

# A FOOD



# LOVER'S

## *Guide to the National Parks*

In honor of the National Park Service's 100th anniversary in August, we found the best restaurants and bites at America's five most-visited parks.



Old Faithful Inn Dining Room

# YELLOWSTONE



## National Park

Yellowstone appeals to all types of travelers. It's America's oldest national park (a plus for history buffs); it has the largest concentration of mammals in the contiguous US (great for animal lovers); and laid-back visitors can just watch Old Faithful spout every 35 to 120 minutes. There are great bites for all outside the five entrance gates, especially in West Yellowstone, MT, and Cody, WY.

### OLD FAITHFUL INN DINING ROOM Yellowstone National Park

This 112-year-old dining room, set in one of the largest log structures in the world, caters to the indecisive: There are buffets three times a day, so you can try as much as you like, or you can commit to a proper Wyoming meal of bison bratwurst. *Grand Loop Rd.; yellowstonenationalparklodges.com*

### TAQUERIA LAS PALMITAS West Yellowstone, MT

The tacos here are just as authentic (and affordable) as ones you'd find in Mexico. The restaurant's entire operation runs out of the back of a vintage school bus, and the five-taco plate will set you back just \$10. *21 North Canyon St.; 406-640-0172*

### CAFÉ MADRIZ West Yellowstone, MT

Many of the Latin eateries near Yellowstone are Mexican—except for this spot owned by a native Spaniard. Of the Spanish classics on the menu, the chorizo al infierno is the crowd-pleaser. You get to flambé imported sausage at your table over a pig-shaped terra-cotta pot. *311 North Canyon St.; 406-646-9245*

### CASSIE'S SUPPER CLUB Cody, WY

If you want some two-step with your T-bone, this is the place to get it: The bar meets restaurant meets dance hall has been pairing steaks with honky-tonk music since the early 1940s. Try to tackle the legendary 36-ounce bone-in porterhouse; it's dry-aged and hand-cut. *214 Yellowstone Ave.; cassies.com*

### THE BOOK PEDDLER AND BUNKHOUSE BARN INTERIORS West Yellowstone, MT

First-time park visitors should stop by this bookstore café for a cup of joe, a baklava muffin and a quick research session: It's full of nature and outdoor survival guides. *106 North Canyon St.; 406-646-9358*



Grand Prismatic Spring

Café Madriz



The Book Peddler and Bunkhouse Barn Interiors



Cassie's Supper Club



Taqueria Las Palmitas



GRAND PRISMATIC SPRING: RALPH SMITH; CAFÉ MADRIZ: WHERRE WOMEN WORK; CASSIE'S SUPPER CLUB: JASON MCCARTHY; BISON: BROWN W. CANNON III; INTERSECTION PHOTOS: TAQUERIA LAS PALMITAS; ASHLEY ANN CAMPBELL



# GRAND CANYON



## National Park

You'll find top-notch food south of the Grand Canyon in the towns of Tusayan and Williams, but you can also eat a memorable meal right inside the park—and even on the canyon floor.

### EL TOVAR DINING ROOM

#### Grand Canyon Village, AZ

Of Grand Canyon Village's nine in-park eateries, 111-year-old El Tovar is the only upscale option, and it has amazing views of the canyon. The decor is old-school Grand Canyon glamour (murals of native tribes, 1930s-style Southwestern tableware), and the food is a modern take on Arizona classics, including pancakes with prickly pear syrup and the famed salmon tostada. *1 El Tovar Rd.; grandcanyonlodges.com*

### PHANTOM RANCH CANTEEN

#### Inner Canyon, AZ

Your reward for hiking 9.6 miles down to the canyon floor: a three-course dinner of steak, beef stew or vegetarian chili in a café built from river rocks. Most guests choose to book a stay in Phantom Ranch's cabins; you can buy a to-go lunch from the Canteen for your hike back up the next day. Reservations fill up fast, so call months in advance. *North Kaibab Trail; grandcanyonlodges.com*

### RP'S STAGE STOP

#### Tusayan, AZ

Before the railway started connecting the South Rim to civilization (aka Williams), stagecoaches were the way to get there, hence the name of this roadside café. The place can get busy—it's one of the only grab-and-go spots in town—but it's worth the wait. The mix-and-match breakfast sandwiches are the perfect start to a day of exploring. *400 AZ-64; rpsstagestop.com*

### TWISTERS

#### Williams, AZ

This Route 66 restaurant pays homage to all the soda fountains that dotted the highway during its 1950s heyday, starting with the vintage pink Crown Victoria parked out front. On the menu: sundaes, malts and blue plate specials like fried catfish. *417 East Rte. 66; route66place.com*

### STATION 66 ITALIAN BISTRO

#### Williams, AZ

The servings here are extra-big—just what you'll need after a long hike. Make the easy five-minute walk from the Grand Canyon Railway train depot to the restaurant, then order the 14-layer lasagna. *144 Historic Rte. 66; kennellyfamilyconcepts.com*



Twisters



RP's Stage Stop



El Tovar Dining Room



Station 66 Italian Bistro



Phantom Ranch Canteen



# GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS



## National Park

This is the country's most popular national park, with 11 million annual visitors, but you won't find a single restaurant among the hiking trails, waterfalls and scenic overlooks. The 500,000-acre park straddles the Tennessee–North Carolina border and has gates in several towns; the most action is in Gatlinburg, TN.

### FULL SERVICE BBQ Maryville, TN

Quintessential Tennessee barbecue is smoked, and at this former gas station, it's done right: Owner Anthony DiFranco III uses a blend of native hickory and oak in his two custom-built smokers. The fan-favorite pulled pork is the ultimate fuel for a day in the park. 113 South Washington St.; [fullservicebbq.com](http://fullservicebbq.com)

### WILD PLUM TEA ROOM Gatlinburg, TN

This cottage, modeled after teahouses in the Austrian Alps, looks like something from a fairy tale. Order the chicken salad—the secret ingredient is nutmeg—or grab a cup of tea and the namesake wild plum muffin. 555 Buckhorn Rd.; [wildplumtearoom.com](http://wildplumtearoom.com)

### SMOKY MOUNTAIN BREWERY Gatlinburg, TN

This has been the city's lone brewery for 20 years, and at least eight microbrews are on tap at all times. You can get a flight to try them all, but order some food, too. The sirloin is marinated in the signature Cherokee Red Ale. 1004 Parkway; [smoky-mtn-brewery.com](http://smoky-mtn-brewery.com)

### DOC COLLIER MOONSHINE DISTILLERY AND SUGARLANDS DISTILLING COMPANY Gatlinburg, TN

Tennessee has long been known for its moonshine, and you'll get a history lesson on the centuries-old tradition at Doc Collier, one of the area's prominent distilleries (519 Parkway; [doccollier.co](http://doccollier.co)). Then travel half a mile down the road and try making your own at Sugarlands Distilling Company (805 Parkway; [sugarlandsdistilling.com](http://sugarlandsdistilling.com)).

### THE LODGE AT BUCKBERRY CREEK Gatlinburg, TN

This is one of the only fine dining spots around, and it's about as close to eating in the park as you'll get: The mountainside property is a seven-minute drive from the entrance. Meat lovers will find plenty of options (including wild game) on the menu. 961 Campbell Lead Rd.; [buckberrylodge.com](http://buckberrylodge.com)

The Lodge at Buckberry Creek



Full Service BBQ

Sugarlands Distilling Company



Wild Plum Tea Room



Smoky Mountain Brewery



SMOKY MOUNTAINS: RALPH SMITH; SUGARLANDS DISTILLING COMPANY: J. MILES CARY; WILD PLUM TEA ROOM: GATLINBURG CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU; FULL SERVICE BBQ: ANTHONY DIFRANCO

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN

## National Park

A day of scaling Colorado's famous 11,000-foot mountains calls for mountains of food, too. Near the park's eastern border, in Estes Park and Lyons, you'll find tons of options for dining, drinking and snacking.

### TWIN OWLS STEAKHOUSE

Estes Park, CO

Swap your hiking boots for dress shoes and schedule a date night here. The lighting is low, the wine list is long and the servers are used to lovey-dovey guests: It's a hot spot for weddings. You should try an elk dish, like kebabs with Cajun sauce or the medallions with roasted sweet potatoes. 800 MacGregor Ave.; [twinowls.net](http://twinowls.net)

### ESTES PARK PIE SHOP & DINER

Estes Park, CO

You can order a full meal at this diner, but the word "pie" comes first in the name for a reason. The 40-plus varieties are made from the owners' grandmothers' recipes. If you order "the Frankenstein," you'll get six different slices in one pan. 509 Big Thompson Ave.; [youneedpie.com](http://youneedpie.com)

### ANTONIO'S REAL NEW YORK PIZZA

Estes Park, CO

Owner Antonio couldn't find good New York-style pizza when he moved to Colorado a decade ago, so he started making it himself. The mozzarella is local, but the tomatoes, flour and olive oil come from Italy. Antonio's accent, on the other hand, is straight-up Brooklyn. 552 West Elkhorn Ave.; [estesparkpizza.com](http://estesparkpizza.com)

### COLORADO CHERRY COMPANY

Lyons, CO

If you're looking for a halfway point between the park and Boulder (one hour away), make a "pit" stop here for some picnic snacks. The fourth-generation owners peddle local cherry specialties, including chokecherry jelly, cherry-marinated pickles and jugs of cherry cider. 12311 North Saint Vrain Dr.; [coloradocherrycompany.com](http://coloradocherrycompany.com)

### FARMER GIRL

Lyons, CO

When you've tasted enough local game, head to Farmer Girl: The chefs serve veggie-heavy dishes made from produce grown within 15 miles of the restaurant. This summer, look for cucumber soup and spicy corn cakes. 432 Main St.; [coloradofarmergirl.com](http://coloradofarmergirl.com)



Estes Park Pie Shop & Diner



Farmer Girl



Colorado Cherry Company

Twin Owls Steakhouse



Antonio's Real New York Pizza

ROCKY MOUNTAINS: AURORA PHOTOS.  
 COLORADO CHERRY COMPANY: KRISTI LEHNERT.  
 TWIN OWLS STEAKHOUSE: PAUL CHILBUCK.  
 ANTONIO'S REAL NEW YORK PIZZA: KATE FRANCHER.  
 FARMER GIRL: TYRA SUTAK.

# YOSEMITE National Park

Yosemite's most famous landmarks are towering giants, like Yosemite Falls (one of North America's tallest waterfalls), Half Dome (an 8,800-foot granite formation) and the millennia-old sequoia trees. It's a lot to take in—but you can fuel up for the sightseeing with great lunches and dinners near the West and East gates.

## MAJESTIC YOSEMITE DINING ROOM Yosemite National Park, CA

The dining room at the Majestic, long known as the Ahwahnee, is how the rich and famous (John F. Kennedy, Judy Garland, Brad Pitt) do meals in Yosemite: The Sunday brunch buffet in the log lodge is \$49 a person, but that buys you carved-to-order prime rib and fresh oysters—along with a view of Half Dome. 1 Ahwahnee Drive; [www.travelyosemite.com](http://www.travelyosemite.com)

## WHOA NELLIE DELI Lee Vining, CA

Make plans to fill up at this gas station, 15 minutes from the park's east entrance. The Mobil mart looks like any other, but its menu belongs in a trendy restaurant, with dishes including ahi sashimi and whitefish tacos. Take your food outside to the picnic tables for a mountain view and—on summer weekends—a front-row seat to music performances. 22 Vista Point Dr.; [whoanelliedeli.com](http://whoanelliedeli.com)

## DEGNAN'S DELI Yosemite National Park, CA

This 132-year-old sandwich shop is beloved for its storied past (it's the oldest business in the park) and, perhaps more important, its strong Wi-Fi signal. Enjoy the famous chicken salad croissant while you post a picture of the family in front of Half Dome. 9006 Yosemite Lodge Dr.; [travelyosemite.com](http://travelyosemite.com)

## JUNE BUG CAFE Midpines, CA

This spirited café and hostel is as popular for its food (made from the restaurant's own garden) as it is for its nighttime gatherings, where travelers flock to enjoy music, board games and flowing taps of Guinness. 6979 Hwy. 140; [yosemitebug.com](http://yosemitebug.com)

## 1850 Mariposa, CA

Golden State natives will feel at home here: The name is a nod to the year the state entered the Union, and California is celebrated with stacks of history books and state wines. Try the Bootjack burger, topped with bacon and an onion ring. 5114 Hwy. 140; [1850restaurant.com](http://1850restaurant.com)



Yosemite Falls



June Bug Cafe



1850

YOSEMITE FALLS: AURORA PHOTOS; JUNE BUG CAFE: 1850 AND DEGNAN'S DELI; THE MORGANS; WHOA NELLIE DELI; DENISE MOLNAR; MAJESTIC YOSEMITE DINING ROOM: YOSEMITE HOSPITALITY; TENAYA LAKE: SCOTT MARKEWITZ.



Tenaya Lake



Degnan's Deli



Whoa Nellie Deli



Majestic Yosemite Dining Room

REPORTING BY KRISTEN BROWNING-BLAS (ROCKY MOUNTAIN), KRISTIN LUNA (GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS) AND NINO PADOVA (YELLOWSTONE, GRAND CANYON AND YOSEMITE).



PLAY LIKE A KID.

EAT LIKE A GROWN-UP.



Now made with  
**100% ANGUS BEEF.**  
THESE HOT DOGS ARE ALL GROWN UP.