

taste of the south

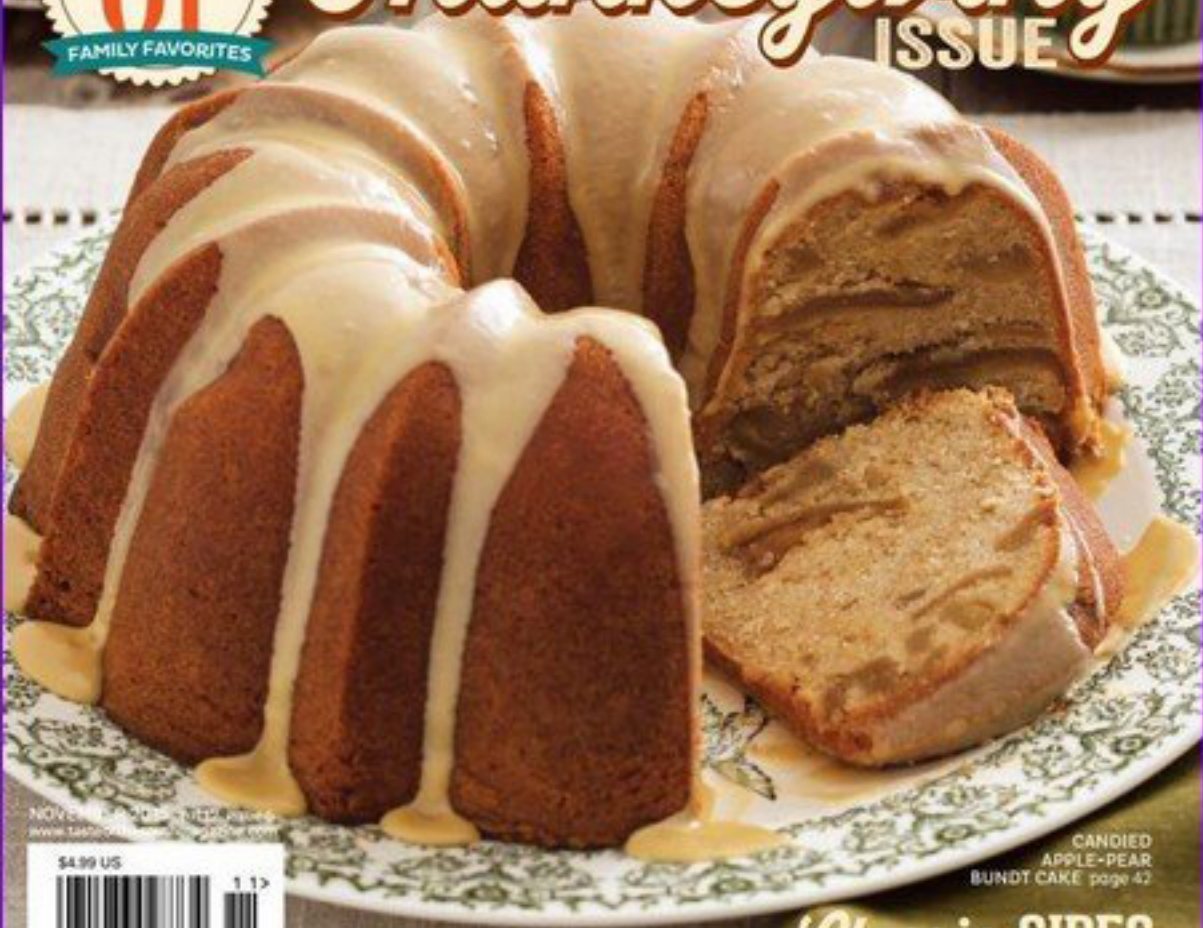
AUTHENTICALLY SOUTHERN, ALWAYS DELICIOUS



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Thanksgiving ISSUE



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CHATTANOOGA

by Brian Hart Hoffman | photos taken on iPhone 6



S'mores Hot Chocolate at Hot Chocolatier



Champy's



Meeting Place

IF YOU'VE EVER TAKEN A ROAD TRIP IN THE SOUTH, I bet you've passed your fair share of old red barns emblazoned with the words "See Rock City" or "Visit Ruby Falls" beckoning you toward Chattanooga. But there's a lot more to this bluff-hugged city than famous landmarks. Chefs, bakers, and makers are hard at work, peppering this historic-yet-happening city with authentic and inspired Southern food. From mountainside to riverfront, there's a happy plate waiting for you in the Scenic City.



Downtown Chattanooga is enjoying the same booming revitalization that has blessed many Southern cities over the past decade, and **Warehouse Row** is a perfect example of that progress. This Civil War fort-turned-warehouse has been thoughtfully repurposed to house an indoor community-driven mix of retail, fitness studios, and dining options.

In keeping with the reclaimed-industrial vibe of Warehouse Row, the mood at **Public House**, a bustling bistro, is fun, cool, and casual. And the lunch menu follows suit; it's a refined, mindful nod to a classic Southern meat-and-three. You can't go wrong with daily specials like meatloaf, pot pie, and shrimp and grits. For dessert, try the Chocolate Chip Cookie Banana Pudding (the waiter said it was like getting a hug from your grandma, and he wasn't lying!). It's a great spot to grab lunch or dinner after spending a few hours exploring this inspired space.

On the other end of the spectrum, you have **Champy's**—a Chattanooga institution. The only thing reclaimed at this beloved fried chicken shack are the signed dollar bills thumbtacked to the walls (a trend started by the restaurant's first servers). There's nothing fancy about this place, and that's why it's so much fun. When my Styrofoam plate of just-fried chicken arrived, it was all I could do to take pictures before digging in. As I aimed my camera over my plate to get the best angle, I couldn't help but notice the group at the table next to us. Turns out these guys are regulars with their own table (complete with a sign that says "The Family Table"), who regularly hold court over plates of fried chicken, catfish, and fried tamales. They were a hoot, just like the restaurant itself. Expect a wait—this is a very popular place.



Urban Stack



St. John's Restaurant



Meeting Place



For a quicker breakfast, seek out **Julie Darling Donuts**. Not only do they fry up a variety of yeast, cake, and cream-filled donuts, they also use their sweet goodies to build over-the-top desserts like Donut Sundaes and Ice Cream Sandwiches. Their flavors are seemingly endless—I love Pancakes and Bacon Donut with Maple Icing, and I couldn't leave without sampling the Banana Pie. Can you blame me?

For a casual dinner option, check out **Urban Stack**. This fun burger and bourbon bar plays up the same reclaimed industrial vibe as Warehouse Row (the original building was built in the 1860s). Their straightforward menu is based on Southern staples with more toppings than you can imagine. I opted for the most Southern burger I could find, the Fried Green Tomato Burger, slathered with rémoulade, and topped with yellow Cheddar and Benton's bacon. And don't skip their sides; they have everything from classic steakhouse favorites (Gouda Creamed Corn!) to crispy fries.

If you're looking for a more elegant dinner, make reservations at **St. John's Restaurant**. Located in a restored early 20th century flatiron building that was once home to the opulent Ellis Hotel, St. John's treats patrons to elegantly plated dishes like pork belly and venison in a refined dining room that's full of Southern grace and sophistication. Head next door for something completely different; their sister restaurant, **Meeting Place**, is the "darker side" of St. John's, featuring a cozy lounge and more casual, yet equally delicious fare. No matter which you choose, you won't be disappointed.

In the mood for an adventure? Meander up the mountainside to Hill City, a fun and artsy neighborhood in North Chattanooga. There you'll find the wonderfully quirky **Aretha Frankensteins**, a breakfast destination unlike anything you've ever experienced. As you might surmise, Frankenstein's monster sneaks into the décor in random and funky ways, from movie posters to the mottled green walls and ceiling. But don't let the ambiance distract you—you're here for the pancakes. No lie, these whoppers are as thick as cake layers! You can order them studded with blueberries, strawberries, pecans, or chocolate chips, or just plain, smothered in a waterfall of syrup. They only have a handful of tables, but don't worry—it's well worth the wait.

//// SOUTHERN FLAVORS

CHATTANOOGA ITINERARY

Public House

1110 Market St.
publichouse
chattanooga.com

Champy's

526 E. Martin Luther
King Blvd.
champyschicken.com

Urban Stack

12 W. 13th St.
urbanstack.com

St. John's Restaurant

1278 Market St.
stjohnsrestaurant.com

Meeting Place

1274 Market St.
stjohnsmeetingplace.com

Aretha Frankensteins

518 Tremont St.
arethas.com

Julie Darling Donuts

121 Frazier Ave.
jddonuts.com

Niedlov's Bakery

215 E. Main St.
niedlous.com

Main Street Meats

217 E. Main St.
mainstreetmeatschatt.com

Rembrandt's

204 High St.
bluffviewardistrict.com

The Hot Chocolatier

1437 Market St.
thehotchocolatier.com

In addition to Chattanooga's awesome eateries, there's a talented community of makers responsible for rounding out menus all across town. The bakers at **Niedlov's** supply their gorgeous, rustic loaves to some of the city's finest dining spots—and they supplied me with a perfectly glazed cinnamon roll. The smells in this place are an intoxicating advertisement for their handcrafted baguettes, boules, and pastries. Trust me; you'll want to buy a bagful.

My next stop was just next door at **Main Street Meats**. Like their neighbors at Niedlov's, husband-and-wife team Erik and Amanda Niel provide custom cuts to some of Chattanooga's finest restaurants (including their own, Easy Bistro & Bar). Channeling the bygone days when folks could count on the skills and expertise of their neighborhood butcher, Erik and his team source whole animals from local farms, utilizing each and every part possible—you can literally purchase anything you need, from beef bones to lamb loins to fresh stock and lard. More than just a meat counter, there's also a great lunch, dinner, and cocktail menu. Belly up to the counter, snack on a charcuterie board or some of their Fresh Pork Rinds, and enjoy their friendly company.

Of all of my wonderful experiences in Chattanooga, one moment stands out. It was my last morning, and I grabbed a cup of coffee at **Rembrandt's** and decided to take a walk. After a few steps, I found myself treated to a glorious view of the river and the city I'd been exploring. The Scenic City was waking up, commuters buzzing over the river's bridges, on their way to start another day in their beautiful home. I took a sip of my coffee and thought to myself, *I wonder if they know just how lucky they are?* 📍



AS SEEN IN
TASTE OF THE SOUTH
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WHERE TO STAY

The Chattanooga

Originally a foundry,
this charming hotel is
located within walking
distance of many of the
city's best restaurants
and attractions.

chattanoogaanhotel.com