BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Five Culinary Journeys In the U.S. to Get Your Tastebuds Excited

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Everyone knows that food and drink can make or break a trip and often the memories of delicious meals linger longer after the holiday is over. From the sweet aromas of roasted peppers lining the streets of Santa Fe to traditional New England fare with a twist in Boston, Visit The USA has pulled together five gourmet destinations to unlock the flavours of the U.S.

Turn up the heat in Santa Fe, New Mexico
Most roads in this Rocky Mountain city lead to chilli peppers. Locals pass its seeds along like secrets, and tucked in the valley of the Rio Grande lies Hatch, the "Chile Capital of the World." Try mild-to-hot green varieties in dishes like chiles rellenos for stuffed, battered or fried chillies, or experiment with the sweeter red pepper, often sundried or in sauces. Most vendors will simply roast the peppers on the spot, and when asked the inevitable "red or green" question, travellers can answer with "Christmas" for a taste of both. Don't miss the New Mexican specialty, the green chilli cheeseburger, which is now so popular it has its own trail. Other local favourites include Mexican food trucks in the plaza downtown, rich posole (pork and hominy stew), tasty barbecue, and the Santa Fe Chocolate Trail where those with a sweet tooth can try ancient Meso-American-style elixirs. Arrive in September for the Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta, which celebrates the city's culinary scene with cooking demonstrations, guest chef luncheons, wine dinners and a cycling tour between gourmet food stations.

Clam chowder galore in Boston, Massachusetts
The first stop on any New England culinary trip begins with the oldest continuously-operating restaurant in the U.S. Union Oyster House in Boston, where foodies can indulge in regional specialities including clam chowder, lobster and fresh oysters. The restaurant boasts a wall of fame with its star-studded diners, including Robin Williams, Meryl Streep and Al Pacino and it was a personal favourite of President John F. Kennedy, who loved to feast in the privacy of the upstairs dining room. Top menu picks include the restaurant's famed chilled lobster roll or lobster macaroni. Don't fancy seafood? Head to the North End, also known as Little Italy, to explore Boston's oldest neighbourhood that is home to more than 100 Italian-inspired restaurants, cafes and bakeries. Dine at Bricco, Assaggio or Quattro in the Frank DePasquale collection for a blend of old-world Italian and modern sophistication - we strongly recommend the tomato sauce and meatballs from a family recipe. Caffé Paradiso just down the road is your go-to café for an after-dinner espresso and cannoli, open daily until 2am.

Wine and dine in the desert in Scottsdale, Arizona
Set against the backdrop of Camelback Mountain, Scottsdale is home to a dazzling array of pioneering chefs who have long been leading the culinary charge. Chef Charleen Badman is a local foodie hero showcasing the best of Arizona's agricultural and farming community in seasonal menus at her downtown restaurant, FnB. Charleen also offers the first Arizona-only wine programme to complement the locally inspired dishes. At The Mission, Chef Matt Carter brings the flavours of Spain, Mexico, Central and South America to Old Town, Scottsdale. The guacamole tastes all the better for being made tableside and don't leave without trying the roasted pork shoulder tacos or the cucumber jalapeno margaritas. For a more casual ambience, Diego Pops offers diners a playful twist on traditional Mexican flavours with the brussels sprout nachos being one of the most popular dishes on the menu.

Gumbo feast in Lake Charles, Louisiana
If you are road-tripping across the South, Lake Charles in southwest Louisiana is definitely worth a stop. Celebrating the best of Cajun and Creole heritage and culture, this city serves the best gumbo, boudin and Étouffée and its culinary landscape is just waiting to be discovered. Head straight to the local hangout, Steamboat Bill's on the Lake, for of their shrimp and crab gumbo and jumbo butterfly gulf shrimp and for a meat feast, look no further than Famous Foods for their soft pork cracklins and boudin sausages (traditionally a blend of cooked port, rice, onions, peppers and seasonings stuffed into a sausage casing). For those with a sweet tooth, choose from a selection of old-fashioned sweet dough pies, freshly baked every morning at Mrs Johnnie's Gingerbread House. It's definitely worth getting an extra blackberry pie or two for the journey. For the first time ever, Lake Charles will be hosting the inaugural Louisiana Food & Wine Festival (14- 17 September) bringing together the best gourmet experiences from across Louisiana and the South.

Bluegrass culinary revolution in Lexington, Kentucky
Envelop yourself in Southern charm in Lexington, Kentucky, where the sweet and salty aromas of classic Southern fare awaits. Start with a trip back to the early 1800s in a historical home-turned-fine-dining restaurant, Holly Hill Inn. One of six restaurants in Lexington owned by celebrated chef Ouita Michel, dubbed the 'Martha Stewart of the South,' Holly Hill Inn sparked a Bluegrass culinary revolution when it first opened in 2001. With produce sourced from local Kentucky farms and a seasonal-inspired menu, the restaurant truly emulates the warmth of Kentucky hospitality. A trip to Kentucky would not be complete without bourbon, America's Native Spirit. Journey through 18 of Kentucky's greatest distilleries on the Bourbon Trail located in and around Lexington and Louisville to indulge in the rich history and taste of bourbon, while getting a behind the scenes look into how it is made. For the perfect food and drink combination, head to the Bardstown Bourbon Company. Just under an hour outside of Lexington, guests can enjoy a blend of Southern comfort food paired with an extensive spirit library hosting more than 400 vintage American whiskeys.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.

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