

Best Bites

**AUBURN
OPELIKA**



Best Bites

This isn't just any ol' list. These independent restaurateurs and talented chefs have created exceptional establishments with specialty dishes you won't find anywhere else. And they have to earn their way onto these pages: selected for our visitors and by our visitors, these are our GOATs, our tried and true, those that have achieved a superior and unparalleled level of YUM!

From Iron Chef and the James Beard Foundation to *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living*, and *Wine Spectator*, the whole world is figuring out what we already know. The Auburn-Opelika culinary scene is on fire! Pick your fave and share it. And don't forget the hashtag! #AuburnOpelika



Scan for the full list of Best Bites in AO!





Acre

210 East Glenn Avenue, Auburn
334-246-3763 | acreauburn.com | \$\$\$

Acre celebrates Southern hospitality and the fresh harvest provided by the local community. With sophisticated charm, repurposed architectural details, and a menu of stylishly modern food with roots deep in Southern soil, it's a delightful anachronism. Acre is good traditions for good people, a neighborhood place perfect for relaxing with friends, making memories with family, or conducting business.

Acre is located in historic downtown Auburn, just three blocks from Toomer's Corner, the heart of the Auburn community. Chef David Bancroft and his team bring classic favorites to the table with fresh, innovative flavors and artistic presentations.

“Our goal is to interpret the complex, traditional tastes of the Deep South in a totally fresh and modern way.”

- Chef David Bancroft

Highlighting new Alabama cuisine inspired by Southern heritage, the food is responsibly grown, harvested, sourced, and then prepared by a team that enjoys the extra dedication and labor required by this type of food. The menu moves with the rhythms of the seasons and the unpredictability of the harvest. Acre's food and service are casual but clean and focused. Full bar available. Reservations recommended. Serving lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch.



Amsterdam Cafe

410 South Gay Street, Auburn* | 334-826-8181

1850 Shug Jordan Parkway, Auburn | 334-209-1587

2301 Ogletree Village Lane, Auburn | 334-209-1599

amsterdamcafe.com | \$\$\$

Alive with conversation and an energetic mix of generations, Amsterdam Cafe welcomes visitors in a relaxed and stylish setting. An Auburn tradition, the eatery's original location* features special event space and two full bars. Amsterdam Cafe's menu offers a plate for every palate and consists of soul-pleasing selections that include family favorites, seasonal highlights, and timeless classics. One taste of their daily specials, award-winning sandwiches, and market fresh seafood, and you'll know you've found just what you're looking for!

Insider Tip: Amsterdam Cafe's famous crab cake & avocado sandwich is named as one of Alabama's *100 Dishes to Eat Before You Die!*

Full bar and terrace dining available. Serving lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch. Multiple locations. Reservations accepted.



Cafe 123

123 South 8th Street, Opelika

334-737-0069 | cafeonetwentythree.com | \$\$\$

A fine dining restaurant serving Southern and continental cuisine with a hip, vintage atmosphere in the heart of downtown Opelika. Located in the historic Haynie's Drugstore building, the ambiance and charm of this authentic 50s soda fountain and hangout remains but has been updated with original artwork, white linens, and modern fixtures.

The café's menu lists hand-cut ribeyes and filets, sushi-grade tuna, and more, accompanied by a selection of Chef Eron Bass' specials and fresh catches. Try the beer-battered asparagus with lemon aioli, classic tableside Caesar salad for two, and anything with Chef's famous brown sugar rub. Full bar available. Serving dinner and Sunday brunch. Reservations recommended.

Insider Tip: Check their social media pages for info on wine dinners and other special events!



Pannie-George's Kitchen

2328 South College Street, Auburn
334-821-4142 | panniegeorgeskitchen.com | \$\$

Pannie-George's selection of meats and vegetables encompasses the rich tastes and textures of Southern-style cooking. Named after their grandparents, the owners and operators of this cafeteria-style restaurant have created a place where customers are "welcomed and treated like a respected member of Pannie-George's family." Traditional Southern selections vary daily - other than the legendary fried chicken which is a staple - and include items such as catfish, meatloaf, mac & cheese, purple hull peas, banana pudding, and sweet potato pie. Serving lunch and dinner.

Hamilton's on Magnolia

174 East Magnolia Avenue, Auburn | 334-887-2677
1849 Ogletree Road, Auburn | 334-329-5886
hamiltonsgroup.com | \$\$\$

Hamilton's on Magnolia offers an intimate, casual atmosphere that's made it a favorite destination in historic downtown Auburn for over a decade. The menu consists of diverse, contemporary American selections. Appetizers, salads, and sandwiches are available throughout the day. Whether dining for pleasure, business, or hosting a special event, Hamilton's will make a lasting impression. Patio dining and full bar available with drink specials daily. Serving lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch. Check out their second location at Moore's Mill! Reservations not accepted.

Niffer's Place

1151 Opelika Road, Auburn | 334-821-3118
niffersplace.com | \$\$

Niffer's Place opened in 1991 with good food for an excellent value in a fun atmosphere. Niffer's loves even the pickiest of eaters, offering everything from wings, nachos, huge salads, and ½ pound burgers to grilled chicken, steamed veggies, pasta, a kid's menu, desserts, and more. Full bar and patio dining available. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations not accepted.



The Depot

124 Mitcham Avenue, Auburn

334-521-5177 | allaboardauburn.com | \$\$\$

Auburn's finest and freshest seafood! The Depot is a gulf-coastal brasserie with a globally inspired menu where sea meets land. Constructed in 1847, this fabled train depot rests at the gateway of downtown Auburn. With a prominent role in the history of the city, the time-worn tracks of The Depot have seen the face of war and abandonment. Now over 150 years later, The Hound owners Matt & Jana Poirier have resurrected the building to house the area's first fresh seafood restaurant where, along with co-owner and Executive Chef Scott Simpson, they bring globally-inspired cuisine to the heart of Alabama in this historically relevant setting.

"Where the hook meets the line," The Depot plates up the finest and freshest seafood in the area, elevating the culinary scene in the community with cuisine that, cooked simply and spectacularly, serves to honor their Southern heritage. Serving dinner and Sunday brunch. Reservations recommended.

Insider Tip: Try their famous Tapas Tuesday or Thursday Oysters & Bubbles from 5-7pm!



Ariccia Cucina Italiana

241 South College Street, Auburn
334-844-5140 | aricciacucina.com | \$\$\$

Inspired by a hilltop town of vineyards, palaces, and poets, Ariccia Cucina is a modern Italian escape located in the heart of Auburn. Offering breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner 365 days a year, Ariccia has become a favorite among locals and visitors alike.

Guests can enjoy authentic Italian fare in the intimate dining room or al fresco on the patio, experiencing fresh ingredients and house-made pasta. The extensive wine selection, coupled with a full-service bar and lounge, provides an ideal dining experience.

Ariccia favorites include rigatoni Bolognese, spaghetti carbonara, and truffle ravioli, as well as their signature porchetta, featured on the list of *100 Dishes to Eat in Alabama Before You Die*. Hearty paninis, wood-fired pizzas, and unique brunch offerings round out the extensive menu options, giving guests a true taste of Italy. Casual yet sophisticated, Ariccia offers something for every palate.

Full bar available. Open seven days for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch. Reservations accepted.

Bow & Arrow

1977 East Samford Avenue, Auburn
334-246-2546 | bowandarrowbbq.com | \$\$

From the talented chef-owner who brought us Acre, Bow & Arrow is where South Texas barbecue meets Alabama potluck. Casual and authentic, Bow & Arrow serves up an assortment of smoked meats cooked over a live-fire Kudu grill, a selection of Southern sides, including hashbrown casserole, collard greens, and brisket beans; and an extensive selection of real Tex-Mex cuisine. A full bar and creative cocktail menu round out the experience. Serving lunch and dinner. Reservations not accepted.

Toomer's Drugs

100 North College Street, Auburn
334-887-3488 | toomersdrugs.com | \$

When Toomer's lemonade ranked number one in Esquire magazine's "162 Reasons It's Good To Be An American," it was only about 105 years after the rest of us already knew. Hand-made to order, this tart and tangy concoction is the hallmark of a beloved Auburn icon, the only business to occupy this historic corner since 1896. Located in the heart of downtown Auburn where the city and campus come together, Toomer's offers delicious soda fountain specialties and snacks along with a full line of Auburn souvenirs.

Mrs. Story's Dairy Bar

1900 Pepperell Parkway, Opelika
334-749-1719 | \$

An Auburn-Opelika tradition since 1952, the secret recipe for Mrs. Story's famous homemade chili dogs reminds us that, thankfully, some things never change. Still in its original location on Pepperell Parkway, the owners of this 50s style walk up are the third generation of the Story family to serve the freshest "fast" food in the area. Serving lunch and dinner.





1856 - Culinary Residence

205 South College Street, Auburn
auburn1856.com | \$\$\$\$

1856 - Culinary Residence is an elegant teaching restaurant named after the year of Auburn University's founding and anchoring the first floor of the Tony & Libba Rane Culinary Science Center. Students in the Horst Schulze School of Hospitality Management work under the guidance of visiting chefs to prepare and serve an à la carte lunch menu and the current, prix fixe tasting menu during dinner service. Each year, a nationally acclaimed chef arrives to create a unique restaurant concept, providing a one-of-a-kind, ever-changing culinary experience for students and restaurant guests alike. The open kitchen invites diners to observe as their food is prepared, while a soaring two-story wine room stocked with bottles from around the world provides a stunning dining backdrop.

Thought to be the first teaching restaurant in the world to offer a tasting menu, 1856 sets the stage in a dramatic fashion for students, faculty, and visitors to experience all that the best of Auburn hospitality has to offer. Full bar and Master Sommelier. Serving lunch and dinner. Reservations required.



Zazu Gastropub

112 South 8th Street, Opelika
334-203-1747 | zazuopelika.com | \$\$\$

Housed in what was previously a vacant commercial building in downtown Opelika, Zazu Gastropub is now a stunning, five-level restaurant striking in character with sandy, old bricks, wide-plank flooring, flickering gas lanterns, and repurposed wooden beams from the Old Mill in Opelika. At Zazu, people can expect “fine dining” food in a relaxed, public house atmosphere.

“We do a lot of different comfort foods from around the United States and a couple of different ones from around the world. We make everything from scratch that we can, and we use as much local produce as possible.”

- Chef Graham Hage

Zazu has teamed up with Opelika Grows, Alabama Seafood Co., and Oakview Farms Granary for the menu’s ingredients. Zazu offers a full bar with a wide selection of craft beers on tap and bottled. Serving lunch and dinner. Reservations accepted.



Auburn Plaza Bar & Lounge

1188 Opelika Road, Auburn (Midtown)
334-521-0074 | auburnplaza.com | \$\$

Brought to us from the creators of Waverly Local, Auburn Plaza Bar and Lounge is a lively bar and eatery located in Midtown. Featuring creative cuisine and cocktails, it's a fun place to hang out with friends and enjoy good food and drinks. Brunch is available on Saturday and Sunday. Serving lunch and dinner, their casual space spilling into the outdoors is just begging you to bring your friends for a drink. Or come make new ones!

The Irritable Bao

127 East Magnolia Avenue, Auburn
instagram.com/dumpslikeatruck_irritablebao | \$

The Irritable Bao might be a funny name, but their food is seriously yummy. A tiny storefront in the heart of downtown Auburn, The Irritable Bao is known for long lines that snake all the way to Toomer's Corner and incredibly delicious authentic Chinese bao. The casual dining hot spot has a menu that changes daily. You can find it on Instagram or Facebook, and the lines form promptly. But don't let that turn you away from experiencing the best bao in the South because, "The longer the line is, the faster your service is," says owner, Whitley Dykes. With a new menu each day, it's hard to say what the most popular menu items are. You'll just have to try it for yourself.

Byron's Smokehouse

436 Opelika Road, Auburn
334-887-9981 | \$

Treat your taste buds to a true Southern feast at Byron's Smokehouse, a local legend serving up the best BBQ in town since 1989! Mouthwatering pit-cooked pork, juicy chicken, sizzling sausage, and fall-off-the-bone ribs. Plus, they've got killer sandwiches, fresh salads, and all your favorite home-cooked sides. And don't even get us started on breakfast – it's the stuff of legends! So whether you're stopping by for a quick bite or settling in for a leisurely meal, Byron's Smokehouse is the place to be. Come hungry, leave happy – that's the Byron's promise.



The Hound

124 Tichenor Avenue, Auburn

334-246-3300 | thehound-auburn.com | \$\$\$

The Hound is a family-owned restaurant and bar featuring over-the-top American classics, top shelf bourbon, and 28 craft beers on tap. They offer bacon from heritage breed pork as well as other organic and humanely raised meats. The atmosphere was designed to be warm and welcoming: think hunting lodge or an antler-pronged barn setting.

“Our food philosophy is the same as our life philosophy: we provide a place for people to feel at home and just enjoy the simple things we have all been given.”

Owners Matt & Jana Poirier realized their dream of opening a local watering hole featuring simple, delicious food with a focus on bacon, bourbon, community, and family. Menu items might include meatloaf, craft beer-braised chicken, 1/2 lb. bacon BLT, wild-game sausage, and a thick cut bone-in Berkshire chop. The menu changes with the seasons.

The team sources locally and regionally and harvests from The Hound family farm in Lafayette, Alabama, when possible. Try the fantastic brunch! Full bar available. Serving lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch. Reservations recommended.



Lucy's

2300 Moores Mill Road, Auburn
334-521-0391 | lucysauburn.com | \$\$\$

Awarded by diners as the #1 restaurant in Auburn by Trip Advisor, Lucy's is a modern American eatery offering a fresh, approachable spin on the classics.

A light and bright California-style restaurant, its menu is ever-changing and filled with fresh seafood, locally-farmed meat, and produce. Lucy's is all about shared plates, award-winning cocktails, and a killer wine list with wine on tap.

Hospitality at Lucy's is warm, welcoming, and one of the many attributes that sets the restaurant apart. It's truly a community hub and a place for all people and all occasions – Sunday suppers, first dates, anniversaries, big brunches with friends, and casual drinks at the bar. It's simply where locals and those passing through love to be.

Insider Tip: Be sure to visit Lucy's latest endeavors, Little Darling Burger Co. and Wildchild Tacos, located in the Hey Day Market of the Tony & Libba Rane Culinary Center.

Full bar featuring skilled mixologists; open daily. Reservations recommended. Private dining and event space available.



The Waverly Local

1465 Patrick Street, Waverly

334-539-6077 | thewaverlylocal.com | \$\$\$

“Seasonally inspired, simple Southern fare amidst mid-century modern decor in a beautifully repurposed garage setting.”

Locals just call it *The Local*, where the menu comes from Southern roots and there's something for every member of the family. It's a creative dining experience with a variety of entrees and delicious appetizers, sides, and salads. The restaurant sources its produce from local growers whenever possible, including tomatoes and squash from Mace Glasscock and collard greens from Andrew Lowery in Waverly, and cucumbers and lettuces from Ralf du Toit of Extreme Green Farms in Auburn.

Waverly Local offers a revolving beer list featuring local craft brews, wine by the glass or bottle, and a full-service bar. Menu items include a daily gulf offering, half smoked chicken, bacon wrapped Wickle's okra, blue crab cakes, and roasted ranch pork. Serving dinner and Sunday brunch. Reservations recommended. Check social media for the live music and specials calendar!



Sword & Skillet



Botanic

***Try these other independently owned,
Auburn-Opelika originals!***

The Bean

Fair trade coffee, teas, & handmade baked goods | \$

Big Blue Bagel

Breakfast, sandwiches, salads, & more | \$

Botanic

The most unique restaurant, cafe, & retail compound in Auburn-Opelika | \$\$\$

Butcher Paper BBQ

Classic Southern bbq & homemade sides | \$

Chuck's Bar-B-Que

Classic American bbq smokehouse; catering services | \$

The Corner Office

Eclectic breakfast and lunch cafe | \$\$

Pho Lee

Authentic Vietnamese cuisine, egg rolls, pho, & more | \$\$

Savanh Thai Kitchen

Authentic Thai curry, stir fry, noodles, & more | \$\$

Sword & Skillet

Fine dining food truck in a permanent location | \$\$

Venditori's

Italian Restaurant

Classic Italian cuisine | \$\$\$

Vintage 2298

Southern fare with coastal roots; local produce, meats, and gulf seafood | \$\$

Well Red

Coffee, books, & wine bar; house-made pastries & desserts | \$



***Don't miss these Best Bites located inside
the Hey Day Market!***

Wildchild Tacos

Southern-Californian-inspired street taco bar offering a variety of specialty street tacos, nachos, quesadillas, and traditional sides, including authentic Mexican street corn, fresh guacamole, and queso "sucio." All of their tacos come on handmade, Heirloom blue corn masa tortillas with the choice of a side of queso or guacamole. Along with street tacos, Wild Child serves various types of nachos "locos" and quesadillas. Top off your meal with some churros and an authentic Mexican soda!

Little Darling Burger Co.

Little Darling is a classic, all-American spot with specialty burgers sure to impress! Enjoy one-of-a-kind burgers and sandwiches at this cute stop inside Hey Day Market. From a variety of aioli sauces to house-made ketchup, you'll find the perfect pairing for their specialty fries. Along with their delightful food menu, satisfy your sweet tooth with one of their hand-spun milkshakes or floats!

This information is proudly presented by Auburn-Opelika Tourism, a non-profit service organization positively impacting our local economy and improving the quality of life in our community through tourism and travel.

**AUBURN
OPELIKA**
t o u r i s m

714 E Glenn Avenue
Auburn, AL 36830
aotourism.com
info@aotourism.com

