Chicago has the fifth highest foreign-born population in the United States. As John Drury wrote in 1933, one can visit world cuisines by traveling through Chicago's neighborhoods.

Beginning in the 1950s, increased numbers of African Americans moving from the South settled in Chicago's West Side, joining the well-established black communities on the South Side.

Mostly hailing from Mississippi and Arkansas, the new Chicagoans brought regional variations of standard dishes, though many were categorized as soul food restaurants. West Side Food stores now sold specifically Mississippi foods such as spicy pork sausages. Over time, however, eating habits in the black community changed. As years went on, many of the soul food restaurants were forced to close: Army & Lou's, Queen of the Sea, Izola's, Gladys' Luncheonette. Some southern-style restaurants and many rib and chicken shacks remain as reminders of a unique Chicago cuisine.

Many residents in less-advantaged neighborhoods had to deal with "food deserts," areas with a lack of full-service supermarkets, in addition to low incomes. The passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1964 helped. Those in the economically challenged neighborhoods, mainly on the South and West Sides of the city, now had a helping hand from the federal government. The program later became known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). But the challenge of getting supermarket chains to open in these areas remained. In September 2016, Whole Foods opened a store in Englewood on the south side of Chicago. However, hunger was a constant threat for families. In 1979, The Greater Chicago Food Depository opened on the Southwest Side. The nonprofit distributed donated groceries to food pantries across the city and became a training center for the disadvantaged.

A small dent in the food-access problem came after the passage of The Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, which made it easier for farmers to sell directly to consumers. The city and suburbs began opening farmers markets in the neighborhoods. Though prices at the markets could not compete with the bulk prices of the large supermarkets, they did provide fresher, locally grown produce. Many city markets and independent markets accept the Link cards of the SNAP program. As of 2015, more than 150 farmers markets existed in the Chicago area.

A sign advertising stuffed pizza. *Image licensed by Ingram Image. Courtesy of Philip V. Wojciak.*

The Dining Revolution

The most dramatic changes in how Chicagoans ate could be found through their restaurants. From its steak-and-potatoes beginnings, the city soon expanded its menu with fast food, fancy French food, regional American food, fusion food, farm-to-table food, and molecular gastronomy—and all permutations between. Chicagoans' growing sophistication about food and a crop of new, young chefs created one of the fine-dining capitals of the world by the early 2000s.

First, the growth of fast-food chains certainly changed Chicago's eating-out habits. Inexpensive burgers now competed with the city's popular hot dog stands and the suburban drive-in restaurants of the 1950s. Fast food captured Chicago's hearts and stomachs. Though not a fast food, pizza in Chicago continued and expanded in popularity. Independent operators popped up with thin-crust, stuffed, and tavern-style, square-cut pies. Then came Gino's East in 1966, and Giordano's, Lou Malnati's, Connies, and Nancy's. It seemed every neighborhood had its own pizza parlor. As the 1990s and 2000s arrived, Italian-style thin crust pizzas cooked in wood-burning ovens became the newest trend, and diners could find them in all sorts of restaurants beyond pizza joints.

In 1971, the era of Chicago as "Meatpacker to the World" came to an end. The cattle market at the Union Stock Yards was closed, and the nearby Stock Yard Inn

served its last steak in 1976. Meat processing had shifted west, closer to where livestock was raised. But that did not deter Chicagoans' taste for a prime steak, and the city continued its reputation as the steakhouse capital of the country with favorites such as Gene & Georgetti's and Eli's the Place for Steak, and newcomers Morton's The Steakhouse and Gibson's.

Fine dining in the 1960s meant French or Continental food. As with the old downtown upscale restaurants, these were destination places that catered to a more affluent population. In 1963, The Bakery opened in a storefront on North Lincoln Avenue. Chef Louis Szathmary offered fine continental cuisine, with dishes like beef Wellington with Cumberland sauce. The most influential of French chefs was Jean Banchet, who opened Le Français in Wheeling in 1973 with his wife, Doris. They turned the restaurant into what some called a "temple of gastronomy." Jovan also was a French restaurant, but it was owned by a Yugoslavian, Jovan Trboyevic, one of the most influential restaurateurs in the city. He later opened Le Perroquet on Walton Street, which became the first place in Chicago to emphasize the imported "nouvelle cuisine" of France.

During the 1970s, while French and continental places did well, a new American cuisine began to appear. In Chicago, Richard Melman and Jerry Orzoff opened a casual restaurant in 1971 called R. J. Grunts, where they created an eclectic menu and one of the country's new, hipper iterations of salad bars (and smorgasbords). As the 1980s progressed and living was high, diners enjoyed more dining out than ever before. Practitioners of what was called "new-American" cuisine included Gordon Sinclair, with his 1976 Gordon restaurant, and chef Michael Foley, with Printer's Row restaurant. In 1984, the Levy Brothers opened a high-end Italian place called Spiaggia on the Magnificent Mile and launched the career of chef Tony Mantuano. It set the bar for Italian food in Chicago that has not been matched since.

Top ingredients became the focus for another pioneer chef, Charlie Trotter. In 1987, he created an elegant, fine-dining establishment that bore his name. It became the top restaurant in Chicago, and one of the country's most celebrated. The same year that Trotter began his restaurant, Rick and Deann Bayless opened a casual, art-filled Mexican cafe on North Clark and called it Frontera Grill. It would become as influential for its modern but authentic take on Mexican food as Trotter's was for top fine dining.

In the 1990s and 2000s, restaurants boomed in the city, pausing briefly during the 2008 recession. As the economy struggled to bounce back, a number of less-expensive restaurants appeared (some from chefs looking to diversify their properties or downscale, and some from chains), leading the food website Eater to call it the "fast casualization of Chicago."

In 2005, Grant Achatz opened a restaurant that would reach fame around the world for its daring, creative fare that utilized what would be called "molecular gastronomy." Alinea was like no other restaurant in town. With partner Nick Kokonas, he soon earned kudos for one of the best restaurants in the world. Chicago's fine-dining mode continues with restaurants such as Acadia and Grace.

Chefs embraced local ingredients and seasonal cooking, often handcrafted in casual bistros. "Farm to table" became buzzwords, along with "artisan." Charcuterie, nose-to-tail meats, and in-house butchering were trendy, not very different in ingredients from nineteenth century cookery. Wine lists offered bottles from around the world, new lounges sold "craft cocktails," made by "mixologists," and brewpubs touted local craft beers. By 2015, restaurants in the Chicago market numbered 20,039, according to research firm NPD Group. Food in Chicago today comes more varied, lighter, and fresher than ever. The selection of imported products has widened, with choices from places unimaginable just 20 years ago. At the same time, many ingredients grow or are raised closer to home.

Much of the food scene today reboots what existed earlier in Chicago's history. For example, in 1910, more than 200 milk bottlers existed in Chicago, but they disappeared with the growth of large dairy operations far from Chicago. Yet, in 2015, a new dairy plant opened in the Fulton Market neighborhood, where it produces artisan milk, cream, and yogurt made from grass-fed cows. The plant, named the 1871 Dairy, recalls the year Mrs. O'Leary's cow became famous for its rumored role in the Great Chicago Fire, and it signals how the city's food has evolved and revolved—like the history of the city itself.

in Cicero). After discovering Cajun food via the cookbooks of New Orleans chef Paul Prudhomme, he worked with Prudhomme in New Orleans. On his return, Bannos added New Orleans–inspired items to the Garland's menu. The items proved so successful that in 1986 he changed the name of the restaurant to Heaven on Seven and served only New Orleans dishes, including oyster and catfish po' boys, hoppin' john, etouffeé, gumbo, and jambalaya. He opened a second branch at 600 N. Michigan, and a third in Naperville, both in partnership with Bob Vick.

His son Jimmy Bannos Jr. studied at Johnson & Wales University and worked for Emeril Lagasse and Mario Batali before returning to Chicago. In 2013, in collaboration with his father, Scott Harris, and Tony Mantuano, he opened The Purple Pig, 500 N. Michigan Ave., featuring housemade charcuterie, cheese, Mediterranean fare, and an extensive wine list. In 2013, Bannos Jr. won a James Beard award as "Rising Star Chef of the Year."

Contributor: Colleen Sen

See also: Chefs; Restaurateurs and Restaurant Groups

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Barbecue

Chicago's reputation for barbecue is built on ribs as surely as the city was built on the wreckage of the Great Chicago Fire. Although plenty of chicken and beef barbecue can be found in town, there was a reason Carl Sandburg called the city "hog butcher for the world."

Barbecue and the blues both came to the South Side from the Mississippi Delta as hundreds of thousands of African American farm workers displaced by mechanization moved north during the First Great Migration, from 1910 to 1930. Then, because Chicago was a major war-goods manufacturer, from 1940 to 1960, there was a Second Great Migration, and the South Side became known as the "Capital of Negro America."

Southerners made barbecue by fire-roasting their meats low and slow over dirt pits. Health regulations eventually forbade restaurants from cooking in holes in the ground, so aboveground brick and concrete-block pits, such as the Texas "pulley pit," became the standard. It is a large rectangle, perhaps 4 feet high, 10 feet long, and 4 feet wide, with a cooking grate below the top and a flat metal lid that was lifted by a rope through a pulley hanging from the ceiling. To prevent another Great Chicago Fire, and to prevent smoke from filling the room, a unique variation called the "aquarium pit" evolved in Chicago. A large box of thick, tempered glass rises from the bricks and connects to the chimney making it look like a giant aquarium. They are still used in a dozen or so restaurants, mostly on the South Side and, although a few can be found elsewhere, they remain emblematic of Chicago barbecue.

Chicago's reputation for ribs was given a boost in 1974 when, in an episode of the Korean War sitcom, M.A.S.H., Dr. Hawkeye Pierce got so fed up with the food that he called a restaurant named Adam's Ribs in Chicago and placed an order to be delivered to his mobile hospital in South Korea as medical supplies. In real life there was no Adam's Ribs, although years later a restaurant renamed itself to take advantage of the fame of the story.

Then, in 1982, the *Chicago Sun-Times* Pulitzer Prize–winning columnist Mike Royko bragged that he made the best ribs anywhere and launched the annual Royko Ribfest in Grant Park. One of the nation's first large barbecue competitions, the event became an overnight sensation with more than 400 contestants. Almost from the outset, vegetarians began pestering Royko for permission to enter nonmeat "ribs." The crotchety columnist wrote that he had nothing personal against vegetarians, "In fact, I occasionally eat vegetables—a tiny onion in a martini or a stalk of celery in a Bloody Mary." The contest grew to almost 1,000 entrants, but Royko tired of the hassle and wriggled out of the job in 1987. Without him, it petered out and shut down in 1990.

The winner of the inaugural Royko Ribfest was an African American from Mississippi, Charlie Robinson, who parlayed his instant fame into the restaurant Robinson's No. 1 Ribs in the near western suburb of Oak Park and a line of sauces and spices. In 1985, brothers Dave and Larry Raymond came in second in the Royko Ribfest. Their sauce was so good that Dave bottled it and started selling it wholesale from the trunk of his car. In 2001, the brand was bought by the large food processor, Ken's Foods. Now Sweet Baby Ray's is by far the most popular barbecue sauce in the nation with about 40 percent of the market, although it is no longer made in Chicago.

Today there are five distinct styles of Chicago ribs: Delta style, "boilbecue," smokeless roast, digital, and fusion barbecue.

1) Delta style. A dozen or so pitmasters, mostly South Side African Americans, still cook in aquarium pits over wood. Ribs, rib tips, hot links, pulled pork, and chicken are their signature dishes, often served on top of slices of white bread, smushed into a cardboard boat, doused with a sweet-tart tomato-based sauce, and topped with

fries. Many sell carryout only, pretty much like their antecedents did back home under the big shade tree in the Mississippi Delta. Among the remaining Delta-style are Lem's, founded in 1954, and Leon's, founded in 1940.

2) Boilbecue. Meanwhile, Eastern Europeans, many of whom came to rebuild the city after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, simmered their ribs with cabbage, potatoes, onions, and caraway seeds as they did back home, making a rich stew. But they liked the sweet red sauces of the South, so they pulled the ribs out of the pot, slathered them in sauce, and tossed them on the grill. Boilbecue can be found in scores of restaurants and carryouts around town. Although the boiling makes the meat very tender, alas, much of the meat's flavor comes out in the water.

3) Smokeless roast. Restaurants such as Twin Anchors Restaurant & Tavern, founded in 1932 and a favorite of Frank Sinatra, pop their ribs in the oven to roast, then sauce them, and finish them on the grill. The Gale Street Inn, opened in 1963, also became famous for sweet fall-off-the-bone ribs that are first steamed, then roasted, and then broiled.

4) Digital. Since the year 2000, a dozen or so first-rate restaurants on the North Side and in suburbs have opened, several gaining national renown, among them Smoque and Chicago q. They use gas-fired pits supplemented with logs for flavor, and are fitted with digital thermostats and timers. Many of the old timers have upgraded to the digital smokers, among them Russell's, in Elmwood Park, founded in 1930, and Carson's, a chain launched in 1977 with three locations.

5) Fusion barbecue. Most barbecue tends to stick to the classic Southern canon of ribs, pulled pork, beef brisket, burnt ends, and chicken. But contemporary chefs, many influenced by Asian cuisines, have taken barbecue to exotic new places with creative spices, tomato-free sauces, unusual buns, and unexpected side dishes. Such fusion can be found at places such as bellyQ and Lillie's Q.

Because grilling also is a form of barbecue (from a technical, culinary, historical, and lexicography standpoint), Chicago's worldwide-famed steakhouses are related to the city's equally famed barbecue restaurants.

Contributor: Craig Goldwyn

See also: African Americans

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Bars, Taverns, Saloons, and Pubs

Chicago has a rich history of drinking culture that begins in its earliest days of European settlement. As soon as Chicago became a fur-trading hub in the early 1800s, visitors would travel through and need hotels, which had restaurants and also taverns as part of their hospitality. The first tavern was opened by Archibald Caldwell in 1828 or 1829 at Wolf Point, where the Chicago River's north and south branches meet. Other taverns followed: for example, the Eagle Tavern was turned into The Sauganash Hotel (and Tavern) by its jolly proprietor, Mark Beaubien.

By the mid-1800s, the city was full of drinking establishments, and the term "saloon" came to be used for them. A saloon could be either a tavern, which was attached to an inn, or a grocer dealing with liquor sales. These establishments originally had sample rooms where people could purchase liquor wholesale and sample the goods.

The number of saloons grew dramatically in the late 1800s, due to an increase in population as well as social factors. In 1877, 1,017 saloon licenses were issued in the city; by 1895, there were 6,522. They were frequented predominantly by the working and merchant classes, as the higher classes socialized in private clubs, homes, or bars in elegant hotels. Saloon drinking was mostly a male affair, though some saloons had a side door for women. In working-class neighborhoods, women sometimes joined their husbands for a beer or two, since this was often the only day off in a week. In many places, women did not stand at the bar and might not even enter into the front room, which was a male space, with mustache towels on the bar and spittoons by the brass foot rails full of the disgusting sludge of chewing tobacco.

Bars became social centers of neighborhoods, often divided by ethnic group: Lithuanians went to Lithuanian bars and the Germans went to *biergartens*. (The word *pub*, derived from *public house*, generally was used for Irish establishments.) Customers could find out about job openings or housing possibilities, read the newspapers, and cash paychecks. The saloon came to be knit into the fabric of local politics: Everyone knew and respected the barkeeper, and they often progressed to become alderman or have other political assignments. The most famous was the colorful saloon-keeper Mathias "Paddy" Bauler (1890–1977), a 43rd Ward alderman and political boss known for his statement, "Chicago ain't ready for a reform mayor."

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, bars sold mostly beer and whiskey, and sometimes French brandy. Whiskey was drunk straight and then perhaps with a chaser of water, milk, or buttermilk. Other products included

SMELT

Battered, fried smelt with lemon-garlic mayo dip:
Prep: 10 minutes
Chill: 30 minutes
Cook: 4 minutes
Makes: 4 appetizer servings

Use a Chicago craft beer for this batter, if you like. This batter also can be used on other small fish fillets, such as perch.

2 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 bottle (12 ounces) beer
1 pound smelt, cleaned
1/4 cup canola oil
Lemon wedges
Garlic mayo, see recipe

1. Mix 1 1/2 cups of the flour, salt, Old Bay, and pepper in a bowl. Whisk in the beer slowly to avoid lumps. Refrigerate until cold, about 30 minutes.
2. Dust smelt with the remaining 1/2 cup flour. Shake off any excess. Heat a large, cast-iron skillet. Add oil to skillet; heat to 350 degrees. Dip smelt into batter; place in hot oil in small batches. Cook 2 minutes; turn. Cook until golden brown, about 2 to 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Season with salt. Serve with lemon wedges and garlic mayo for dipping.

Garlic mayo: Crush 2 cloves of garlic into a small bowl. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt and zest of 1 lemon. Stir in 1/2 cup mayonnaise. Chill to meld flavors, about 30 minutes.

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Smorgasbords

Swedish smorgasbords were one of the most popular dining experiences in Chicago from the 1920s through the 1950s. Economic and industrial problems in Sweden led to mass exodus to other countries between 1840 and 1930, and Chicago became home to many of the thousands of Swedes immigrating to the United States. By 1910, one-fifth of the people born in Sweden lived in the United States, and Chicago had the second-largest Swedish population in the world, second only to Stockholm. Many of them opened smorgasbords in the Loop and neighborhoods. Sweden House on East Ohio Street was one of the city's best-known smorgasbords.

The McCormick mansion on East Ontario Street, now the site of Lawry's The Prime Rib, was purchased in 1937 by Fredrik Chramer, a Danish restaurateur. He renovated the building in Swedish Modern style and opened Kungsholm, one of the city's most iconic smorgasbords with a puppet theater. It closed after his death in 1960.

At a smorgasbord, for a set price, a diner could sample any number of dishes from a buffet, such as bread, butter, cheese, herring, meatballs and headcheese. The food was typically offered in three courses, starting with bread and cold meats and cheeses, followed by chilled seafood, and then warm dishes such as fried sausages, potato casseroles, and meatballs. Later, Polish restaurateurs copied the popular concept with their own smorgasbords of Polish dishes.

Contributor: Chandra Ram

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At Dumas Pere l'École de la Cuisine Française, founded by John Snowden (1914–80), the focus was classic French cooking, the schedule was rigorous, and the owner/instructor was both skilled and demanding. Although designed primarily for dedicated amateurs, Dumas Pere was the training ground for many top-tier chefs, including John Terczak, Sarah Stegner, George Bombaris, and John Hogan.

Not much is known about Snowden's early life, but as an African American interested in French cooking in the mid–twentieth century, his opportunities were limited. He wound up working on cruise ships, in a hotel in Switzerland, and at various restaurants worldwide. By the time he took a job at a French restaurant in Chicago's racially diverse