



Traditional Foods in America

Different Regions





Many Regions in America

- New England/Northeast
- Midwestern
- Southern
- Southwestern
- Pacific Northwestern
- *California
- *Texas
- *Louisiana
- *New York

- **Alaska
- **Hawaii, American Samoa
- **Guam, Mariana Islands
- **Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

*California, New York, and Texas are large enough to have their own food subculture, while southern Louisiana has a special population demographic

**These places are separate from the rest of the USA, each in different regions.



“New World” vs. “Old World” Foods

- There are many stereotypes about American foods (pie and ice cream, barbecue, fast food, Cheddar cheese, etc.)
- However, pork, beef, dairy, and other foods were imported to the Americas by Europeans. Some foods that are truly native to North America, not imported by European colonists, are:
 - Corn
 - Chocolate
 - Cactus
 - Tomatoes
 - Potatoes
 - Beans
 - Peppers
 - Squash
 - Avocados
 - Peanuts
 - Cranberries, other berries
 - Local mushrooms
 - Turkey, local wild birds
 - Elk, moose, deer
 - Salmon, trout, local fishes
 - Shrimp, crab, local seafood



All the Regions

New England / Northeast

New England



Common Regional Foods

- Lobster
- Cranberries
- Pancakes & Maple Syrup
- Colonial British Influence: Baked Beans, Brown Bread, Corned Beef
- Fish/Clam Chowder
- Thick Soups, Seafood, Potatoes, and Dairy
- Limited spices



Top: Brown bread
Bottom: Lobster

Maple syrup
Baked beans

Corned beef
Doughnuts (NY)

Cranberries
Clam chowder



New York City Area: All the Cuisines in One Place

Some Ethnic Groups in NYC:

- African-American
- Albanian
- Australian
- Bangladeshi
- Bhutanese
- Brazilian
- Caribbean
- Chinese
- Colombian
- Creole
- Czech
- Dominican
- Ecuadorian
- Egyptian
- Filipino
- Georgian
- German
- Greek
- Guyanese
- Irish
- Italian
- Haitian
- Hungarian
- Jamaican
- Jewish
- Korean
- Lebanese
- Mexican
- Pakistani
- Palestinian
- Peruvian
- Polish
- Puerto Rican
- Romanian
- Russian
- Thai
- Tibetan
- Trinidadian
- Turkish
- Ukrainian
- Uzbek
- Vietnamese
- West Indian
- West African
- Yemeni

New York City was traditionally the entering port for immigrants, so it has a very diverse population. It has the Statue of Liberty to remind the world that everyone is welcome.

Note: Because NYC is also the home of Wall Street and Broadway, it has massive income inequality. Therefore, some foods are very cheap, while others are very fancy.

For specific details, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine_of_New_York_City



Iconic NYC Foods:



← Cheesecake
Cronut ↓



← Manhattan



Bagels and lox

Cheesecake

Coney Island Hot Dogs

Cronut

Doughnuts

Manhattan (drink)

Pastrami/Reuben sandwich

Pizza

Waldorf Salad



← Bagels and lox
Coney Island hot dogs ↓



Reuben sandwich ↑
← Waldorf salad



NYC Restaurant Suggestions: <https://ny.eater.com/maps/new-york-iconic-dishes>



Some Popular NYC Street Foods:

Falafel



Hot Dog Stands



Italian Ice



Knishes



Pretzels



Street Tacos



Take-out Soup



Midwest

The Midwest



Regional/Common Foods

- Beer (+ beer bratwurst, beer cheese dip)
- Hamburgers and sausages
- Dairy (Wisconsin cheese)
- Beef, pork (esp. Iowa), potatoes, corn (esp. Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska)
- Unusual “salads” (potato salad, pasta salad, fruit salad, popcorn salad, etc.)
- Cakes, cookies, breads (origin of white bread)
- Deep-fried fair foods
- Sweet “bars” (baked sheets of sweet dessert)
- Berries (northern), beets, pickles
- Chicago: Deep-dish pizza

More Midwestern dishes: <https://www.thedailymeal.com/cook/dishes-only-found-midwest-gallery/>



Top: Cookies
Middle: Bundt Cake
Bottom: Breads

Scotcheroos
Sausages

Cheese
Deep-fried
Oreos

Rice Krispies
Deep-Dish Pizza

Beer & Bratwurst
Beer Cheese
& Pretzels

1800s Immigration: Effect on Midwestern Cuisine

Upper Midwest

- Scandinavian (Sweden, Norway, Denmark)
- German

Lower Midwest

- Slavic (Russian, Polish, Czech, Yugoslavian, etc.)
- German
- Greek, East Asian (Chinese, Vietnamese) – Chicago Area



South

- Coastal South (orange)
- Mountain South (dark green)



Regional/Common Foods

- Seafood (coastal)
- Beans
- Fried foods
- Cabbage
- Barbecue
- Rice
- Pork, chicken, beef
- Iced tea
- Corn
- Fruit cobbler
- Biscuits
- Scrambled eggs and ham/bacon
- Pies
- Melons



Iced Tea



Top: Pecan Pie
Middle: Biscuits and gravy
Bottom: Blueberry Pie

Melons
Barbecue

Peach cobbler
Berry cobbler

Southern Cuisine: Very Specific Details

- The **Appalachian Mountain** areas have many ramps (a variety of wild onion) and berries. Appalachia uses butter extensively but makes little use of cheese, and eats more wild game (as well as wild fruits and vegetables) than the rest of the South; apples, oats, and potatoes are also common in Appalachian cuisine, since the mountains are cooler and drier than the lowlands.
- The **Mountain South** favors pork, sorghum, and whiskey; the **Coastal South** (the coast, especially coastal Georgia and coastal South Carolina) favors seafood, rice, and grits.
- **Texas and Oklahoma**, where the South shades into the Great Plains, tend to eat beef; the rest of the South (including Arkansas, which is geologically more similar to Appalachia) prefers pork.
- **Arkansas** is the top rice-producing state in the nation. It produces Riceland rice and sweet corn, both of which are staples of the cuisine of Southeastern Arkansas. Arkansas is also noted for catfish, pork barbecue at restaurants, and chicken.
- **Florida** is home of the Key lime pie and swamp cabbage. Orange juice is the well-known beverage of the state.
- **Georgia** is known for its peaches, pecans, peanuts and Vidalia onions.
- In **Southern Louisiana**, there is [Cajun](#) and [Creole](#) cuisine. Louisiana is the largest supplier of crawfish in the U.S.
- **Kentucky** is famous for [Burgoo](#) stew, beer cheese, and the [Hot Brown](#) sandwich. Kentucky is also known for KFC and fried chicken.
- **Maryland and Virginia** are known for their blue and soft-shell crabs, and [Smith Island Cake](#).
- **Mississippi and Alabama** produce the most catfish in the United States.
- **Mississippi** specializes in farm-raised catfish, found in traditional "fish houses" throughout the state.
- Carolina-style barbecue is common in **North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia**, and is made traditionally from pulled-pork and a vinegar-based sauce.
- In the coastal areas of **South Carolina**, rice was an important crop, leading to local specialties like "Hoppin' John" (a mixture of rice and black-eyed peas flavored with salt pork) and Charleston red rice.
- **Oklahoma** has a reputation for many grain- and bean-based dishes, such as "cornbread and beans" or the breakfast dish biscuits and gravy.
- **Tennessee** is known for its country ham, and Memphis, TN is known for several famous barbecue restaurants and a major barbecue cooking competition held in May. Nashville, TN is known for its famous hot chicken (fried chicken with spicy red pepper).
- **Texas** specializes in barbecue, chili, and Southern cuisine, as well as a regional variation of Mexican food unique to Texas called Tex-Mex.
- **Virginia** produces Smithfield ham and Virginia peanuts. Brunswick stew, which originated in the town of Brunswick, Virginia is also popular. The state's proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and the ideal conditions of the Rappahannock River, makes oysters a popular dish in Virginia, be they served fried, raw, or in a cream-based oyster stew.

Southern Cooking: Cultural Note

- It is important to recognize that most “traditional Southern” cooking that occurred in the 19th century was done by Black American women, cooking both for their families and as forced labor. They did not receive credit for this labor or for their adaptations of European recipes, which may be why the allegedly Southern dish of chicken and waffles (and possibly others) is often attributed to Harlem, New York, where many Black people moved after the American Civil War. Many people still believe that the dish was “discovered” in Harlem in the 1930s.



One report on the topic: [The Dish the South Denied as its Own?](#)



Famous Louisiana Cuisines: Cajun & Creole



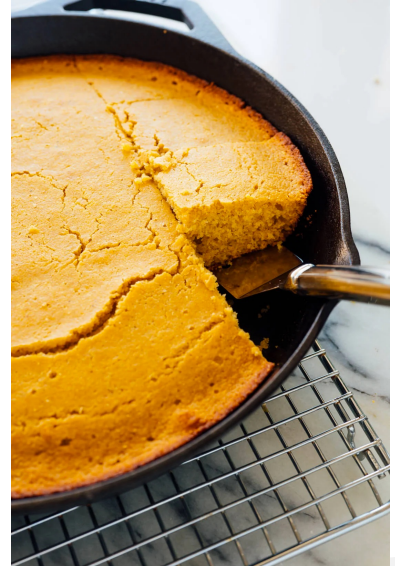
Cajun

- Comes from the French-speaking Acadian people, sent from Canada to Louisiana by the British in the 1700s
- Common dishes: Jambalaya, boudin, cornbread, crawfish boil; **large portions of meat**

Creole

- Comes from a blend of West African, French, Spanish, Native American, and Haitian influences
- Common dishes: gumbo, grits and grillades, beignets; **tomato-and-herb sauces, beans & rice**

These two cuisines are often confused for each other and have blended in popular culture. For more information, read this article: [Cajun or Creole](#)



Top: Seafood Gumbo
Bottom: Seafood Bisque

Sausage Gumbo
Chicken Gumbo

Crawfish Boil
Boudin (sausage)

Jambalaya
Cornbread



Top: Bananas Foster (bananas fried in butter, brown sugar, and rum), Beignets (Louisiana doughnuts)
Bottom: Bread Pudding Pralines (AKA “brittle”) Pain Perdu / French Toast

Steak & Beef: Center of America

- The cattle trails of America do not correspond with normal U.S. regions. They were in the middle of the country (the Old West) and includes parts of what is now the Northwest, Midwest, Southwest, and South.
- Cultural note: In Canada, Idaho, Oklahoma, and Texas, some cattle ranchers serve “Rocky Mountain Oysters.”



Cuisine: "South by Southwest"



Texas: Famous for Steak, Chili, and Tex-Mex



Left: Chili

Below: Nachos

Right: Tex-Mex full meal



*Tex-Mex usually has more dairy, larger portions, and some American ingredients (American cheeses, sour cream)

Southwest

The Southwest



Regional Foods

- Corn, beans, squash
- Chili peppers
- Beef and pork
- Steak (in cattle country)
- Cactus
- Native American roots
- Mexican Influence



Picture 1: Mexican food at a Southwestern restaurant.

Picture 2: Southwestern sweet potato

Picture 3: Cactus, chiles, corn

Pacific Northwest

The Pacific Northwest



Regional Foods

- River fish (trout)
- Cherries, berries
- Mushrooms
- **Coastal:** Shellfish, salmon, seafood
- **Inland:** Deer, elk, moose, beef
- Native American roots



Top: Chanterelle mushrooms, elk, deer, salmon
Bottom: Morel mushrooms, trout, seafood



Top: Sushi-rito (Japanese-Mexican sushi burrito), Ramen burger, Wonton fish tacos
Bottom: Baja omelette (Mexican-French), Nordic omelette, Sushi sandwich, Nutella wontons

Alaska: The Final Frontier



Difficult to keep in AK:

- Pasture (grassland)
- Large, domestic grass-eating animals
 - Cows
 - Sheep
 - Horses
- Warm-weather fruits
 - Citrus
 - Stone fruits
- Corn
 - Needs a long growing season

Alaskan Specialties: Salmon, Crab, Reindeer, Moose, Caribou, Black Cod, Wild Berries

- Alaska has a very short growing season because it is far away from the Equator, but plants grow very fast there because there is so much sunshine.
- Many domestic animals have difficulty living in Alaska, so it is common to eat wild animals instead.

Fun fact: In Alaska, it is illegal to whisper in someone's ear while they are hunting moose.



Top: Reindeer hot dogs, Alaskan salmon
Bottom: Alaskan wild berries, black cod, king crab



Hawai'i



Some Regional Foods:

- Coconut
- Pineapple
- Bananas
- Mango
- Papaya
- Lilikoi
- Wild boar
- Pork & Chicken
- Rice
- Seafood
- Poi (Taro)
- Sweet potato
- Poke
- Saimin
- Lau Lau
- Chicken Long Rice
- Sweet bread
- Macadamia nuts
- Coffee

- Polynesian, East and Southeast Asian influences



Top: Lomi Salmon, Poke, pineapple, poi
 Bottom: Lau Lau, Chicken Long Rice



American Samoa



Top to bottom (left):
Palusami, Fa'apapa,
Kopai, Panikeke



- Palusami
- Faiai Eleni
- Fa'apapa
- Fa'ausi
- Kopai
- Pani Popo
- Panikeke
- Sapasui
- Oka i'a



Top to bottom (right):
Faiai Eleni, Fa'ausi,
Pani Popo, Sapasui



Oka i'a



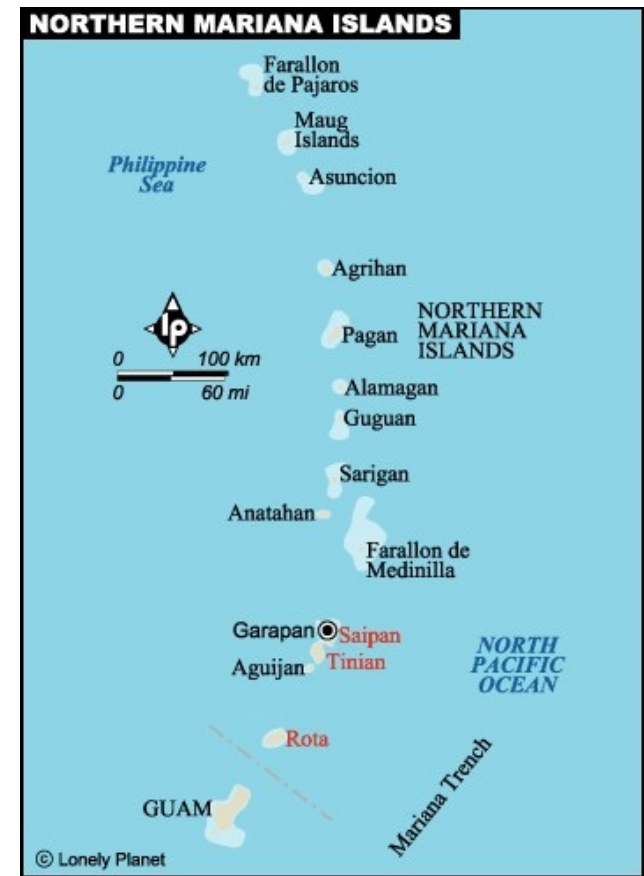
Guam and the Mariana Islands

Regional Foods:

- Cows
- Sheep
- Horses
- Poultry
- Pork
- Small animals
- Seafood
- Tropical fruits
- Coconut oil
- Rice
- Annatto
- Cucumber
- Salad
- Cakes



- This region has Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Papuan, Hawaiian, American, and indigenous influences



Fun fact: the Mariana Islands have the highest per-person consumption of Tabasco sauce.



Latiya



Red rice



Chamorro chicken kelaguen

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Common Ingredients:

- Rice, wheat, beans, corn
- Herbs and spices
- Spicy peppers (U.S. VI)
- Taro root and cassava/yucca
- Vegetables
- Meat and poultry
- Seafood and shellfish
- Tropical fruits
- Fried foods

- The food of Puerto Rico is inspired by:

- Spain (its European conquerers)
- Africa (its slave workers in the past)
- the original native Taíno population



- The food of the Virgin Islands is influenced by:

- Its former European inhabitants (Danish, Dutch, French, English, Scottish, Irish)
- Africa (its slave workers in the past)
- India, the Caribbean, and Arab regions



Top: Tostones, Longaniza platter, arroz con gandules (rice and peas)
Bottom: Empanadas, Tembleque (coconut pudding), Alcapurias (fried snacks)



15 Most Popular Foods in America (source: Door Dash)

#1. Burrito Bowl

#2. Tacos

#3. Cheeseburger
& Fries

#4. Pizza

#5. Bean Burrito

#6. Cobb Salad

#7. Chicken Soup

#8. Spicy Chicken
Burrito

#9. Taco Salad

#10. Nachos

#11. Spring Rolls


#12. Greek Salad

#13. Cheesecake

#14. Chicken BLT

#15. Chili

~ Slides by Victoria Thomas ~



Disclaimer: The information in these slides was gathered from various sources, including blogs for local culture, discussions with people from these regions, and Wikipedia for a mainstream view. **Accuracy is important to us:** If you find information that you believe to be inaccurate to your region, please contact the author at v-thomas@u-shimane.ac.jp



Next Topic: Holidays!

And their traditional foods