooking, turns out wondrous pizzas and juicy lamb chops that acclaimed chef-owner Clay Conley pairs with mango chutney and cilantro. He serves squash blossoms relleno-style, stuffed with rock shrimp and cotija and chars octopus and serves it in a tabbouleh with chickpeas, chili and mint.

350 S. County Road, Palm Beach.
561-833-3450; buccanpalmbeach.com



A plate of stone crabs with a serving of hash browns, cole slaw and key lime pie.

JOE'S STONE CRAB

Joe's and stone crabs have been synonymous for more than a century. Joe's Stone Crab is so popular that diners need to come early to shorten the wait because lines usually are long and reservations are not accepted at the large, bustling restaurant on South Beach. Stone crabs are market price and available only seasonally from Oct. 15 to May 15. The sweet meat of the stone crab, a delicacy usually boiled and served chilled with melted butter or Joe's legendary mustard sauce, resembles lobster in appearance and flavor. Joe's classic meal features stone crab claws, cole slaw, hash browns, creamed spinach and a slice of key lime pie. The up-scale eatery also has other seafood dishes, meat, poultry and salads.

11 Washington Ave., Miami Beach.
305-673-0365. joestonecrab.com



Pies are scratch made each morning in flavors such as butterscotch, strawberry-rhubarb, and Key lime.

YODER'S

A taste of Amish country on the Gulf Coast of Florida? Welcome to Yoder's. Opened in 1975 by Levi and Amanda Yoder, Amish transplants from Indiana, Yoder's serves some of the best fried chicken, well, anywhere. It's breaded by hand and pressure-fried to shatteringly juicy perfection. And it's just the beginning. At breakfast, Yoder's biscuits are a thing of buttery-flaky beauty. At lunch and dinner the roasted turkey and gravy-smothered stuffing soothes your Thanksgiving-loving soul. There is a deli and a gift shop – and have I mentioned the pies? They're scratch made each morning in 32-some flavors including butterscotch, strawberry-rhubarb, Key lime, peach and a Southern pecan.

3434 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota.
941-955-7771. yodersrestaurant.com

Sweet Melissa's Cafe on Sanibel specializes in West Florida cuisine, according to chef-owner Melissa Talmage.



SWEET MELISSA'S CAFE

On the shell-lined barrier island of Sanibel, Sweet Melissa's is a chef-run bastion of excellent cooking; a culinary shelter from the storm of grouper sandwiches and cloying Key lime pies. Chef-owner Melissa Talmage worked in some of the best restaurants in New York and New Orleans before opening her own place on Sanibel in 2009. It's become a restaurant beloved by locals and tourists, alike. Credit the citrus-cured hamachi served with avocado puree and polenta croutons. Or an outstanding Carbonara that teams house-made fettuccine with country ham, pea tendrils and duck egg. But mostly you can credit Talmage, for saving us from the tourist traps with one great dish after the next.

1625 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. 239-472-1956. sweetmelissascafe.com

FLAVORS *of* FLORIDA



AT TOP: A shrimp and grits dish.
ABOVE: Chef Art Smith in the dining room of 1500 South.

1500 SOUTH

Art Smith, known for serving as Oprah Winfrey’s personal chef for years, has become a world-wide celebrity in his own right. The gracious chef brings his incredible enthusiasm and passion to the table for his scenic waterfront restaurant in Naples. Sophisticated dining areas surround its open kitchen and bar, opening up to outdoor tables next to yachts moored on the bay. The chef cleverly showcases his Florida roots with Southern-inspired dishes and creative American cuisine with an international flair. The restaurant features a breakfast menu with build-your-own omelets, lemon yogurt pancakes, blue crab cake Benedicts and cast-iron skillet home fries. For dinner, enjoy fried chicken and waffles, stone crab fettucine, pan-roasted grouper and heirloom tomato pie. Desserts include strawberry shortcake, apple dumplings with bourbon butter-scotch, and Smith’s signature 12-layer hummingbird cake.

1500 Fifth Ave. S., Naples. 239-774-1500. 1500southnaples.com

THE PERFECT CAPER

For years Jeanie Roland was “just” a great chef crafting thoughtful, seasonal plates (and winning the occasional James Beard nomination) in the otherwise sleepy town of Punta Gorda. Now she’s the bad-mamma-jamma who took down Bobby Flay in the 2015 Food Network victory. The win makes her chicken-liver pate with fig-vidalia relish and pear jam that much more velvety. It makes her miso salmon over udon noodles and shitake mushrooms that much more savory. And it makes the Caper’s occasional moules frites special – the dish with which Roland beat Chef Flay – that much more special.

121 E. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda. 941-505-9009. theperfectcaper.com



Chef Jeanie Roland



The bigeye tuna tartare with puffed wild rice is among the selections from the “raw” menu at Upland.

UPLAND

Chef Justin Smillie is a master. As the executive chef at Il Buco Alimentari e Vineria in Manhattan, Smillie’s handiwork earned a prestigious three stars from The New York Times. On Miami Beach he’s created an equally impressive restaurant that draws from his rural roots. A meal could start with cool slivers of wahoo sprinkled in microgreens and house-pickled cherry peppers – so simple. It could continue with a masterfully restrained cacio e pepe, or a two-person short rib showered in fresh horseradish with Castelvetro olives, walnuts and shaved celery. Upland’s dining room has a sort of farm-house minimalist vibe, with a Miami twist. It’s as lovely and hard to classify as its food.

49 Collins Ave., Miami Beach. 305-602-9998. uplandmiami.com



Petar’s daily special of pan-seared haddock also features lobster mashed potatoes and broth.

PETAR’S

Although the tiny restaurant is tucked away in the corner of a large shopping center in Bonita Springs, Petar’s fine-dining experience lets guests know they have stumbled upon something truly special. It’s an opportunity to savor the culinary skills of up-and-coming Chef Petar Al Kurdi in an intimate setting around an open kitchen. The young chef’s first solo creation is a big deal, offering simple, yet sophisticated dining elegance. Petar’s flawless food is on par with the best restaurants anywhere. Although the seasonal menu is limited with only about 15 starters or dinner entrees, the dishes make for a memorable evening. Outstanding entrees of world-class international cuisine include the popular lobster linguine, house-made lasagna and braised Wagyu beef short ribs finished with perfect crème brûlée and sweet crepes.

3300 Bonita Beach Road S.W., Bonita Springs. 239-494-1343. petarsrestaurant.com



As part of its seasonal Sicilian menu, Campiello in Naples offers this pasta dish with spaghetti, tomato, bell peppers, eggplant and capers.

CAMPIELLO

Campiello is the timeless cream of the crop in a coastal city known for its elegant dining destinations. The ritzy restaurant stands tall in a landmark historic building on one of Naples’ most popular streets for dining and shopping. The D’Amico & Partners classic offers delectable Italian cuisine and an impressive wine list in a refined setting. Campiello’s Italian-inspired ambience includes an open kitchen, Michelangelo-influenced interior, a scenic outdoor courtyard and balcony views overlooking the tony Third Street South. The award-winning ristorante and bar are perfect for a romantic dinner, a business lunch or just enjoying a Gulf breeze while dining al fresco. The chef-crafted menu of Tuscan dishes features fresh pasta, wood-roasted rotisserie specialties and decadent desserts.

1177 Third St. S., Naples. 239-435-1166. campiello.damico.com

SOUTH FLORIDA FESTIVALS

Key West Lobsterfest: Aug. 10-13, Key West

South Florida Garlic Fest: Mid-February, Delray Beach

Swamp Cabbage Festival: Late February, LaBelle

South Beach Wine & Food Festival: Late February, South Beach

Naples Winter Wine Festival: Late January, Naples

Sarasota Seafood & Music Festival: Jan. 20-21, 2018, Sarasota

Southwest Florida Food & Wine Fest: Late February, Miramar Lakes

Suncoast Food & Wine Festival: Mid-November, Sarasota

Taste of the Islands: November, Sanibel

Taste of the Town: November, Fort Myers

Taste of Lee: November, Fort Myers

MangoMania: July, Pine Island

Forks & Corks: Jan. 28, 2018, Sarasota

International Chocolate Festival: Mid-January, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Miami

Key West Food & Wine Festival: Oct. 1, Key West

Goodland Mullet Festival: Late January, Goodland

Master Chefs Classic: Late January, Key West

Uncorked Food & Wine Festival: Early to mid-January, Key Largo and Islamorada

Brew on the Bay: Early January, Key Largo

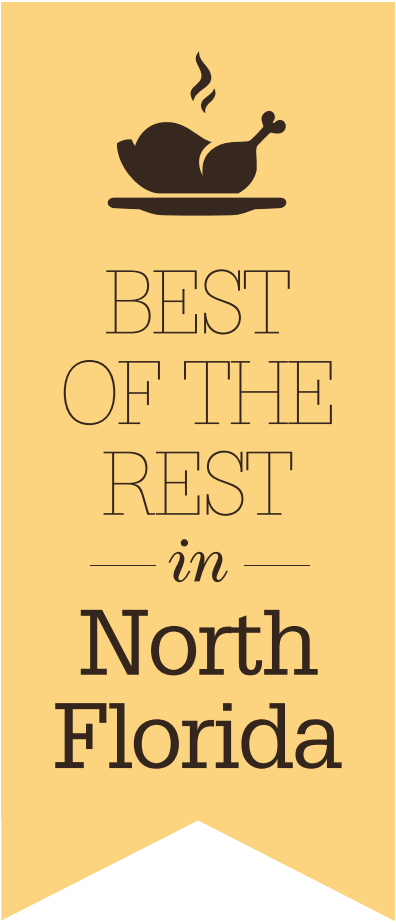
Las Olas Wine and Food Festival: Late April, Fort Lauderdale

Stone Crab Festival: Late October, Naples

Palm Beach Food & Wine Fest: Mid-December, Palm Beach

Florida Winefest & Auction: Early April, Sarasota

Everglades Seafood Festival: Mid-February, Everglades City



 **THE FISH HOUSE**, 600 S. Barracks St., Pensacola. 850-470-0003. fishhousepensacola.com

Skopelos at New World, 600 S. Palafox St., Pensacola. 850-432-6565. skopelosatnewworld.com

Jackson's Steakhouse, 400 Palafox Place, Pensacola. 850-469-9898. jacksonsrestaurant.com

Restaurant Iron, 22 N. Palafox St., Pensacola. 850-476-7776. restaurantiron.com

H2O Cajun-Asian Grill, Hilton Pensacola Beach Gulf Front, 12 Via de Luna, Pensacola Beach. 850-972-1700. hiltonpensacolabeach.com

 **BLACKWATER BISTRO**, 5147 Elmira St., Milton. 850-623-1105. blackwaterbistro.com

The Donut Hole Bakery Cafe, 635 Harbor Blvd., Destin. 850-837-8824.

Fish Out of Water, WaterColor Inn, 34 Goldenrod Circle, Santa Rosa Beach. 850-534-5000. watercolorresort.com/dining/fish-out-of-water

Tim Creehan's Cuvee 30A, 12805 U.S. 98, Suite D101, Inlet Beach. 850-909-0111. cuvee301.com

Havana Beach Bar and Grill, The Pearl Hotel, 63 Main St., Rosemary Beach. 850-588-2882. thepearlrb.com/dining/havana-beach-en.html

Capt. Anderson's Restaurant & Waterfront Market, 5551 N. Lagoon Drive, Panama City Beach. 850-234-2225. captandersons.com

Firefly, 535 Richard Jackson Blvd., Panama City Beach. 850-249-3359. fireflypcb.com

Bistro Aix, 1440 San Marco Blvd, Jacksonville. 904-398-1949. bistrox.com

Blackfly, 108 Anastasia Blvd., St. Augustine. 904-201-6300. blackflytherestaurant.com

Black Sheep, 1534 Oak St, Jacksonville. 904-380-3091. blacksheep5points.com

Blu Halo, 3431 Bannerman Rd., Tallahassee. 850-999-1696. thebluhalo.com

Catch 27, 40 Charlotte St., St. Augustine. 904-217-3542. catchtwentyseven.com

Dragonfly, 201 SE 2nd Ave.,Gainesville. 352-371-3359. dragonflyrestaurants.com

Gilbert's Underground Kitchen, 510 South 8th St., Fernandina Beach. 904-310-6374. undergroundkitchen.co

 **THE IVY HOUSE**, 106 NW Main St., Williston. 352-528-5410. Also at 917 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. 352-622-5550. ivyhousefl.com

Kool Beanz, 921 Thomasville Rd., Tallahassee. 850-224-2466. koolbeanz-cafe.com

Orsay, 3630 Park St., Jacksonville. 904-381-0909. Restaurantorsay.com

 **SATCHEL'S PIZZA**, 1800 NE 23rd Ave, Gainesville. 352-335-7272. satchelspizza.com

Sage, 3534 Maclay Blvd., Tallahassee. 850-270-9396. sagetallahassee.com

Table 23, 1215 Thomasville Rd., Tallahassee. 850-329-2261. table23tally.com



Jackson's Steakhouse in Pensacola is often ranked among Florida's top restaurants and is recognized in the Golden Spoon Hall of Fame by Florida Trend magazine.



Grits à Ya Ya is the world-famous signature dish at The Fish House in Pensacola. Spiced Gulf jumbo shrimp top a sauté of spinach, portobello mushrooms, applewood-smoked bacon, garlic, shallots and cream, served over a heaping bed of smoked Gouda grits.



Keith Paniucki is founder and partner of The Blu Halo. The Tallahassee-based steak and seafood restaurant offers gourmet, farm-to-table menu selections including a wide selection of small-plate appetizers and high-end chops.



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Explore North Florida » If Flavors of Florida has you craving an in-state road trip, we've got just the tool to help you eat well along the way. Look up "Destinate," and you'll discover it means to destine or to choose. Visit MyDestinate.com, and we'll help you choose your next great road trip meal. We get it, sometimes you're in a hurry, looking for the quickest way to get from Point A to Point B. Grabbing a burger next to the gas station is your only option. But on those glorious occasions when you've got a bit more time, Destinate is here to help you find interesting local places like The Fish House in Pensacola, Backwater Bistro in Milton, The Ivy House in Ocala or Satchel's Pizza in Gainesville. Check out our mobile website, and we'll help you find a place just a few minutes off the interstate.



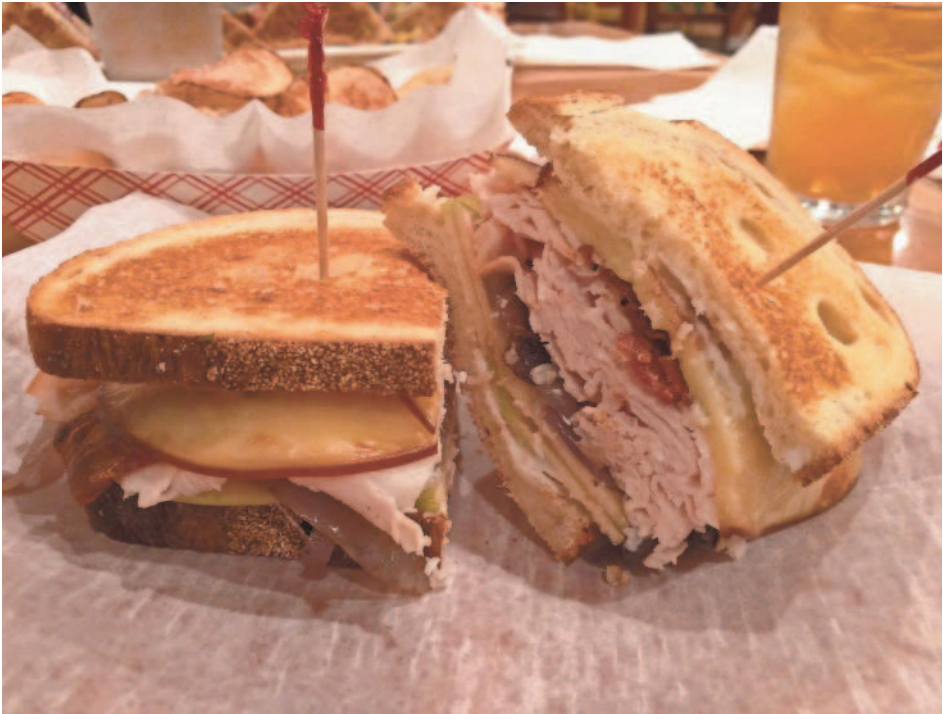


Osceola Bistro owner and chef Christopher Bireley is a Vero Beach native who has been honing his craft for more than 20 years.



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Explore Central Florida »
How do we find our Destinate restaurants? We asked the experts: food writers from across the USA Today Network and foodies who live in the area. Tell us your route, and we'll share our recommendations along the way. Places like Cibo Neighborhood Eatery in Rockledge, The Breakers in New Smyrna Beach or The Ravenous Pig in Orlando. Unlike other restaurant search tools, we won't overwhelm you with choices. You know how to find the national chains and fast food.



This Red Onion sandwich features smoked turkey, bacon, Fuji apple slices, Gouda cheese, caramelized onion and cream cheese.



One Love Jamaican Restaurant N Seafood offers the ultimate crab pot that is filled with shrimp, snow crab legs, whole blue crabs, a lobster tail, pork sausage, potato, half an ear of corn and a hard-boiled egg all swimming in butter and zesty seasoning.



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Bern's Steak House, 1208 S. Howard Ave., Tampa. 813-251-2421. berns-steakhouse.com

Crush XI, 11 Riverside Drive, Cocoa. 321-634-1100. crusheleven.com

Yellow Dog Cafe, 905 U.S. 1, Malabar. 321-956-3334. yellowdogcafe.com

Islands Fish Grill, 111 Fifth Ave., Indialantic. 321-956-0559. islandsfish-grill.net

Café Margaux, 220 Brevard Ave., Cocoa. 321-639-8343. margaux.com

 **CIBO NEIGHBORHOOD EATERY**, 3100 S. Fiske Blvd., Rockledge. 321-206-8099, ciboeatery.com

The Garlic, 556 E. Third Ave., New Smyrna Beach. 386-424-6660. thegarlic.net

 **THE BREAKERS**, 518 Flagler Ave, New Smyrna Beach. 386-428-2019

Soco, 629 E. Central Blvd., Orlando. 407-849-1800. socothonrtonpark.com

The Pharmacy, 8060 Via Dellaglio Way, Orlando. 407-985-2972. thepharmacyorlando.com

Prato, 124 N Park Ave, Winter Park. 407-262-0050. prato-wp.com

Chelsea's on Cardinal, 3201 Cardinal Drive, Vero Beach. 772- 234-8300

The Red Onion Eatery, 3001 Ocean Drive, Vero Beach. 772-492-8881. redonioneatery.com

The Blue Lion, 13401 U.S. 1, Sebastian. 772- 589-4445. bluelionbar.com

Osceola Bistro, 2045 13th Ave, Vero Beach. 772-569-1299. osceolabistro.com

The Cottage Grill, 8573 S. U.S. 1, Port St. Lucie. 772- 323-0236. facebook.com/pages/The-Cottage-Grill

Poinciana Café, 4812 N. Kings Highway, Fort Pierce. 772- 242-8610. facebook.com/PoincianaCafe

One Love Jamaican Restaurant N Seafood, 3453 SW Darwin Blvd., Port St. Lucie. 772- 985-3128. oneloveseafood.com

Brew.etarian, 2401 S.E. Ocean Blvd., Stuart. 772-419-8711. facebook.com/Brewetarian

The Hoffmann, 3825 N.E. Indian River Drive, Jensen Beach. 772-233-8487. thehoffmann.us

Ground Floor Farm Cafe, 100 Martin Luther King Blvd., Stuart. 772-600-4230. groundfloorfarm.com

Harry and the Natives, 11910 SE Federal Hwy, Hobe Sound. 772-546-3061. harryandthenatives.com

Taste Casual Dining, 11750 S.E. Dixie Highway, Hobe Sound. 772-546-1129. tastehobesound.com

Mary's Gourmet Kitchen, 3310 N.E. Indian River Drive, Jensen Beach. 772-934-6107. facebook.com/Marys-Gourmet-Kitchen

Fugu Tei, 6220 S.E. U.S. 1, Stuart. 772-287-5979. facebook.com/pages/Fugu-Tei



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Blue Heaven, 729 Thomas St., Key West. 305-296-8666. blueheavenkw.com

El Siboney, 900 Catherine St., Key West. 305-296-4184. elsiboneyrestaurant.com

Lorelai, 96 Madeira Road, Islamorada. 305-664-2692. loreleicabanabar.com

Alabama Jack's, 58000 Card Sound Road, Key Largo. 305-248-8741.

Larios on the Beach, 820 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach. 305-532-9577. lariosonthebeach.com

Bazaar Mar, 1300 S. Miami Ave., Miami. 305-615-5859. sbe.com

NIU Kitchen, 134 NE Second Ave., Miami. 786-542-5070. niukitchen.com

Mandolin Aegean Bistro, 4312 NE Second Ave., Miami. 305-576-6066. mandolinmiami.com

The Regional Kitchen & Public House, 651 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. 561-557-6460. eatregional.com

Coolinary Café, 4650 Donald Ross Road, Palm Beach Gardens. 561-249-6760. coolinarycafe.com

Nisi Restaurant, 3330 E Oakland Park Blvd., Fort Lauderdale. 954-200-6006. nisigroup.com

Hardy Park Bistro, 21 SW Seventh St., Fort Lauderdale. 954-652-1475. hardyparkbistro.com

Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe, 39395 Tamiami Trail, Ochopee. 239-695-2682. joaniesbluecrabcafe.com

Continental, 1205 Third Street South, Naples. 239-659-0007. damicoscontinental.com

Osteria Tulia, 466 Fifth Avenue South, Naples. 239-213-2073. osteriatulia.com

 **INCA'S KITCHEN**, 8955 U.S. 41 N, Naples. 239-631-5954. incaskitchens.com

Angelina's, 24041 S. Tamiami Trail, Bonita Springs. 239-390-3187. angelinasofbonitasprings.com

Indigenous, 239 S. Links Avenue, Sarasota. 941-706-4740. indigenoussarasota.com

 **OWEN'S FISH CAMP**, 516 Burns Lane, Sarasota. 941-951-6936. owensfishcamp.com

Leroy's Southern Kitchen & Bar, 201 W. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda. 941-505-2489. leroyssouthernkitchenandbar.com

Il Cielo, 1244 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. 239-472-5555. ilcielosanibel.com

Point 57, 3522 Del Prado Blvd., Cape Coral. 239-471-7785. point-57.com

Harold's Restaurant, 15250 S. Tamiami Trail, south Fort Myers. 239-849-0622. haroldscuisine.com

Blanc, 13451 McGregor Blvd., south Fort Myers. 239-887-3139. blancentertainment.com

 **FARMERS MARKET RESTAURANT**, 2736 Edison Ave., Fort Myers. 239-334-1687. farmersmarketrestaurant.com



ABOVE: The costoletta di maiale plate contains a grilled chop served with spatzle, pork belly, raddichio, grilled Valencia orange and radishes at Angelina's Ristorante.

AT LEFT: Made to resemble a rustic Italian farmhouse, Osteria Tulia is located in downtown Naples and operated by Chef Vincenzo Betulia.



Located just east of Everglades City, Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe in Ochopee has been feeding locals and tourists for the past 27 years.

CREDITS

ABOUT THIS SECTION

Flavors of Florida is a joint effort of the USA TODAY NETWORK-Florida properties: Pensacola News-Journal, Tallahassee Democrat, Florida Today, the Treasure Coast Newspapers, The News-Press at Fort Myers and Naples Daily News. Our trusted team of food writers have deemed these spots worthy of sharing with our valued readers as you eat and drink your way around Florida. Mark your calendar for a sampling of foodie festivals worth attending.

ON THE COVER

Seafood is a regular menu item on many of Florida's restaurants. Pictured here is a plate of roasted tiger prawns with fresh leek, lemon, and bread. GETTY IMAGES

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