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Top 100 culinary voyages in the West

We've combed the West for the very best flavor experiences, all worthy of a culinary pilgrimage



Photo by Shelly Strazis; Edited by Margo True with Julie Chai, Stephanie Dean, Sophie Egan, Peter Fish, MacKenzie Geidt, Gina Marie Goff, Elaine Johnson, Haley Minick, Loren Mooney, Anna Nordberg, Nino Padova, Kelley Plasterer, Sara Schneider, Erin Shitama, and Johanna Silver

Savor the West 2011

Have you ever noticed how food tastes best when you eat it on its home turf? How all the small details of a place, its sounds, its smells, even the way the air feels against your cheek—all become part of the flavor? A cold date shake is good at home but transcendent when you're slurping it up on a broiling day in Indio, California, within sight of the palm trees that produced the fruit. A fragrant, tender homemade pork tamale from a stand in rural Arizona, under a big desert sky, will stick with you the rest of your life. The truth is, food is always about more than just what's on our plates; it's connected to land and history, to the people who made or grew it, and to our sense of ourselves. We invite you to explore the West with us, through restaurants, markets, and farms, food trucks, brewpubs, and wineries—places that define what it is to eat and drink like a Westerner. Our first annual list of 100 choices is listed in no particular order. They're all equally delicious adventures, and they're waiting for you.

—Margo True, Food Editor



Photo by Thomas J. Story

Taste organic, sustainable cooking in the middle of nowhere

Boulder, Utah, a sleepy farming community 4½ hours south of Salt Lake City, is home to roughly 150 Mormons—and [Hell's Backbone Grill](#), run by two practicing Buddhists devoted to fresh, sustainable cooking. The owners, Jen Castle and Blake Spalding, fell in love with the incredible beauty of Boulder on a visit and opted to stay and create one of the West's most improbably located gourmet restaurants. The locally sourced menu and sophisticated wine list have been hailed by critics as far as New York and London, and by just about every traveler who comes through Boulder. But the traditional community was initially skeptical. To warm things up after opening in 2000, Castle and Spalding threw an ice cream social. Practically the entire town showed up, and the event has been an annual tradition ever since. If you can't make the schlep to Boulder yourself, give their [Mexican Chocolate Ice Cream](#) recipe a try.