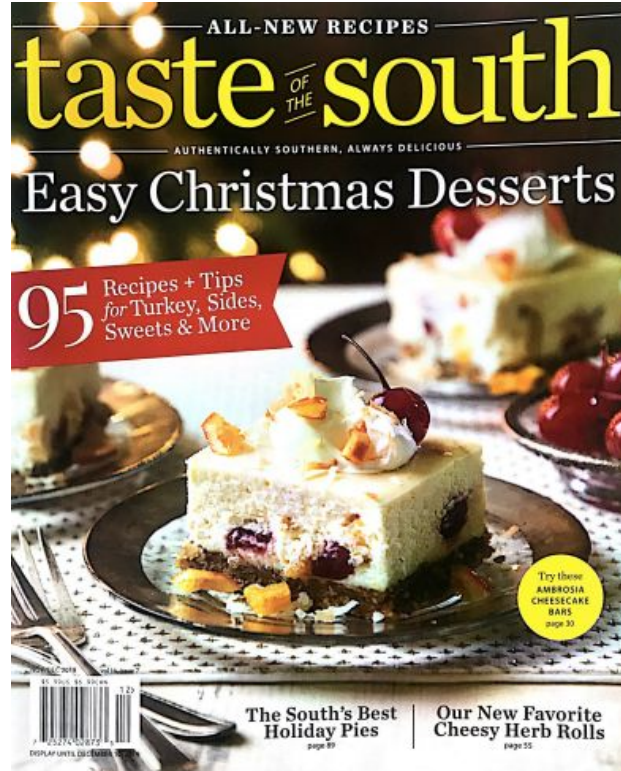


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# MISSISSIPPI MAGIC

Accomplished chefs with enticing restaurants are making the Magnolia State a worthwhile culinary destination



Southern comfort food that's steeped in history has long been a way of life in Mississippi, but with a bevy of esteemed chefs dispersed across the state and rising culinary stars on the horizon, you'll quickly realize this state has much more to offer than just biscuits and gravy. Whether you find yourself in the SEC college towns of Oxford or Starkville, decide to spend a relaxing weekend in the capital city of Jackson, or are making your way down to Hattiesburg, your next visit to Mississippi will awaken your taste buds in more ways than you ever imagined.

Chef **DEREK EMERSON**, a three-time semifinalist for the James Beard Best Chef: South award, and his wife, Jennifer, are the culinary gurus behind both Walker's Drive-In in Jackson and Local 463 in Madison. Walker's Drive-In, located in the Fondren arts district, showcases elevated diner classics that are as nostalgic as the 1950s building itself. At Local 463, their mission is synonymous with the restaurant's name, as they work closely with local farmers and vendors to secure only the freshest products.

Now is the time to check out one of the hippest restaurants in Mississippi's ever-evolving food scene: Bar Fontaine, the rooftop bar of Cotton House, the newest boutique hotel conveniently located in the Mississippi Delta, the undisputed Birthplace of the Blues and home to the vast majority of Mississippi Blues Trail markers. Chef **COLE ELLIS**, a 2017 James Beard Semifinalist for Best

Chefs in America, is at the helm of this new venture while overseeing Delta Meat Market, also housed in Cotton House.

Chef **ALEX EATON** of The Manship Wood-Fired Kitchen in Jackson embraces the philosophy of cooking with locally sourced ingredients, which is evident in the wide array of menu options. Eaton, who is a 2019 James Beard Semifinalist and the 2016 Great American Seafood Cook-Off Champion, has mastered the blend of wood-fired and Mediterranean cuisine at this Belhaven neighborhood gem.

If you haven't noticed yet, 2019 Best Chef: South James Beard Award-winner **VISHWESH BHATT** is setting the Southern culinary scene on fire. As the corporate chef at Oxford's Snackbar, part of the restaurant empire of John Currence, Bhatt is putting his own touch on traditional Southern food, and you'll want to take a bite out of it.

**THIS PAGE** (clockwise from top left): Neon lights play up the retro feel of Walker's Drive-In; Biscuits from The Manship Wood-Fired Kitchen; Katie Dixon of Birdhouse Cafe.

**OPPOSITE PAGE** (clockwise from top left): Ty Thames of Restaurant Tyler, The Guest Room, and Bin 612; Korean BBQ Beef Tenderloin Tips with Sesame Sweet Chili Sauce and Seared Asparagus over Two Brooks Misimati from Fan & Johnny's; the well-stocked bar of The Guest Room; the lively blue facade of Bin 612; Triple Chocolate Mousse Cake from The Manship Wood-Fired Kitchen.



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**TY THAMES** is the co-owner of and chef behind the Eat Local Starkville restaurant group that includes Restaurant Tyler, The Guest Room, and Bin 612, all favorites amongst the city's residents. While his culinary journey has taken him all over the map—from Vermont to Washington, D.C. to Parma, Italy—he stayed true to his Mississippi roots with Starkville serving as the landing spot for three noteworthy establishments, each bearing pieces of his culinary travels.

From the James Beard Award-nominated chef **TAYLOR BOWEN-RICKETTS** comes an intriguing food destination in the Mississippi Delta called Fan & Johnny's, which sits proudly on the

corner of Main Street and Ramcat Alley in Greenwood. The restaurant's cuisine leans into its Southern roots, but its global influences and attention to local ingredients are worth noting. While you're dreaming about the next time you'll dine on the oysters and biscuits entrée, you'll be equally as charmed by the artwork displayed on the exposed brick walls—all original works by Taylor and her husband, Darby.



Hattiesburg might not be the first place that comes to mind when you think of healthful eating, but chef **KATIE DIXON**, once a contestant on *MasterChef*, is looking to change that. As the owner of Birdhouse Café, Katie carefully crafted a selection of fresh juices, salads, bowls, and sweet treats that will not only satisfy you, but nourish you as well. Stop by this charming café to delight in all-natural ingredients that'll leave you a little bit better than when you arrived.

**BAR FONTAINE & DELTA MEAT MARKET**  
215 Cotton Row  
Cleveland, MS 38732

**THE MANSHIP WOOD-FIRED KITCHEN**  
1200 North State St., #100  
Jackson, MS 39202

**SNACKBAR**  
721 North Lamar Blvd.  
Oxford, MS 38655

**RESTAURANT TYLER**  
100 E. Main St.  
Starkville, MS 39759

**THE GUEST ROOM**  
100 East Main St.  
Starkville, MS 39759

**BIN 612**  
612 University Dr., #3  
Starkville, MS 39759

**WALKER'S DRIVE-IN**  
3016 North State St.  
Jackson, MS 39216

**LOCAL 463**  
1000 Highland Colony  
Pkwy., #5002  
Ridgeland, MS 39157

**FAN & JOHNNY'S**  
117 Main St.  
Greenwood, MS 38930

**BIRDHOUSE CAFÉ**  
6763 US-98  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402



