

Pittsburgh bleg

by [Tyler Cowen](#) May 14, 2018 at 3:17 pm in

- [Food and Drink](#)
- [The Arts](#)
- [Travel](#)

A loyal reader writes to me:

Maybe a bleg on MR at some point (not naming me) for good places to eat and things to do in Pittsburgh?

The suburbs stretching out to eastern Ohio would count too...and is there a Tyler Cowen of Pittsburgh when it comes to ethnic dining?

I thank you all in advance for your wise and mature counsel.

- [77 Comments](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [RSS Feed](#)
- [print](#)

Comments

John Brennan

May 14, 2018 at 3:25 pm [1](#)

My ranking of best food towns in America: 1) NYC, 2) San Francisco, 3)Pittsburgh. Ask around, it likely will not go wrong.

Handle

May 14, 2018 at 4:12 pm [2](#)

Kansas City and Austin both beat Pittsburgh. Seattle has improved a great deal too. DC is consistently mediocre and often shockingly sub-par.

Facepalm

May 14, 2018 at 8:34 pm [3](#)

You are certifiably insane. Los Angeles? Houston? Dallas? Seattle? Pittsburgh is not diverse, and has small ethnic communities. Sorry, I appreciate them, but fourth generation Polish Americans does not a food mecca make.

Anon

May 14, 2018 at 11:31 pm [4](#)

I do not understand that comment. "best food towns in America: 1) NYC, 2) San Francisco, 3)Pittsburgh."

In what way? Are we only talking high end restaurants that would charge a weeks pay for a meal? If so, maybe you are right. But if you are simply talking taste and satisfaction of the meal I cannot believe that you can't find that in any large city. What am I missing here. For example I know Kansas city has the best steaks but to be honest I can make just as good a steak at home. Texas has great barbecue but probably 40 other states have barbecue joints that can match it. What criteria do you use to put NYC first without regard to the couple thousand medium to large cities in the U.S. with good restaurants?

Anon

May 14, 2018 at 11:47 pm [5](#)

Here is the best Italian restaurant I have ever eaten at
<http://lafamigliagiorgios.com/index.php>

Here is the best fried clams ever
<http://www.jtfarnhams.com/>

Best Mexican food is in California at various hole in the wall one man small Mexican restaurants. Also they can have some of the worst Mexican food you have to search them out to find the good ones.

Best catfish I ever had was in a tiny one man restaurant in Georgia run by an ex-military cook.

Best fried chicken was at a pub in Beaverton Oregon.

Of course this doesn't mean there aren't equal or better restaurants elsewhere. Which is the point I'm trying to make.

mkt42

May 15, 2018 at 12:14 am [6](#)

What is that pub in Beaverton? It sounds a bit like Reel M Inn, a dive bar that is legendary for its fried chicken -- but Reel M Inn is in Portland rather than Beaverton.

Anon

May 15, 2018 at 9:53 am [7](#)

I cannot remember it was many years ago. It was on Farmington Road near the Fred Meyers.

JMCSF

May 15, 2018 at 10:07 am [8](#)

Best fried chicken I have ever had was at Ad hoc in Yountville, California. Thomas Keller does no disappoint; trust me I've done the leg work.

Adam007

May 16, 2018 at 1:15 pm [9](#)

The best food city in USA: Philadelphia

Satura

May 14, 2018 at 3:28 pm [10](#)

Strip (warehouse) District, known as "the Strip." Primanti Brothers and Wholey's Fish Market for lunch. Coffee at La Prima Espresso. That's all I got, but you'll find foodies down there who will know other places.

Oh ffs

May 14, 2018 at 4:12 pm [11](#)

My god. Primanti Brothers isn't good food. It's a mountain of garbage meat and flavorless topping sandwiched between two pieces of garbage white bread. Is it a Pittsburgh institution? Yes... but that fact is damning of Pittsburgh, not indicative of it being good.

dan1111

May 14, 2018 at 6:03 pm [12](#)

I lived in Pittsburgh for a few years. I ate at Primanti Brothers once. Not impressed, and I'm someone who thinks "fries on a sandwich" has great potential. Pittsburgh is a great food town, but Primanti brothers is not a great standard bearer for that.

If you like sandwiches with weird stuff on them, Fathead's was a better place to go.

Many local places also do fries on salads, which is interesting.

When I lived there Tram's Kitchen was a great (Cowenesque) place for Vietnamese food.

Jeff R

May 14, 2018 at 6:45 pm [13](#)

Good call. I enjoyed Fatheads as well when i lived there, along with the whole East Carson St strip more generally.

Handle

May 14, 2018 at 4:15 pm [12](#)

Nah, skip Primanti Bros. Overrated.

Sk

May 14, 2018 at 7:47 pm [13](#)

This is correct. I don't understand why people like it so much, it really isn't that good.

Hook

May 14, 2018 at 7:51 pm [13](#)

Wholey's Fish Market is the food experience I miss most about Pittsburgh, but I was shopping for food to cook at home. I've been away for 15 years, so it wouldn't surprise me if they now have a good lunch counter.

Chris

May 14, 2018 at 3:30 pm [17](#)

Big fan of Peppi's.

Jeff R

May 14, 2018 at 4:10 pm [18](#)

+1

Joel

May 16, 2018 at 3:47 pm [19](#)

+1000

Chris

May 14, 2018 at 3:31 pm [20](#)

There's a relatively new restaurant from acclaimed chef Kevin Sousa called Superior Motors in Braddock. Would definitely check that out.

Dan

May 14, 2018 at 3:32 pm [21](#)

And perhaps any suggestions at all for good vegetarian or vegan food? I have had almost no luck myself.

JRG

May 14, 2018 at 3:57 pm [22](#)

There's actually rather a lot!

Vegan:

Onion Maiden - punk trappings, always delicious, must try vegan donuts, in Allentown

Apteka - vegan Polish, must be tried, quit close to Children's

Mad Mex (the one in Shadyside specifically) - okay, so most of their food is not world-class or anything, but they do really excellent seitan wings with vegan ranch in addition to being able to make any of their burritos vegan

Burgatory - you scoff, but it is very easy to make a delightful and totally vegan burger there.

Veg:

Udipi Cafe - a little ways out of town, but legit South Indian

Spak Brothers - just great pizza all around, has respectable vegan options for pizza/cheesesteaks as well, in Bloomfield

Ki Ramen - in Lawrenceville, always have a solid veg bao and multiple veg ramen choices, decent sake selection

Not bad

May 14, 2018 at 4:19 pm [23](#)

While I disagree vehemently about Mad Mex (total crap), the rest are good.

I'd add the Brillobox if decent beer (for the 'burgh) and vegan junk food in a hipstery (again, for the 'burgh) dive bar is your scene. Eden can provide the exact opposite vibe.

Scott Richardson

May 14, 2018 at 3:33 pm [24](#)

Hands down, try Apteka on Penn Ave in Bloomfield/Lawrenceville. Polish-inspired vegetarian food. Very original, very popular, yet still under the radar. Almost every dish is fantastic.

Jeff Baxendale

May 14, 2018 at 4:33 pm [25](#)

This. You don't have to be vegetarian to enjoy it either. Also throwing in some love for Noodlehead (very good pork buns), and Pamela's crepe pancakes for brunch.

So sad

May 14, 2018 at 8:38 pm [26](#)

Noodlehead would be the third to eight best Thai place in any given neighborhood in Seattle. This is why people acting like Pittsburgh is a good, let alone great, food town are certifiable.

Bruce Humbert

May 14, 2018 at 3:38 pm [27](#)

Where to begin...

The signature food/sandwich of the Burgh is Primanti Brothers. A combination of meat, coleslaw and fries. Rumor has it the creation was a way for men working to have a meal on bread. The local meat preference is kielbasa-but a lot of other options. There are a number of locations in town including one at PNC Park which

Is also a must see. Even if you are not a baseball fan it is perhaps the he best ballpark in MLB. The view of the downtown skyline from the park is awesome.

A trip up Mount Washington on the incline is a must and a great picture taking opportunity

A great weekend adventure is a walk through the Strip District. Lots of shops and great people watching. Breakfast/brunch at Pamela's diner (cash only) is great - be sure to sample BOTH the potatoes and the pancakes.

Also in the strip is Gaucho Parilla for lunch or dinner - be prepared or wait, the lines can be long and it is BYOB. The wings are unique and very good.

That should get you started

Jeff R

May 14, 2018 at 4:13 pm [28](#)

Primanti's is, based on my having lived there for a few years, a gimmick food sold to tourists. Natives do not seem particularly fond of it. I would tell Tyler to skip it, entirely.

JRG

May 15, 2018 at 6:49 am [29](#)

Mount Washington also has Kavsar, a surprisingly good Uzbek restaurant.

Sk

May 15, 2018 at 7:55 pm [30](#)

Only been there once and not an expert on Uzbek cuisine, but I enjoyed the meal.

Techy

May 14, 2018 at 3:42 pm [31](#)

Ignore all recommendations for Primani's sandwiches. They are a local point of pride because they were invented there, but they are nothing special.

Hazel Meade

May 14, 2018 at 3:51 pm [32](#)

Agreed. Try 'Cure' in north lawrencville. Never been there but im told its excellent. Pittsburgh has a large Italian population and they know cured meats.

Justin

May 17, 2018 at 7:53 pm [33](#)

Cure is a bit expensive, but for me, it's the best restaurant in the city.

simul

May 14, 2018 at 3:50 pm [34](#)

- Harris Grill - Pub food and great beers in Shadyside
- Umi - surprisingly good sushi in Shadyside
- Point Brugge Cafe - Belgian food in a fantastic environment, in Point Breeze
- Cure - nationally talked about, in Lawrenceville
- Meat and Potatoes - gastro pub downtown, solid
- Legume - cheffy modern American with Pittsburgh elements
- Gaucho - the meats - one of Yelp's highest rated - Strip District
- Chengdu Gourmet - pretty legit Sichuan in Squirrel Hill
- Tessaro's - burgers
- Dinette - Shadyside-ish, pizzas and small plates

That's just scratching the surface. A fantastic food city, especially for it's size.

sethd

May 14, 2018 at 4:31 pm [35](#)

Came here to suggest Legume, but you beat me to it. One of the legit best meals I've had in any city.

anon

May 15, 2018 at 9:03 am [36](#)

simul,

can you expand your list? Have eaten at Chengdu Gourmet and agree with your comment so would appreciate any more recommendations you have, especially along Asian lines.

Thanks

JWatts

May 14, 2018 at 3:57 pm [37](#)

"I thank you all in advance for your wise and mature counsel."

Ok, I laughed.

Hagbard

May 14, 2018 at 4:00 pm [38](#)

Cure <-- sampled the entire menu, everything was spectacular. Also, they are an amaro bar. Ask your server/bartender for guidance pairing spirits with courses, and don't miss the sampler flight at the end of your meal.

They commission several excellent spirits exclusively for their own bar. Truly wonderful.

All of the Taiwanese joints in Squirrel Hill were good choices during my last visit. Comparable to the many of the best i've had in Northern Virginia.

yuypez

May 14, 2018 at 4:07 pm [39](#)

thanks in advance is no thanks at all.

Aaron

May 14, 2018 at 4:15 pm [40](#)

I was in Pittsburgh for 3 weeks last year for work. Most of what I discovered has already been covered (shout out to Peppi's, Cure was good if a bit too "high concept" for me). i also found Primanti's to be over-rated. I was impressed by Eddie V's Prime Seafood; went on a weekday when it wasn't too busy and the service and food were both excellent.

Matt

May 14, 2018 at 4:22 pm [41](#)

Noodlehead in Shadyside has fantastic Thai street noodles and boat noodle soup. Cash only. The heat ratings are not to be underestimated. I second the suggestions for Gaucho and Point Brugge. Chatellier and La Gourmandine are great French bakeries. A little bit out there, but Golden Pig is an authentic Korean mom and pop shop in Cecil Township. Nak Won garden is pretty good too.

I would try to see a few neighborhoods. They all feel very different. There is usually not much happening downtown, but Squirrel Hill, Shadyside, Lawrenceville, Oakland, the Strip District, and Sewickley (west of the city) are all worthwhile. There is an easy bike loop along the rivers that crosses several neighborhoods and includes great views. You can rent a bike on 2nd avenue and grab a map. If you are renting a car and have some time, you are also a 90 minute drive to Fallingwater.

Mmk

May 14, 2018 at 10:08 pm [42](#)

Gaucho and Noodlehead are my two most memorable meals in Pittsburgh. I didn't think it was that great of a food city tbh.

Known Fact

May 14, 2018 at 4:48 pm [43](#)

Don't miss the aviary, right near downtown and near the Warhol Museum if he floats your boat. We had good Cambodian within walking distance of downtown, and Philippine comfort food near the zoo. This was years ago so I don't recall the names but the point is the Burgh has lots of good eats. Pasta, Polish, Thai, brewpubs, you can't go wrong. Fine museums, nice ball yard. Do the bridges if walking or jogging is your thing. It's a fun place to visit because it has what you'd expect from a big city but on a more accessible scale.

Known Fact

May 14, 2018 at 4:53 pm [44](#)

And yeah, get to the Strip and the Market District for roving eats and drinks but don't waste your calories on Primanti

Jkind

May 14, 2018 at 5:01 pm [45](#)

Some of my favorite meals ever have been at Morcilla - amazing Spanish food. Arsenal Cider House (also in Lawrenceville) makes very good ciders and has a great outdoor area if the weather is nice. Also a big fan of Pamela's - but remember to bring cash. The Mattress Factory (museum) is pretty good if you're into contemporary art, and it's in a cool old neighborhood.

Lewis

May 14, 2018 at 5:10 pm [46](#)

Go to the Nationality Rooms in the Cathedral of Learning on Pitt's campus in Oakland. The first three floors of the Cathedral are just tremendous, like Hogwarts.

When I go to pittsburgh I like to just walk around the walkable areas: Mexican War Streets on North Side, Walnut Street in Shadyside, Carson Street on South Side. It's also a great city to drive around. Drive up to Polish Hill around sunset and look at the catholic church.

I really think Pittsburgh is the best place I've ever lived. Sad I had to move away for grad school.

mkt42

May 14, 2018 at 5:35 pm [47](#)

"It's also a great city to drive around."

It's certainly highly scenic with many localized neighborhoods (as opposed to each neighborhood looking like the others).

But a warning to would-be drivers: you will get lost in Pittsburgh. Multiple times. Because the many steep hills mean that the streets cannot follow a grid pattern or really any predictable pattern and no matter where you want to go, you pretty much cannot get there from here. Except by following a circuitous route. It makes even Boston look simple to navigate in.

dan111

May 15, 2018 at 12:59 am [48](#)

Yes. This makes it a great city to drive around. You always end up on some bizarre cliffside neighborhood at a 45 degree angle.

pstu

May 14, 2018 at 5:21 pm [49](#)

Our family recently did spring break in Pittsburgh and had a blast.

- Cure, one of the best meals we've eaten in a long time and reasonably priced
- Federal Galley, a cross between a pop-up restaurant and a food court, with interesting micro-restaurants that bring food to your table in the common area and a well-stocked bar; think Mexican street taco, Detroit-style pizza, fries cooked in duck fat, loaded banh mi, and a local microbrew to wash it down
- Meat and Potatoes, tasty gastro-pub with a growing stable of sister restaurants
- La Gourmandine, the best French pastries since our trip to Quebec City a few years ago

And for a unique museum experience, check out Bicycle Heaven, the "world's largest bicycle museum and shop."

mkt42

May 14, 2018 at 5:29 pm [50](#)

One other notable place, although I'm not claiming that the food is good there (we didn't eat there, we were on our way to an Ethiopian restaurant): the Conflict Cafe. When we walked by it was serving Iranian food.

It wasn't until months later that I read about it: every few months they change the menu to reflect the cuisine of a country that the US is at odds with. So they've served Cuban food, probably North Korean food, I don't know about the others but you could imagine them doing Syrian, Venezuelan, etc.

I second the non-restaurant recommendations that have been made: riding the Monongahela Incline (it used to carry not just passengers but also cargo in horse carts: <http://www.brooklineconnection.com/history/Facts/images/MonIncline1905a.JPG>); Fallingwater (there's a ton of white water rafting in that area too); and the ballpark where the

Pirates play, it's right up there with the very best of the new parks. Sit somewhat near home plate so you can get the killer view of the downtown skyline and the Roberto Clemente Bridge. Before each home game, they close that bridge to car traffic so that people can walk directly from downtown across the bridge to the ballpark. Highly recommended unless you absolutely hate baseball. Might be worth going there anyway, and then skipping the baseball game.

I was impressed by how Pittsburgh has remade itself into a post-industrial city. I didn't see signs of a single steel mill. The skyscraper that old-time locals still call the Steel Building now sports big signs on top saying "UPMC". Numerous other buildings and billboards throughout the city also said UPMC. It took us awhile to figure out what UPMC stood for (hint: it's part of Pittsburgh's post-industrial renaissance).

You can also go to CMU's campus and see the Randy Pausch Bridge, named after the professor who gave the Last Lecture to end all last lectures.

Hadur

May 14, 2018 at 6:44 pm [51](#)

It turns out that this kind of post-industrial turnaround is very easy if your city happens to be home to some great research universities. Pittsburgh is a tech and healthcare hub today because of CMU and Pitt. If those institutions had been located elsewhere, Pittsburgh would have been a bigger Youngstown.

The mayor of South Bend, Indiana tried to become a major national politician a few years back, citing his proven system for turning around small midwestern towns devastated by the loss of manufacturing jobs. His proven system - "be home to a major university" - is alas not replicable for many.

mkt42

May 14, 2018 at 7:45 pm [52](#)

Very true. Of course if we believe Caplan and maybe Tyler (I'm not sure what his stance is) higher education is merely signaling and a waste of resources. I'll bet Pittsburgh wished all that money hadn't been wasted on CMU and Pitt, so that it could be more like Youngstown.

Patrick Moynihan put it quite well decades ago: "“If you want to build a great city, create a great university and wait 200 years.”"

AnonCow

May 14, 2018 at 5:30 pm [53](#)

This is old, and some of these places are now closed, but a good starting point:
<http://tleaves.com/wordpress-archive/post1222/>

Also Udipi has some of the best South Indian vegetarian food in North America. Down the road from one of the more spectacular South Indian temples in North America.

rayward

May 14, 2018 at 5:52 pm [54](#)

One doesn't get the impression from these comments that there's a Pittsburgh cuisine. No, I don't mean that there aren't good restaurants in Pittsburgh, just that there isn't food unique to Pittsburgh. My ancestors resided in Pittsburgh (my mother was born there) when it was a very wealthy place. What was Andrew Mellon's favorite dish, cheese steak? Cleveland and Pittsburgh were affluent, attracting the nation's best professionals. Yes, Cleveland. I've often considered exploring my ancestral roots in Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. But what's the point: my ancestors are dead and the region isn't what it used to be, certainly not what it was in my ancestors' time. My impression is that these folks were ascetic (except for Taft, how many obese people were there in western Pennsylvania and Ohio), refined Presbyterians who ate and drank modestly. Mellon's wife, an English woman, was appalled by the Philistines in Pittsburgh, but I doubt she objected to the uninspiring food, being English and all.

Jay

May 14, 2018 at 6:01 pm [55](#)

Been out of school for a while but if it is still there a place called Pamela's on Forbes or fifth by the university of pittsburgh is great for breakfast.

Bruce Humbert

May 15, 2018 at 9:54 am [56](#)

Pemela's Diner has several locations around town. Great for breakfast potatoes and pancakes are awesome.

Down the river about an hour is Beaver, Pa is Waffles INCaffenated. Great breakfast/brunch place with unique waffles and very good coffee

And right across the street is Cafe Kolache which has great kolaches including vegan varieties and pretty decent coffee

Krawz

May 15, 2018 at 7:01 pm [57](#)

Waffles INCaffenated now open in South Side, McCandless Township (next to North Allegheny High School)

Belivsky

May 14, 2018 at 6:13 pm [58](#)

My children and I think Pittsburgh is chain restaurant heaven. There are so many. When we go for a week we delight in Texas Roadhouse Steaks, King's, Red Lobster, Eat'n Park, and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Hadur

May 14, 2018 at 6:41 pm [59](#)

It doesn't matter whether Primanti Brothers is good or bad or overrated or whatever. It's the signature food of Pittsburgh and you should eat there and get a sandwich with fries and ketchup on it just to try it and say you've been. You'll also get to have an opinion of your own at the very end.

Mike

May 14, 2018 at 8:44 pm [60](#)

...why? It's a crap sandwich that was designed for people who don't care about food. No one is emailing Tyler to ask for this type of trash. I get that people from Pittsburgh have a soft spot in their hearts for the place (I'm married to one), but even they recognize that is nostalgia, not amazing quality food.

Faze

May 14, 2018 at 7:23 pm [61](#)

The [Heinz History Center](#) has many exhibits to fascinate a foodies -- particularly the exhibition of Heinz Innovations (history of baked bean cans, etc. but trust me, it's really interesting), plus other popular cultural history from national and local perspectives.

An unexpected delight, between downtown and the Strip District.

Sk

May 14, 2018 at 7:44 pm [62](#)

I lived in Pittsburgh for a long time. Ignore primanti brothers, it is very overrated.

Gaucha Parrilla Argentina, in the strip, is incredibly good. And busy. You'll wait a half hour to place your order. It is worth it.

Also in the strip, Salem's grill has delicious North Indian and North African food. They are also a butchery and the quality of the meat is high.

There is also a good polish deli in the strip. And a solid Mexican taco truck. I wasn't satisfied with noodlehead the last time I went but have been impressed other times.

Udipi, a bit out of town, is a southern Indian restaurant primarily servicing Indians. They're not very friendly but they make great food. There are a few great food trucks around Pitt, particularly for Indian food.

Chaya has a great omakase experience.

There are two great French bakeries.

Everyday noodles in squirrel hill has some very tasty soup dumplings made from scratch in house, very fun experience.

Pittsburgh is a great food town.

Justin

May 17, 2018 at 7:58 pm [63](#)

Oh man, I forgot about Everyday Noodles. I might need to take a trip over there this weekend.

Rory

May 14, 2018 at 7:58 pm [64](#)

Apteka -- outstanding, and truly singular. Cure, Legume, and the other high-ish end places are all great (especially Cure) and cheaper than they would be in many other cities but the food isn't a truly unique, merely very good. Apteka is a treasure -- I can't think of a better snapshot of what's special about Pittsburgh, with culinarily and culturally. It's also pretty cheap. Be sure to check out their drink menu.

Ignore Primanti's, Pamela's, and other older places with a broad fanbase -- its usually pretty lazy stuff.

Evans_KY

May 14, 2018 at 8:45 pm [65](#)

Pittsburgh is a very walkable city. Head in any direction from the Point and you will find something interesting. We left in 2006 and when we visit friends the city is buzzing with energy. Go through the tubes to enter. Look around at how the city is situated. Go see a Pirates game, best seat in baseball.

Downtown: Primanti Square, PPG, farmer's markets, concerts, festivals, soot covered churches towered by skyscrapers. Cocktails.

Strip District: Catch it on a Saturday morning. Pick up anise biscotti at Enrico's or grab some cheese and bread at Penn Mac. Grab a ticket! Mill around and check out the menus posted.

Restaurants aplenty.

Oakland: Cathedral of Learning and Andrew Carnegie's Legacy (museum and library). Type species for T-Rex, art, and levels upon levels of books.

Rachel Carson's Alma Mater.

Fallingwater is lovely.

Sree's for sentimental reasons. His daughter used to serve us mango ice cream and then we would pack up leftovers in Tupperware.

I know I have skipped so much. It is difficult to capture the beauty and history of such a place in the comments section. Enjoy!

Jeff R

May 14, 2018 at 9:53 pm [66](#)

"Head in any direction from the Point and you will find something interesting."

There's a river on three sides of The Point!

LC

May 14, 2018 at 9:12 pm [67](#)

I second Rory's vote for Apteka. Superior motors has an interesting story <https://www.superiormotors15104.com>. Point Brugge is delicious and fairly priced.

Walt

May 14, 2018 at 11:43 pm [68](#)

Regarding the sushi there, I lived in the Pittsburgh area for four years after finishing uni. While I was there I ate at a LOT of sushi joints. For a while, while in grad school, I would eat beans and rice for almost every meal during the week day, and then spend \$100-200 on sushi on the weekend, every week. My point being that I'm not some causal sushi eater.

My favorite place ended up being a restaurant outside of the city, about half an hour to the north in Beaver, PA. The place was called Yama Japanese Restaurant. I strongly and confidently recommend it to anyone looking for good sushi in the area, with good portion sizes and without being overpriced or stupidly fancy. As a plus, if you make the drive during the evening, you can drive passed the captivating and strangely beautiful industrial ruins of post-coal Pittsburgh.

Now I live in Houston and this place is a craphole. Grocery store sushi up north is better than the restaurant stuff I've gotten here.

John Smith

May 15, 2018 at 12:35 am [69](#)

While visiting Pittsburgh it's easy enough to miss the fact you're in Greater Appalachia. Stray a few miles from of the city and it's Deliverance all over again. Take heed.

MS

May 15, 2018 at 9:33 am [70](#)

Five Points Artisan Bakery has the best baguettes this side of Paris.
Casbah for excellent Mediterranean cuisine

Chris Purnell

May 15, 2018 at 11:34 am [71](#)

"...wise and mature comment..." This sounds like a courtier crawling. We're talking about food in a restaurant which doesn't normally provoke wisdom.

Will Barrett

May 15, 2018 at 4:46 pm [72](#)

Choolah in East Liberty. Best fast casual Indian in the country. It's their sixth location. I think you will like it better than the ones in Northern Virginia. One of the founders went back to India for two years to research recipes, identify spice suppliers and learn cooking techniques from both 90-year old family cooks and young chefs. It definitely comes through i the food. Can't bet the price.

Kennedy

May 15, 2018 at 5:23 pm [73](#)

Corned beef (get the Famous Special) at Sammy's in downtown Pitt. I believe it's on Liberty Ave. 30+ year old bar with a sandwich counter in the back. I live in China and this is the only food in the US I miss.

Andrew Warren

May 15, 2018 at 5:36 pm [74](#)

Enough has already been said about Primanti's but it's a joke as far as the food is concerned. Avoid.

Anyway here are some recommendations I can give. As a basis for comparison, I moved to Pittsburgh from Portland. I think it would be perfectly fair to say that Portland has better food, but not by as much of a margin as you might think. This is a selection, not meant to be encyclopedic.

For the old Pittsburgh: the best is possibly Jozsa Corner in Hazelwood. Hungarian/Transylvanian; by appointment. I believe Mayor Peduto held his victory party for his first electoral win there.

Patisserie: Gourmandine in Hazelwood/Lawrenceville/Downtown.

Museum restaurant: the one in the Carnegie Museum of Art (I believe just called the Cafe Carnegie). Good option for a locavore brunch.

Chinese: Chengdu Gourmet in Squirrel Hill certainly deserved its James Beard nomination last year. I think it would be a very Cowen-esque choice. (Plain, hidden on a side street, but outstanding.)

There are also several good Taiwanese restaurants (Cafe 33 is my favourite) around Forbes and Shady that are quite good and reliable simulacra of certain places you might see in Taipei, but not out of this world.

Tapas: Morcilla is one of the better restaurants I've been to anywhere.

Pierogies: there is a lot of competition! Aside from the excellent Apteka, consider anything on this list: <http://www.post-gazette.com/life/dining/2018/03/23/The-10-best-restaurant-pierogies-in-Pittsburgh/stories/201803250032>

Beer: East End Brewing Company has impressed me the most for quality of product. Church Brew Works is also very good and in a striking setting.

Pizza: Spak in Garfield, Giorgio's near Allegheny Common. (These are also not out of this world, but still quite good.)

Vegetarian: Apteka, Zenith, Onion Maiden.

Wine-focused: Bar Marco.

Regrettably, Conflict Kitchen is now closed, otherwise I would heartily recommend it.

Other recommendations for Pittsburgh that Tyler might appreciate: the Maxo Vanka Murals are singular. They are in a church across the bridge from Lawrenceville; I believe they are only open to sightseers on Saturdays. The City of Asylum is also a very interesting Pittsburgh specific

thing: a residency program for writers from around the world who are political refugees. There is an associated bookstore and event space in a converted Masonic hall across from Allegheny Common. Lastly, Pittsburgh has quite the collection of unique office architecture from the early to mid 20th century in the downtown core; I believe there are regular guided tours.

Donzig

May 16, 2018 at 6:38 pm [75](#)

Pittsburgh is easily the steepest US city I've ever been in (including San Francisco). Walking around the South Hills above the Carson Street district (the Adams Morgan of PGH) or Polish Hill, among other neighborhoods, you'll see stairs going up hills where it is far too steep to pour concrete for sidewalks.

The view of downtown and the Three Rivers from Grandview Ave on Mt Washington is really something to see, especially at sundown.

Tours of a former steel mill are available at the old Carrie Furnaces a few miles east of the city.

Fuocorav

May 24, 2018 at 12:13 pm [76](#)

Forget Peppi's or Primanti Bros. Go to Rudy's in Swissvale. Get the "hot" Italian sub. It's best "hot" sub ever. The homemade soup in Frick Park Market is also great.

Fuocorav

May 24, 2018 at 12:15 pm [77](#)

Forgot to add that Aiello serves great pizza in Squirrel Hill. So is Mineo's.

Comments for this post are closed