

SPRING TRAVEL FEATURE

# taste OF THE south

AUTHENTICALLY SOUTHERN, ALWAYS DELICIOUS

## SPRING GETAWAY GUIDE

Pack your bags for these  
unforgettable trips!





**COVER:** View of the Tennessee Aquarium and Riverfront Park from Walnut Street Bridge in Chattanooga, Tennessee (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga).  
**THIS PAGE:** Pure spring comfort at Fan & Johnny's in Greenwood, Mississippi. **OPPOSITE PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Frazier Five & Dime's Sautéed Shrimp and Creamy Polenta in Chattanooga, Tennessee (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Laura Bellucci); Acadian Superette in Lafayette, Louisiana; comforting local flavors in San Antonio, Texas (photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio); fun on the water in Polk County, Florida (photo courtesy of Visit Central Florida).



**THE SOUTH HAS A WAY** of making every meal feel like a special occasion and every stranger feel like an old friend. This guide gathers eight destinations that capture that spirit beautifully, from the historic streets of Greenwood, Mississippi, and the sun-warmed waterfronts of Punta Gorda and Polk County, Florida, to the live music and good times of Lafayette, Louisiana. You'll find world-class barbecue in San Antonio, Texas, surprising culinary ambition in Florence, South Carolina, outdoor beauty and comfort food in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the deep flavors of Texas Hill Country in between. Gas up the car and grab some snacks—it's time to hit the road.





**OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM LEFT):** Comforting Southern flavors from Fan and Johnny's; Alluvian Old Fashioned from Giardina's. **THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Fan and Johnny's eclectic dining room; prime shopping at The Mississippi Gift Company; Giardina's at The Alluvian; roasted duck and ravioli at Fan and Johnny's.

# Roots & Rhythms

## Greenwood, Mississippi

**AS THE DELTA WARMS UP**, the welcoming small city of Greenwood, Mississippi, invites visitors to slow down and explore a place where American history, blues music, and great Southern cooking all share the same streets.

Greenwood played a meaningful role in the Civil Rights Movement, and many of those stories are still rooted in the places you can visit today. The Emmett Till Memorial Statue and local Freedom Trail markers offer visitors a chance to stand where important moments unfolded and gain a deeper understanding of the people who helped move the country forward.

The music runs just as deep here. This is true Delta blues

country, the same ground that shaped legends like Robert Johnson and Elmore James. You can follow the Mississippi Blues Trail through town and discover how the blues still influences the culture of the region today.

When you're ready to slow down, Greenwood makes it easy. Spend the night at The Alluvian Hotel & Spa, wander through the Museum of the Mississippi Delta, and enjoy dinner at longtime local favorites like Giardina's or Fan and Johnny's.

It's the kind of place where you can take your time, hear a few good stories, and leave with a real feel for the Delta. ■

# Where the Gulf Meets the Table

Punta Gorda, Florida



**TUCKED ALONG CHARLOTTE HARBOR** where the Peace River meets the Gulf, Punta Gorda is one of southwest Florida's best-kept secrets. One of the top sport-fishing destinations in the world, it's also a walkable town with a 2.5-mile Harborwalk, downtown murals, and a lively arts scene.

Perched along Florida's Flavor Coast, Punta Gorda and

Englewood Beach turn every dinner into a coastal event. The waterfront dining scene sets the tone—from the island rhythms of Farlow's on the Water to harbor-side energy at Laishley Crab House and the laid-back vibes at Lighthouse Grill and Tiki Bar, the Gulf is always part of the meal. Barefoot-friendly Lock 'N Key keeps it casual with surf-and-turf comfort steps from the shore.



Beyond the waterfront, the dining scene runs deep. Peace River Seafood dishes up blue crab by the bucket, she-crab soup, and signature gator gumbo in a classic old Florida cracker house, while Prime Serious Steak elevates evenings with custom-cut selections and live butcher room theater. International flavors fit naturally here, too—from Taste of Europe Bistro's cozy elegance to Lime Tequila's street-style fare and lively margaritas.

Whether you're pulling up a barstool at a tiki bar or settling in for a perfectly aged steak, Punta Gorda has a way of making every bite feel like a reason to stay a little longer. ■

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau



# Deep Roots, Bold Plates

San Antonio, Texas



**WITH WARM DAYS AND BLOOMING WILDFLOWERS,** spring is the sweet spot for San Antonio, Texas. A UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy and the self-proclaimed Culinary Capital of Texas, San Antonio earns both titles with a centuries-deep food culture. The iconic 15-mile River Walk winds past restaurants, galleries, and historic landmarks, and the revitalized Pearl District—a former brewery turned neighborhood anchor—draws locals and visitors alike to its weekend farmers’ market, independent shops, and some of the city’s most celebrated kitchens.

The food scene reflects San Antonio’s layered identity: Tex-Mex roots, European heritage, and a restless creative energy. Classic enchiladas and brisket tacos at neighborhood stalwarts like Blanco Cafe and Garcia’s Mexican Food anchor one end of the spectrum, and 2M Smokehouse delivers oak-smoked brisket and serrano-Oaxaca cheese sausage that put south Texas barbecue on the national map. Pan dulces, including brightly colored conchas along with strong coffee at Panaderia are a solid start to any day of adventuring.

Be sure to catch Fiesta San Antonio, a lively 10-day celebration in late April featuring parades, food, and music that captures the city at its best. ■

**THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Floating down the River Walk canal (photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio); the Pearl District’s iconic spire; coastal San Antonio flavor (photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio); Pullman Market combines restaurants and markets in one fun location. **OPPOSITE PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Sweet treats from Panaderia; casual spread from Otto’s Ice House in the Pearl District (photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio); mural near Market Square; Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio).



# Small City, Big Table

Florence, South Carolina



**SITTING AT THE HEART OF THE PEE DEE REGION**, Florence, South Carolina, is the kind of city that tends to surprise people. Brimming with culture and creativity, this walkable downtown anchors a scene that includes the Florence County Museum, a state-designated Cultural District, the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center, and a lively calendar of festivals and outdoor events. Darlington Raceway, just 15 minutes away, draws racing fans from across the country, while the nearby Lynches River and the surrounding countryside offer kayaking and easy access to the outdoors.

The food scene has grown quietly into something worth the detour. Nationally acclaimed chef Elliott Moss

brought his hometown cooking home to Elliott's, where whole hog smoked low and slow reflects (and respects) the flavors of the Pee Dee. Town Hall brings farm-driven New Southern cooking to a wood-fire grill in the heart of downtown, and Victors, the Carolina Chophouse at Hotel Florence has anchored the fine-dining scene for more than two decades. Tubb's Shrimp & Fish Co. keeps it coastal and soulful, and Rebel Pie offers wood-fired pizzas with some unexpected toppings (think: biscuits and gravy). The SC Pecan Trail winds through nearly 20 local restaurants and shops, threading pecans through the entire culinary map of the county.

Florence is still writing its food story—and it's turning into a good one. 

**OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM TOP):** West Evans Street during the popular South Carolina Pecan, Music, and Food Festival in November; wood-fired Neapolitan-style pizza from Rebel Pie. **THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** The Pee Dee Heart Walk on the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center Lawn; beautifully seasoned shrimp at Tubb's Shrimp & Fish Co; partygoers at the Florence County Museum of Art; Holt Bros. BBQ (photos courtesy of True Light Photography/truelightphoto.com).



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Live local music at Hideaway on Lee. **THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Acadian Superette, known for its lunch specials and house-made Cajun specialty meats; smothered sausage plate lunch special at Acadian Superette; Vestal on Jefferson Street; live music at Blue Moon Saloon; Wild Child Wine Shop; meltingly tender brisket at Acadian Superette.



# Pass a Good Time in Cajun Country

Lafayette, Louisiana

**IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A SOUTHERN CITY** that grabs you by the soul, Lafayette, Louisiana, is it. Tucked into the heart of Cajun Country, this vibrant city is a feast for every sense—and spring is the absolute best time to experience it. Every April, Festival International de Louisiane takes over downtown, filling the streets with five days of free world-class music across multiple stages. It's the largest free outdoor Francophone festival in North America, often drawing artists from more than 15 countries. Lafayette's live music scene hums year-round, with sounds of Cajun fiddles and the chank-a-chank of zydeco accordions spilling

out of venues like Blue Moon Saloon and Rock'n'Bowl on any given night. Then there's the food, and the food alone is worth the trip. Spring means crawfish season, and locals take it seriously, boiling them with enough spice to make your eyes water in the best possible way. Boudin, the city's beloved sausage stuffed with seasoned pork and rice, is sold everywhere from gas stations to sit-down restaurants, and every stop is worth making. Come for the food, stay for the festival, and leave already planning your return. 📍





# River, Ridge, and a Really Good Biscuit

Chattanooga, Tennessee



**SPRING ARRIVES EARLY AND BEAUTIFULLY** in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the city's outdoor energy kicks into full gear. Lookout Mountain and Cloudland Canyon State Park draw hikers, the 150-year-old Walnut Street Bridge invites a stroll above the river, and the Tennessee Aquarium anchors a downtown that has quietly become one of the South's most livable and visitable cities. The Southside and Northshore neighborhoods add creative energy to the mix—galleries, live music, local shops, and some of the best porches and patios in Tennessee.

The food scene is rooted in Southern comfort and doesn't apologize for it. Bluegrass Grill is a family-run favorite serving made-from-scratch buttermilk biscuits, blackened shrimp tacos, and homemade pies that earn their devoted following. Champy's World Famous Fried Chicken delivers the kind of golden, crackling bird that would make any Tennessee grandmother nod in appreciation, and FEED Co. Table & Tavern—housed in a beautifully restored historic feed supply building—blends rustic Southern charm with farm-fresh seasonal cooking. Public House keeps things grounded with pimiento cheese, fried chicken, and fried green tomatoes topped with shrimp rémoulade, and Whitebird at the Edwin leans into Appalachian tradition



with farm-raised trout, wilted dandelion, and bacon white beans. For something sweet, Milk & Honey's made-from-scratch gelato and pastries have made it one of Chattanooga's all-time favorite stops.

In Chattanooga, a great meal and a great view are rarely more than a few steps apart. 📍

**OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM TOP):** Walnut Street Bridge (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Sue Burgdorff); Frazier Five & Dime's Deviled Eggs (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Laura Bellucci). **THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Generous spread from Bitter Alibi (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Rachael Crowe); Lavender Latte from Sleepyhead Coffee (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Laura Bellucci); sparkling wine from No Hard Feelings (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Laura Bellucci); Boathouse Rotisserie (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/State of Tennessee); wine pour at Civil Provisions (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga/Emily Unkle); iced coffee and a treat from Goodman Coffee Roasters (photo courtesy of Visit Chattanooga).



**THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):** Fresh brews from Grove Roots; baked treats from Born and Bread Bakehouse; scenic central Florida views; airboat excitement; merriment at Grove Roots. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Gorgeous sunset views from Harborside Restaurant in Winter Haven. Photos courtesy of Visit Central Florida.

# Real Florida Magic

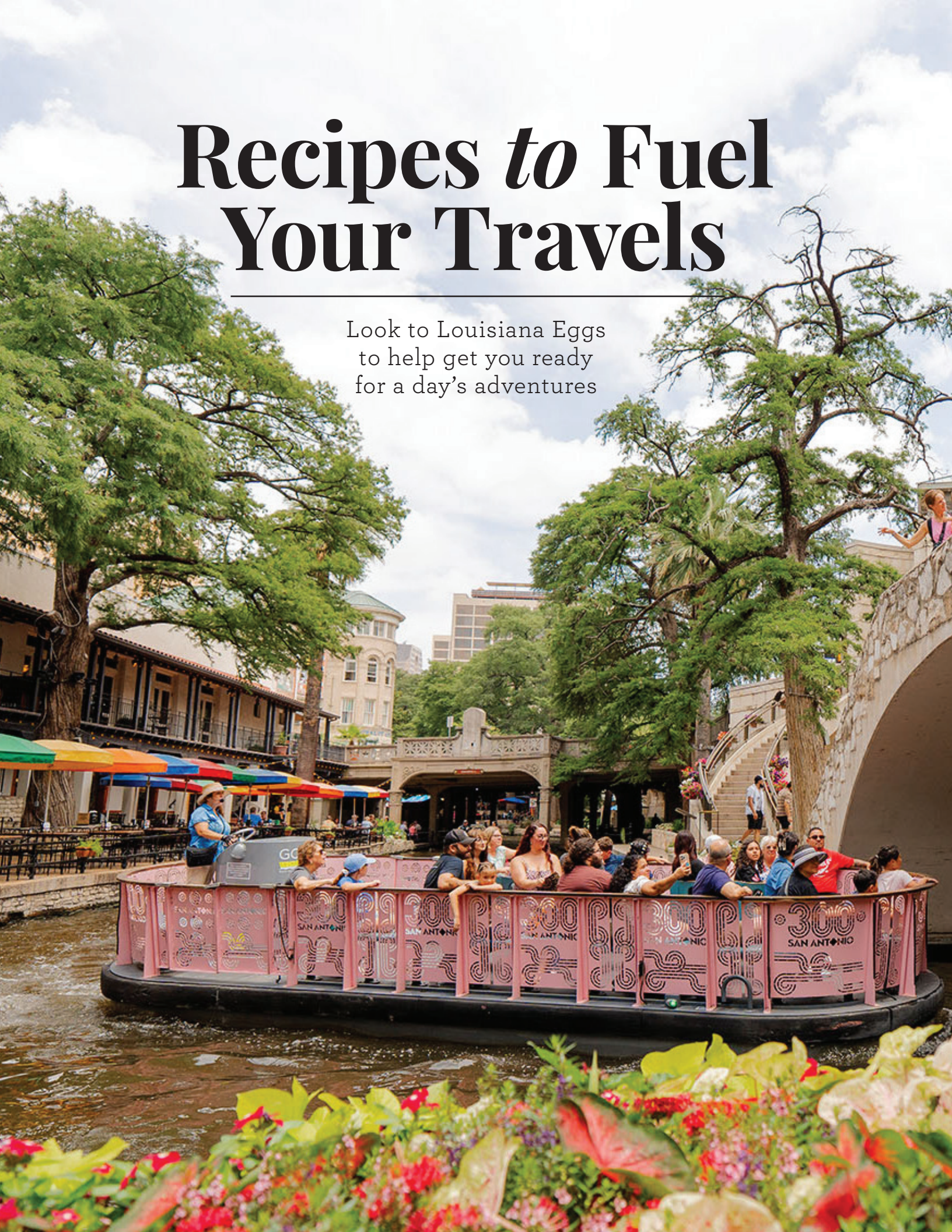
## Polk County, Florida

**NESTLED BETWEEN ORLANDO AND TAMPA,** Polk County, Florida, is the kind of place that rewards visitors who slow down long enough to look around. Anchored by the cities of Lakeland and Winter Haven, the region stretches across 554 freshwater lakes and 17 charming communities, each with its own personality. Lakeland draws visitors to the world's largest single-site collection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture at Florida Southern College and the beloved Circle B Bar Reserve while also hosting the Detroit Tigers' spring training. Winter Haven is home to LEGOLAND Florida Resort and Peppa Pig Theme Park, as well as lakeside dining and a laid-back lakeside lifestyle. Spring is a particularly sweet time to visit, since Bok Tower Gardens bursts into bloom, the SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo takes over the Lakeland

skies, and the Polk County Blueberry Festival celebrates one of the Sunshine State's most beloved crops. The food scene is just as varied as the landscape. Peebles Bar-B-Q in Auburndale has earned its reputation as some of the best smoked meat in the region, and the county leans into that legacy with a dedicated Fire & Flavor BBQ Trail and Pass. Harry's Seafood Bar & Grille and Harborside bring waterfront dining to the lakeside scene, and Born & Bread Bakehouse in Lakeland has built a following around its legendary cruffins. Andy's Drive-In Restaurant & Igloo in Winter Haven offers a dose of pure, classic Florida nostalgia, and no visit is complete without a slice of the award-winning grapefruit pie at Lang Sun Country Groves' Taste of Florida Café. In Polk County, the real Florida magic has always been hiding in plain sight. 🍷

# Recipes *to* Fuel Your Travels

Look to Louisiana Eggs to help get you ready for a day's adventures



## Dill Egg Salad Sandwiches

MAKES 4

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 6 hard-cooked large Louisiana Eggs, peeled and chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons chopped dill pickle
- 8 slices seeded bread
- 2 cups trimmed watercress

12 slices avocado  
Tomato chutney  
Garnish: fresh dill

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, dill, mustard, salt, and pepper. Reserve ½ cup mayonnaise mixture. Stir eggs, celery, and pickle into remaining mayonnaise mixture in bowl.
2. Spread 1 tablespoon reserved mayonnaise mixture onto one side of each bread slice. Divide watercress, avocado, and egg salad among 4 bread slices, mayonnaise side up. Garnish with dill, if desired. Top with chutney and remaining bread slices, mayonnaise side down.



## Sheet-Pan Spring Quiche

MAKES ABOUT 8 SERVINGS

*Bake the crust and prepare the filling the night before for a quick and easy breakfast to fuel your Southern adventures.*

- 1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 large leek, cleaned and cut into ¼-inch rings (about 2 cups)**
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic**
- 1 (5-ounce) package fresh spinach**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided**
- 6 large Louisiana Eggs**
- 1 cup whole milk**
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, divided**
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled**
- 1 cup fresh arugula**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley**
- 1½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly spray the bottom of a 13x9-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
- 2.** On a lightly floured surface, unroll 1 piecrust, and lightly brush with water. Unroll remaining piecrust; place directly on top, gently pressing to seal. Roll into a 17x15-inch rectangle. Transfer to prepared pan, pressing into bottom and up sides. Crimp edges as desired. Top with a piece of parchment paper, letting ends extend over edges of pan. Add pie weights.
- 3.** Bake for 15 minutes. Carefully remove paper and weights; let cool.
- 4.** Meanwhile, in a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add leek and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Add spinach and ½ teaspoon salt, and cook, stirring constantly, until spinach is tender and moisture has evaporated, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat.
- 5.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, cream, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt.
- 6.** Spread spinach mixture into prepared crust. Top with goat cheese, arugula, parsley, and thyme. Pour egg mixture on top; loosely cover edges of crust with foil.
- 7.** Bake until center is set and beginning to brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper before serving.



## Crawfish, Egg, and Bacon Breakfast Sandwiches

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

*The most important meal of the day just got a lot more delicious with these hearty breakfast sandwiches.*

- 6 large Louisiana Eggs**
- ½ teaspoon Creole seasoning**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¼ teaspoon hot sauce**
- 2 tablespoons salted butter**
- 6 ounces cooked crawfish tails, rinsed and drained**
- ¼ cup chopped green onion**

- 2 tablespoons Creole mustard**
- 4 brioche buns, split and toasted**
- 6 slices thick-cut applewood-smoked bacon, cooked and cut in half crosswise**
- ½ cup shredded extra-sharp white Cheddar cheese**

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, Creole seasoning, salt, and hot sauce.
2. In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add egg mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until egg mixture just begins to set, about 3 minutes. Stir in crawfish and green onion; cook, stirring constantly, until egg mixture is cooked but not dry, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Preheat oven to broil.
4. Spread mustard evenly over cut sides of buns. Place bacon on bottom halves of buns. Spoon egg mixture evenly over bacon. Sprinkle with cheese. Place on a baking sheet.
5. Broil until cheese is melted, about 30 seconds. Cover with top halves of buns.



## Creole Sheet Pan Eggs

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 16 large Louisiana Eggs**
  - 8 large egg whites**
  - 1½ tablespoons Creole seasoning**
  - ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
  - ¼ cup shredded Cheddar cheese**
  - ½ cup halved cherry tomatoes**
  - ¼ cup fresh arugula**
- Easy Spring Mix (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat oven to 300°. Spray a 17x12-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites, Creole seasoning, and pepper. Pour egg mixture into prepared pan. Sprinkle with cheese, and top with tomatoes and arugula.
3. Bake until edges are set and center jiggles slightly, 15 to 20 minutes. Cut into 3-inch squares, and serve with Easy Spring Mix.



## Easy Spring Mix

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 1 (5-ounce) bag fresh spring mix lettuces**
- 1 cup halved or quartered heirloom cherry tomatoes**
- ¼ cup mozzarella cheese pearls**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- ½ teaspoon sherry vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper**

1. In a large bowl, combine lettuces, tomatoes, and mozzarella.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Pour vinaigrette over salad, and toss to coat. Serve immediately. ■

