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Sam Rocha

Features

50 Most Iconic American Restaurants

American restaurants are a collective mirror, reflecting the culture and diverse heritage of the United States of America. Other cuisines reflect their cultures too, but nowhere else is the result as regional and eclectic as it is in the USA. From classic French fine dining in New York City to a conceptual avant-garde experience in Chicago to traditional Texas barbecue: American restaurants display their greatness from coast to coast in a variety of forms, techniques, and traditions. The inspirations are local and global, all at once.



What these restaurants also show is the absolute genius of their chefs. With awards and accolades each restaurant comes alive in the vision it owes to its culinary minds, minds who often takes risks and explore deeper questions than just what to eat. Also notable is the book list that emerges from these establishments in the form of beautiful and informative signature cookbooks.

The restaurants featured in this list have the usual concentrations in urban areas, with New York City carrying a significant amount of the selections. There are some rural places that make the list, like a steakhouse in Taylor, Texas, and the city of Charleston, South Carolina, more than hold its own in terms of placing its excellent dining option amidst the national food scene.

Methodology

The selection process for this list of the 50 Great American Restaurants was based on triangulated data from the most recent rankings on Eater, Business Insider, The Daily Meal, Trip Advisor, and Open Table, along with special attention the most recent James Beard Awardees. Once the list was compiled, ranking used the aforementioned sources plus additional information available on Wikipedia and local digital food journalism along the following criteria:

- (1) “**nostalgia**” rating” (i.e., their “classic” status within American society, especially in relation to their own geographic region and chefs),
- (2) their “**taste**” rating” (i.e., their culinary and gastronomic qualities),
- (3) their “**cult**” rating” (i.e., their quantity and quality of enthusiasts and awards), and
- (4) their “**hospitality**” rating” (i.e., their service and attention to the full experience of the meal). Each rating is calculated on a 5-point Likert scale with a total Rave Meter assigned on a cumulative 20 point scale.

While some of the restaurants are newer and others are quite old, the list is based on the most up-to-date information available, to ensure that you can feel confident in your selection being current and on present trends in the ever-changing food world. Read through the list and know that from one to fifty, there isn't a bad meal to be had on the list!

22. Fearrington House Restaurant, Pittsboro, NC



Image Source

Since 1980, the Fearrington House Restaurant has been providing Relais & Chateaux level cuisine with an emphasis on farm-to-fork dining. The expansive grounds surrounding the restaurant contain supple gardens from which produced and herbs are gathered in season as well as belted cows, goats and black and white chickens. The elegant dining space with fireplaces, cozy nooks, and meticulous attention to details give guests an idyllic environment to enjoy their meal. Generous tasting menus curated by Chef Colin Bedford give priority to fresh and local. Prosciutto wrapped quail, lamb terrine and short rib pithivier showcase his talent, while dessert souffle is not to be missed.

Located within the 32 room inn, surrounded by courtyards and gardens, the Fearrington House Restaurant dining area is split into separate rooms, with custom decor. Its location within what is called the “research triangle” of North Carolina, makes its location a prime spot for visitor and regular from the surrounding area. Chef Bedford arrived at The Fearrington House in 2005 as Executive Sous Chef and became Executive Chef in 2008, since then the British culinary genius has been hard at work to develop an elegant, modern, and sustainable kitchen.

The Fearrington House is included in the Open Table Top 100 and is the only AAA Five Diamond and Forbes Five-Star restaurant in the U.S. to be Green Certified and to be ranked a top 100 restaurant for foodies in America, based on more than two million reviews by OpenTable diners. It is a paragon of Southern hospitality.

Nostalgia - 3.75/5

Taste - 3.5/5

Cult - 3.5/5

Hospitality - 4/5

Rave Meter: 14.75

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