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Where to Find the Best Food and Drink in Greenville, South Carolina

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Methodical Coffee
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Greenville, South Carolina, might not be on every epicure's list (yet), but it's only a matter of time. It's currently touted as an emerging food-driven city, following in the culinary footsteps of Charleston. Greenville is a big city with a small-town feel, nestled between some of the South's biggest players: Atlanta, Charlotte, Asheville, and the aforementioned Charleston. Mayor Knox White can be credited for bringing vibrancy downtown, along with Carl Sobocinski, president of Table 301 Restaurant Group, who has helped bring the city's culinary scene to life. "It's unbelievable to think that not so long ago we were the only ones in town," says Sobocinski. "The Greenville culinary scene has evolved—rapidly—and with new spots being announced all the time, it's exciting to think we were at the forefront of it all."



Fried goat cheese balls at the Lazy Goat
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Plus, Greenville happens to be home to Michelin's North America headquarters and a gorgeous backdrop to Euphoria—a multiday food, wine, and music festival founded by singer-songwriter Edwin McCain and Sobocinski. (For the record, McCain does, in fact, perform during the festival.) “Back in the early 2000s, there were only a handful of food and wine festivals,” says Sobocinski. “Today, almost every city, big and small, has one, but back then we were doing something different and unique—and the fact that we added music as a third component was completely unheard of.” Each year, the festival draws wildly talented chefs such as Curtis Duffy (in his third year of attending), Dominique Crenn, and Michael Mina, to name a few.



Biscuit Head on the Greenville History Tours's breakfast tour

Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Sean Brock's ever-growing Husk empire is a solid indication of an up-and-coming food city. Set to open this fall, Brock's goal for the highly anticipated Greenville location is to "explore and define what upcountry cuisine means to the Husk philosophy. Guests can expect food inspired by my childhood, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and my Cherokee heritage." One thing's certain, Greenville is about to make a name for itself on the culinary map.

Here, a mouthwatering guide on where to eat and drink in our latest favorite Southern food city:



Oysters at Jianna
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Downtown's Top Tables

Soby's, Greenville's first non-meat-and-three restaurant to grace downtown in 1997, is a local's staple serving refined Southern eats. The upcountry shrimp and grits, country ham and Brussels sprouts, and boiled peanut hummus are not to miss. For the best Reedy River view, book a patio table at the Lazy Goat and nosh on the chef's talked-about paella and fried goat cheese balls—a hand-rolled luxury. Roost, with a “soil-to-city” approach, is a perfect spot to stop by for sharable snacks like a pimento cheese crock or flatbread after a stroll downtown. Newly opened Jianna presents dreamy pasta dishes and fresh oysters. Try the squid ink radiatori and the potato gnocchi (like pillowy BLT pockets)—or sit at the wraparound bar to soak up JJ's cheeky personality while he shucks the most buttery East and West Coast oysters.



Dark Corner Distillery
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Casual and Cool

Fuel up with Greenville History Tours's new breakfast tour. It's a little history plus several breakfasts at the likes of Famous Toastery, Biscuit Head, and LeGrand Bakery. Then take a scenic stroll down the Swamp Rabbit Trail to burn off a few calories. Methodical Coffee, more like a mad science lab, is worth a stop for a tres leches or a refreshing cold brew mojito. It's also wise to experience a morning bun courtesy of Bake Room, if they're not all sold out (a word to the wise: arrive early). M.Judson is undoubtedly the most prized bookstore in the South, offering an impressive selection of Southern literature and cookbooks. A stop at Poppington's guarantees fun by way of 24 karat gold-coated popcorn and quirky, palatable popcorn flavors like Bloody Mary and dill pickle, which can be washed down with a moonshine and whiskey tasting at Dark Corner Distillery just down the street. Caviar & Bananas can go several ways: a seasonal salad, caviar service for two, or a naughty (but worth it) fried green tomato BLT with a glass of sparkling. If available on a Saturday morning, the Greenville Saturday Market is time well spent—plus, Chancey Lindsey-Peake's banana breads are out of this world.



Fried green tomato BLT at Caviar & Bananas
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



Where to Drink

Pull up a seat at Crafted, Nose Dive's craft cocktail bar on the second floor, where head mixologist Walker Pickering concocts elevated tiki cocktails and updated classics. Craft beer fanatics will appreciate one-of-a-kind brews from Upstate Craft Beer Co. and Birds Fly South Ale Project, while UP on the Roof caters to all with delightful libations and striking views of downtown Greenville. Vault & Vator provides speakeasy atmosphere alongside a signature Vow of Silence mezcal cocktail: the perfect way to end any evening. If too much fun was had, locals swear by Southern Pressed Juicery's Hot Mess and Lord Have Mercy juices for a hangover cure.



Hot Mess juice at Southern Pressed Juicery
Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



The Neighborhood to Explore

The Village of West Greenville is like the Brooklyn of Greenville. The former textile mill turned arts district is worth the trip for a delightful dinner at The Anchorage alone. A no-reservation policy means first come, first serve, but there's an upstairs patio with twinkling string lights where you can appreciate a Devil Makes Three cocktail if you have to wait. Chef Greg McPhee's tasting menu is the way go as it will be hard to narrow down decisions—just know that Antebellum yellow grits and ricotta gnudi are two unforgettable dishes. If you're roaming the neighborhood during the daytime, visit the Village Grind for proper latte art and the Golden Brown & Delicious for lunch.



The Anchorage

Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice



A Quick Jaunt From Downtown

On the way to Greenville from the airport, make a pit stop at [Bacon Bros. Public House](#). It would be wise to order the Potater Tots—topped off with pork shoulder, cheese, crispy pig ears, and sorghum vinegar—an obligatory meat board with house-made charcuterie, and Carolina rice and hash. If you have room, cross your fingers for a coveted slice of Elvis pie. Finally, try [Stella's Southern Brasserie](#), near Hollingsworth Park. It's home to the best gin and tonic program in the city. Pick your gin of choice; it'll be paired with a delightful house-made tonic. It might sound aggressive, but bring a friend and split the shrimp and heirloom panzanella salad, the Brasserie burger (with bacon jam!), and buttermilk okra frites.



Fried okra and a gin and tonic at Stella's Southern Brasserie

Photo: Courtesy of Jenn Rice

