

# Best of Charleston's Southern Cooking | The Daily Meal

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History and fate have thrown this city some tough blows, including major fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and war at The Holy City, but Charlestonians have never backed down or backed away from a good time or delicious food. Ever since being



founded in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Charleston was virtually destined to become the great culinary boom town that it is now. Boasting one of the largest ports in Colonial America, Charleston attracted a diverse and sophisticated population from all over Europe, the Caribbean and eventually, due to slavery, Africa.

Poised to be a culinary dynamo with her unique climate, beauty, a long growing season and fertile land and sea, Charleston got a welcome wake-up call in the late 1980's with the arrival of Johnson and Wales. An ensuing wave of great chef talents put Charleston food staples like grits and Carolina gold rice to work in new and wonderful ways.



In the last decade, Charleston has truly come into her own with the advent of its celebrated Wine and Food Festival and the recognition of three chefs, Robert Stehling (Hominy Grill), Mike Lata (FIG) and Sean Brock (McCrary's) by the James Beard House awards in the past three years. You literally can't walk a block in this wonderful town without finding something delicious to eat. Go Charleston! I've been lucky enough to live here for 11 years, much of that time as a restaurant critic.



Here's where I go when it just has to be Southern and delicious:



**[The Glass Onion](#)** – A trio of young talent from three different Southern cities make this West Ashley (about 10 minutes out of the city) joint sing with energy and authenticity. I literally get weekly cravings. Everything's delicious and fresh and local, but I love the creamy shells and cheese and would kill for the recipe for the buttermilk peppercorn dressing that lovingly coats the Bibb lettuce salad.



**[The Hominy Grill](#)** – A big mural of a pretty lady holding a bowl of steaming grits with a fat pat of butter on top adorns one side of the pink Charleston single house that houses one of Charleston's most beloved destinations for Southern food, especially of the lunch or breakfast variety. Crowds hover outside in all kinds of weather, waiting to receive the goodness for which Chef Stehling is so well known. Go ahead and indulge! Big Fat Nasty Biscuits, cornbread, mac and cheese, squash casserole, fried chicken, chocolate pudding, buttermilk pie – it's all calling your name and you need to listen or you'll die mad you didn't.

**[Husk Restaurant](#)** – Just a few months old, Husk is the brainchild of locavore and lardovore (yes, he's been called that!) and chef galore, Sean Brock. A lover of all things local and authentic, he cultivates heirloom seeds and heirloom pigs in his own garden and THEN he comes to work every day. Everything here, down to the salt and the olive oil has to be raised in the South. The integrity and love are palpable. The menu changes daily but Parker rolls, cornbread and any fish dish are super dependable best bets. There is talk of made-to-order fried chicken, fried in pork fat, of course, in the near future.

**[Bertha's Kitchen](#)** – Don't let the screaming loud exterior color scheme or relatively distant location from downtown scare you away. Bertha's is THE place to be for the best meat 'n three (a kind of

Southern blue plate special) this side of Savannah, bar none. Two sisters have taken over what their mother started decades ago, and that's soul-soothing soul food of the highest order. Dishes like stewed lima beans, fried chicken, gooey/crispy mac and cheese, collards, and fried pork chops prove it, every time.

For a taste of more Charleston restaurants, check out the recipes below.

[\*\*Click here to see the Local Shrimp and Fregula Stew recipe.\*\*](#)

[\*\*Click here to see Virginia's She-Crab Soup recipe.\*\*](#)

[\*\*Click here to see the Oysters Sautéed with Country Ham and Wild Mushrooms over Grilled Bread recipe.\*\*](#)

[\*\*Click here to see Anson's Grits with Shrimp and Braised Bacon recipe.\*\*](#)

[\*\*Click here to see the Seared Foie Gras with Black-Pepper Duck Biscuits and Carolina Peach Jam recipe.\*\*](#)