



PHOTO: JASON PERRY

TRAVEL

My Town: Tyler Florence's Perfect Day in Greenville, South Carolina

The Food Network star heads home in September for the Euphoria festival

By **VIVIAN HODGES**

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Chef Tyler Florence.

The chef Tyler Florence has opened multiple restaurants, garnered two James Beard Award semifinalist nods, written more than ten books, and starred in a slew of Food Network shows, including *Food 911* and *The Great Food Truck Race*—a highly decorated career that, he says, traces in part to his hometown of Greenville, South Carolina. The piedmont city has become known for its bustling downtown and growing culinary scene, but when Florence was young, staples that made an impression included Carolina-style barbeque and Southern classics such as fried chicken. “I love the fact that I grew up in the South,” Florence says. “I love that that is where I learned how to cook. It is one of the greatest authentic, real food cultures in the world.”

Even though he calls the West Coast home now, Florence nods to those roots at his British-style pub in downtown San Francisco, Wayfare Tavern, where fried chicken reigns as one of the best-selling items on the menu. “When you come to my restaurants in San Francisco, and if you really pay attention,” he says, “you can tell there is a Southern guy in the kitchen.”

This year, Florence will return to Greenville for the seventeenth annual Euphoria festival, from September 15 to 18. As wine and bourbon tastings, food tours, and musical performances take over the city, Florence will join in the festivities, including “A Tyler Florence Homecoming,” for which he will host a cooking class for young chefs during the day and a fine-dining experience at Soby’s at night. “I am very excited to come home and see old friends and family and eat some really good Southern food,” he says.



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Guests enjoy Southern bites at the Euphoria festival in downtown Greenville.

Florence also plans to revisit some of the spots that shaped his childhood and started his journey in the cooking world. From historic landmarks to beloved dining destinations, here are a few of his must-dos when visiting Greenville.

Wake Up at the Westin Poinsett

While in Greenville, Florence will rest his head at the historic Westin Poinsett hotel, built in 1925 in the heart of downtown. “It is such a masterpiece,” he says. “It is just a beautiful, old Southern charmer of a hotel. It is one of my favorite places.”

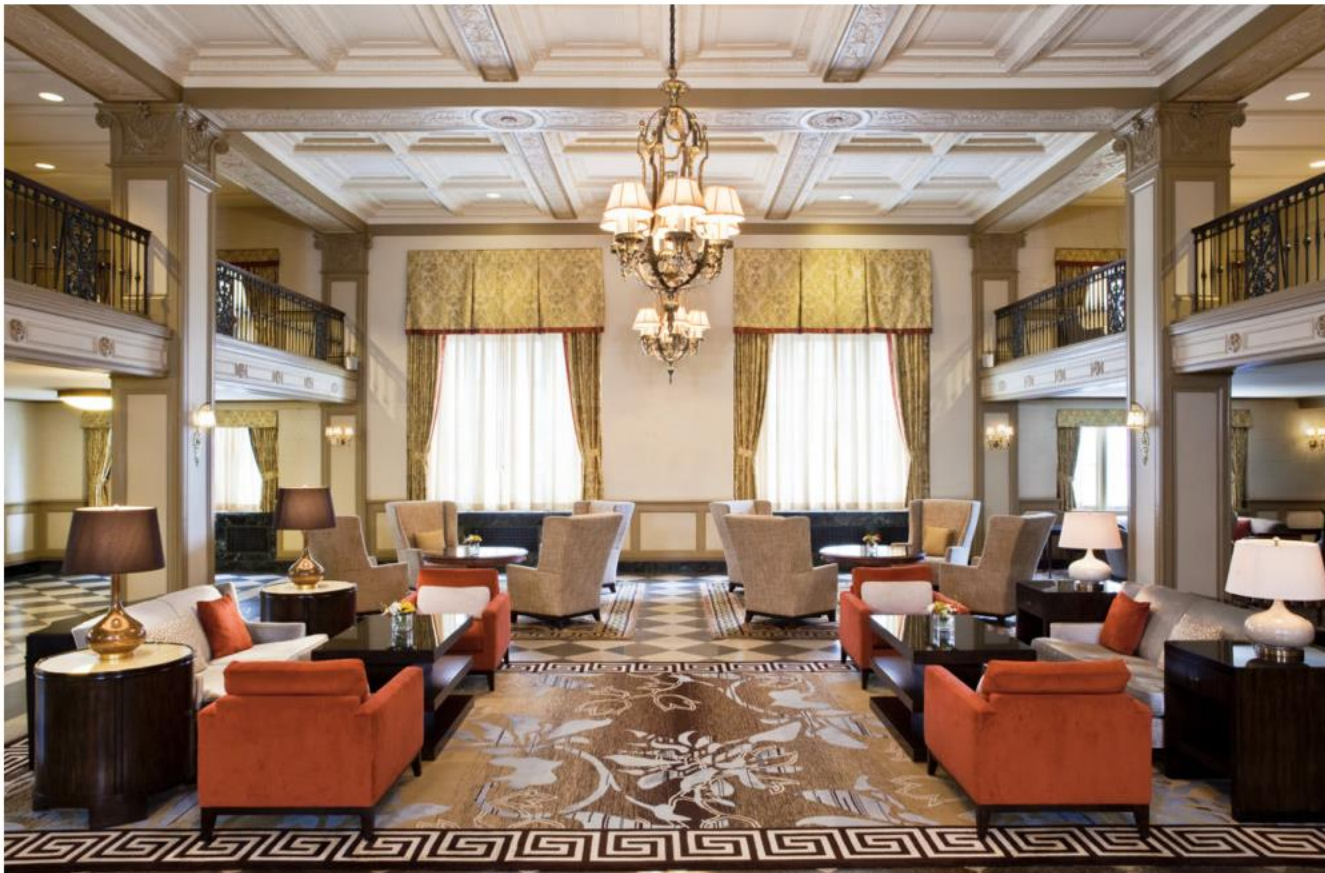


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The lobby of the Westin Poinsett.

Head to Breakfast at Stax Original

The Stathakis family opened this diner in the 1970s. “It is a great place to get a good meat-and-three meal,” Florence says. The breakfast menu, too, offers stick-to-your-ribs favorites such as omelets, steak biscuits, and “country” eggs Benedict with cured ham slices and sausage milk gravy.



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Grab Lunch at Henry's Smokehouse

Florence loves Henry's hickory-smoked, Carolina-style barbecue, located near downtown, especially the “smoked shoulder and ribs and super-tangy mustard-based barbecue sauce, which is awesome.”



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Take an Afternoon Break at Furman University

Florence grew up only a mile away from the small liberal arts and sciences university, and he and his brother would ride their bikes to Furman's picturesque campus daily. "It is where we made a lot of really fun memories as a kid," including at summer camps there, he says. A walk along Furman Lake will allow a peek at the historic Florentine-style bell tower.



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Sink Your Teeth into a Steak at the Peddler

For dinner, Florence makes sure to stop by the restaurant that introduced him to fine dining as a child. “This was the first place where I ever tried filet mignon wrapped in bacon,” Florence recalls. The local landmark, tucked into the woods into an old stone structure at the base of Paris Mountain, north of downtown, offers an old-school steakhouse experience—stone fireplaces, a generous salad buffet, tableside cut-to-order rib eyes, ice-cold martinis at a bar hung with Tiffany-style lamps. “For my entire life,” Florence says, “I have been trying to do a steakhouse like the Peddler.”