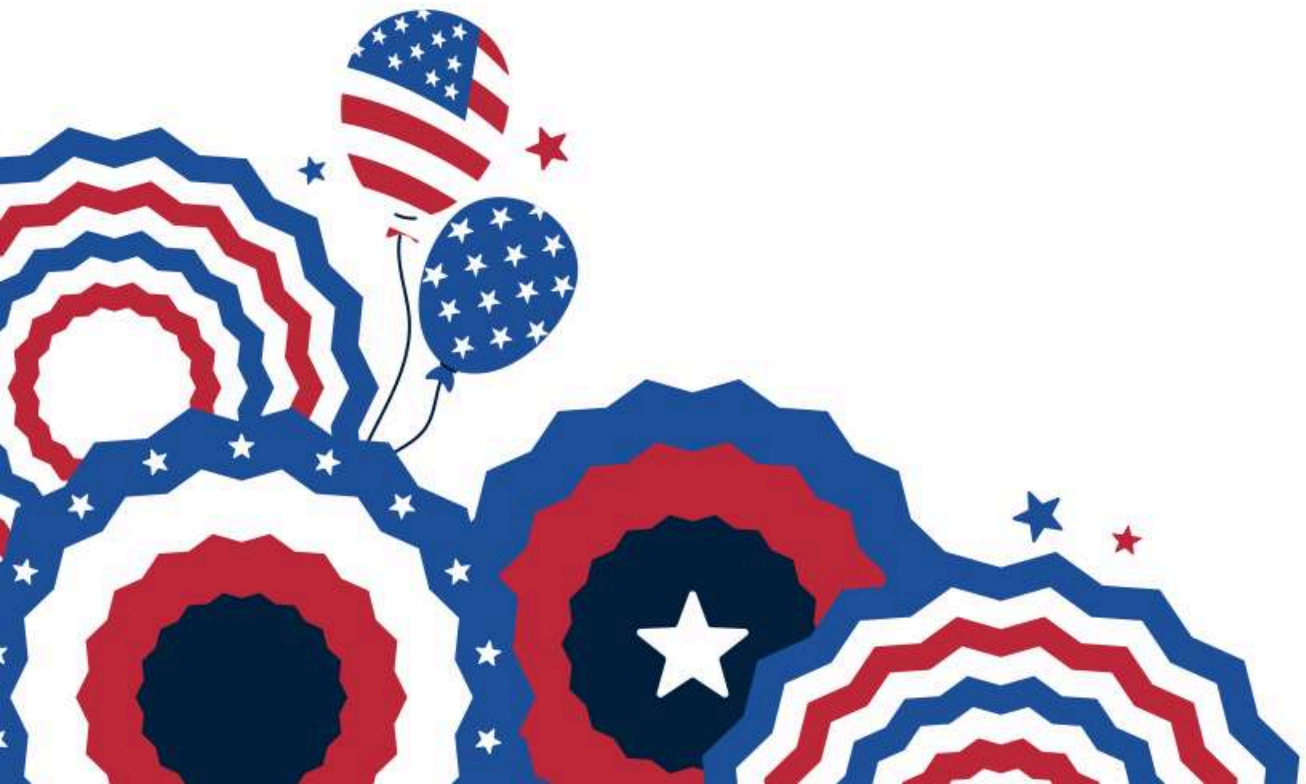


ARTS AND MUSIC ENVOYS

Multimedia Toolkit



Freedom 250

Sharing and Celebrating American Culture

2026

PREPARED BY
Meridian International
Center



FOR



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

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Introduction

This toolkit has been developed as part of the Arts and Music Envoy program, funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and implemented by Meridian International Center in Washington, DC.

The Arts and Music Envoy (AME) program deploys talented American experts from a broad set of artistic disciplines, including music, culinary arts, dance, visual arts, and textile arts, for programs developed in close partnership with U.S. missions overseas. Through AME's high-profile signature activations, short-term outbound programs, virtual exchanges, and follow-on alumni engagement, Meridian provides opportunities for at least 160 distinguished American envoys and program alumni to underscore America's leadership and inventive spirit, foster economic growth, open new global markets for the U.S., and build meaningful connections with global audiences.

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, establishing the foundation for a free and independent United States. This milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on the artistic and cultural achievements that have both shaped the nation and resonated far beyond its borders. This toolkit celebrates this momentous occasion and commemorates outstanding achievements in American art and music. One of America's greatest strengths is its culture: it is a nation of artists, creatives, and innovators. Throughout U.S. history, American artists have continually expanded the boundaries of sound and storytelling, influencing global genres and inspiring audiences around the world. This toolkit will introduce and spark interest in American music through its genres, major milestones, and playlists along with other achievements in arts and culture visualized through narratives, images, and videos. Resources included in the toolkit encourage further learning and exploration.

This toolkit will be updated throughout 2026. U.S. Missions worldwide will have access to virtual Freedom 250 playlists and related content, video interviews, online workshops, and virtual masterclasses. The comprehensive kit will enable U.S. Missions to promote American creative innovation and engage general audiences, English language learners, and emerging artists.

How to Use This Guide



Programming Ideas for Posts:

- **Use American music and song lyrics to showcase U.S. creative industries** — highlight the global reach and economic impact of the American entertainment sector
- **Chef and Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) partnerships for Freedom 250** — work with local chefs, FAS, and U.S. food and beverage companies to feature American ingredients, brands, and supply chains, creating direct market-linkage opportunities
- **Pair music and food with music-focused American Film Showcase (AFS) screenings** — leverage U.S. film and music exports to demonstrate the commercial power of American creative content
- **Freedom 250 regional theme events featuring U.S. trade goods** — use music and food pairings to connect American cultural heritage to exportable products and market opportunities
- **Mission speaker series on U.S. commercial and creative industries** — present American cultural themes through a trade and investment lens, highlighting sectors such as entertainment, agriculture, and technology
- **Local artist collaborations that amplify American creative exports** — facilitate partnerships between local talent and U.S. industry representatives to build commercial relationships
- **Karaoke events featuring licensed American music** — underscore U.S. intellectual property and the commercial value of American copyright industries

The U.S. Creative Economy and Commercial Diplomacy

The U.S. creative economy generated over \$1.17 trillion in 2023, when it accounted for 4.2% of the U.S. GDP and supported more than 5.4 million jobs nationwide. The sector continues to flourish and grow rapidly, outpacing the broader U.S. economy's overall growth rate.

Key Economic Drivers

- **Sector Output:** Core industries (performing arts, museums, design services) and supporting sectors (information services, art support) drive massive commercial value.
- **Job Market:** Creative industries generate over \$400 billion in wages for more than 5.3 million workers.
- **Global Trade:** The United States maintains a multibillion-dollar trade surplus in artistic and cultural goods (including music, movies, video games, and design services). Beyond its contributions to GDP, the arts sector has yielded a growing trade surplus for the U.S. In 2023, the total value of the nation's arts exports was nearly \$37 billion greater than the value of arts imports from other countries.

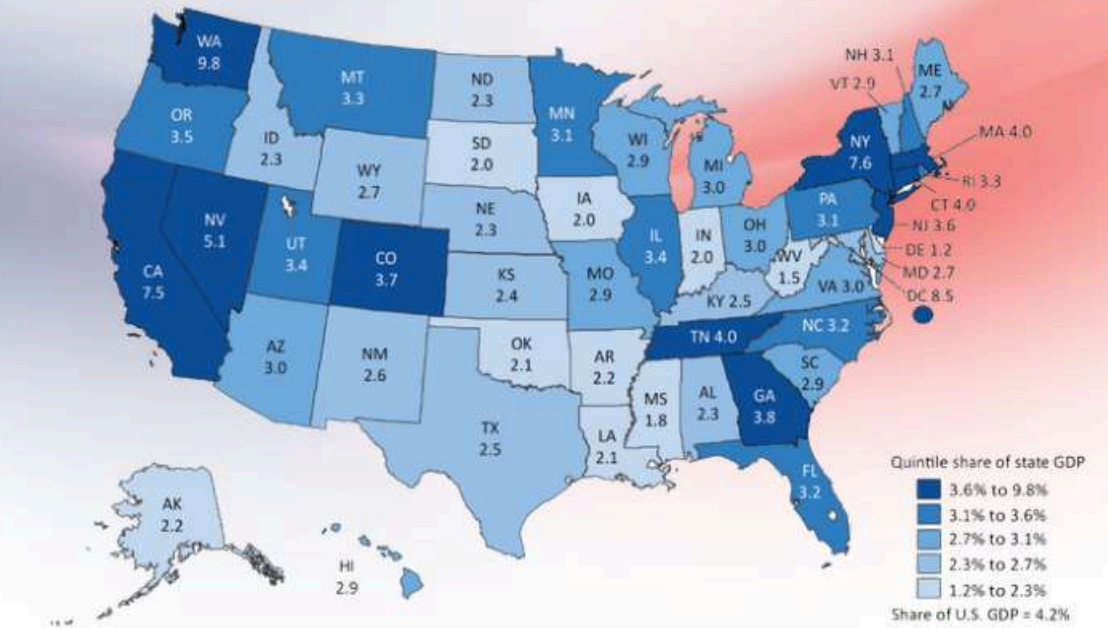


Delaware Arts Alliance

Regional Impact

- States in the South and Midwest also see significant job growth through regional design and manufacturing, performing arts companies, and heritage tourism.
- California: Generates roughly \$288.9 billion in value added and employs over 800,000 workers, heavily driven by film, digital media, and design.
- States in the Northeast have high concentrations of cultural non-profits, publishing, and architectural services. New England alone has a 20% higher prevalence of artists in its employment base compared to the rest of the country.

Arts and Cultural Value Added: Share of State GDP, 2023



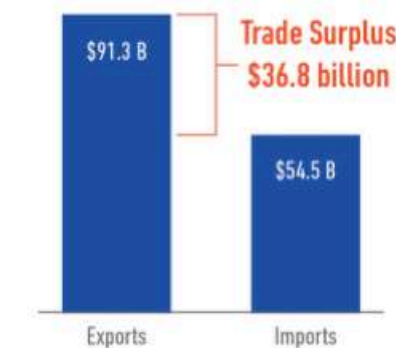
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Where to Find More Data

For those looking to explore specific sectors or regional contributions, state profiles and satellite accounts are available:

- The [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis \(BEA\)](#) provides the official Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Accounts, updated with current metrics.
- The [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies \(NASAA\)](#) provides interactive maps and downloadable [creative economy state profiles](#) breaking down jobs and compensation.
- The [map on pages 61-62](#) of this toolkit shows some of the top U.S. Food Exports by region, with data pulled from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

Imports and exports of arts and cultural goods and services (2023)



Source: Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA). U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts



Resources

American Spaces

American Spaces are excellent platforms for commemorating America's founding. In addition to the official America250 website and Freedom 250, please find a collection of additional curated resources to assist Spaces in celebrating this important anniversary.

American Heroes

This list of more than 200 American heroes has been selected by the White House as part of the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence. In collaboration with their posts, American Spaces may consider programs and activities to commemorate these individuals.

The Founders Museum

The White House created and launched The Founders Museum, an exhibit that pays homage to the patriots who forged the path to independence. This interactive exhibit features photos and videos about 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 6 influential ladies of the American Revolution, and 20 key events, such as the Boston Massacre and Paul Revere's midnight ride.

U.S. Independence Day

This program toolkit is designed for American Spaces to create programs and use social media to focus on Fourth of July celebrations.

The American Revolution

This program toolkit is designed for programming at American Spaces to create a greater awareness of the American Revolution, its historical context, and its impact on democracy around the world.

Democracy

This resource toolkit is designed for programming at American Spaces to define the values of democracy and explain the function, principles, and significance of America's democratic system of government.

Musical Licensing for Public Events

Music performing rights in the United States govern how songwriters, composers, and music publishers are compensated when their music is publicly performed. These rights ensure creators are paid whenever their work is played on the radio or TV, streamed online, performed live, or used in businesses like restaurants and venues. Performing Rights Organizations (PROs) such as [ASCAP](#), [BMI](#), [SESAC](#), and [GMR](#) manage these rights by licensing music to users and collecting performance royalties, which are then distributed to the creators.

Examples of PRO Licenses in the United States

ASCAP General License: Authorizes the public performance of any music in ASCAP's catalog at an event or venue. ASCAP emphasizes that a public performance includes any music played live, via recordings, radio, TV, or streaming in public spaces, and that a license is legally required for such use.

BMI Music License: A blanket license that lets you legally use any music in BMI's vast catalog without needing individual song permissions. Blanket licenses are described as efficient, single-source solutions for businesses or events using music regularly.

SESAC Event License: A customized blanket license that authorizes public performance of all music in the SESAC catalog. SESAC emphasizes that if music can be heard by the public at a business or event, a license is required under U.S. copyright law.

Performances outside the United States

This information is provided for general reference only. Music-licensing requirements vary by country. U.S. Missions are responsible for researching and complying with the specific laws, regulations, and Collective Management Organization (CMO) practices in their host country. Always verify local legal requirements before planning or presenting any program. Countries that do not currently have a CMO include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Haiti, Jordan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.

The music-licensing rules of the host country serve as reference points for performing rights laws in that country. These are administered by that country's Collective Management Organization (CMO). Even if U.S. performing artists are registered with a U.S.-based PRO, their music is administered through the host country CMO under "reciprocal representation agreements." Since these international CMOs handle public-performance licensing in their territories, U.S. embassies, consulates, and other U.S. government-funded events must secure permission locally to ensure compliant music use.

Recommendations for Music Licensing outside the United States

When planning public events, first seek local guidance from:

- The host country's Collective Management Organization (CMO)
- Local public performance laws
- Reporting requirements (often via the venue)

For U.S. government entities, the easiest path is using venues already licensed with the local CMO. If the venue is not licensed, organizers can check to see whether the location is covered. If in doubt, embassies and consulates can contact the local CMO for a one-time public-performance license.

CMOs in many regions:

- Offer discounted rates for government-funded cultural programming
- Can process licenses fast for diplomatic/cultural exchange events
- May grant exceptions for purely educational or cultural demonstrations (varies widely)

Best practices when bringing U.S. artists abroad:

- Collect setlists as early as possible in the planning process.
- Provide setlists to the host venue.
- Inquire that the venue's CMO license covers the event. If not or if unlicensed, purchase a temporary public-performance license.
- If artists perform unreleased or original music, a CMO license is not needed.
- Use royalty-free or original music when licensing is not feasible.

CMOs in AF Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
South Africa	SAMRO	South African music rights society.
Tanzania	COSOTA	Administers authors' rights including music.
Malawi	COSOMA	Collective rights administration.
Benin	BBDA	National copyright bureau.
Burkina Faso	BBDA	Same acronym used regionally for rights societies.
Kenya	MCSK, KAMP, PAVRISK	
Senegal	SODAV	La Sénégalaise du droit d'auteur et des droits voisins

CMOs in EAP Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
Australia & New Zealand	APRA AMCOS	Regional performance & mechanical CMO.
Brunei	BEAT	Bruneian Authors' & Composers' society.
China	MCSC (Music Copyright Society of China)	Primary Chinese CMO for music.
Hong Kong	CASH	Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong.
Indonesia	WAMI	Wahana Musik Indonesia.
Japan	JASRAC, NextTone Inc	Largest Japanese performing rights society, NextTone Inc handles digital and rights clearance.
Malaysia	MACP, PPM, RPM	
Philippines	FILSCAP, PRM, IMPRO, SRRS	
South Korea	KOMCA	Korean performing rights society.
Thailand	Music Copyright (Thailand) Ltd., Phonorights (Thailand) Co., Ltd.	Additional DIP-approved CMOs (2026 list) include: Rose Media & Entertainment Digital One Solution All Dance Copyright Thai Copyright Co. SSK Publishing, etc.

CMOs in EUR Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
Croatia	HUZIP	
Denmark	KODA	Danish rights society.
France	SACEM	Authors'/composers'/publishers' society.
Germany	GEMA	Major European CMO.
Greece	ERATO, AUTODIA, EDEM, GEA	
Hungary	ARTISJUS	Hungarian CMO.
Italy	SIAE	National copyright society.

Malta	CISAC	International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers
Norway	TONO	Norwegian performing rights org.
Poland	ZAIKS	Polish authors' society.
Portugal	SPA	Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores
Spain	SGAE, EKKI, UNISON, AIE	Spain's performing rights org.
Sweden	STIM	Swedish composers' society.
Switzerland	SUISA	Swiss cooperative society for music authors.
United Kingdom	PRS for Music	UK's main PRO/CMO.
CMOs in NEA Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
Egypt	SACERAU	
Israel	ACUM	Authors', composers', publishers' society.
Qatar	No operational performing-rights CMO exists in Qatar.	
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Music Commission, ESMAA	Saudia Arabia does not currently have a traditional CMO/PRO, however, it has two entities that play roles in music rights administration.
UAE	EMRA, Music Nations Copyrights Management	
CMOs in SCA Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
India	IPRS / PPL India / RMPL	Multiple CMOs for music & recordings.
Nepal	MRCNS; PSN	Government-recognized CMO for authors, composers, and publishers; Performers' Rights organization.
Pakistan	COMP	Performing Rights Society established with government sanction under Pakistan Copyright Ordinance.

CMOs in WHA Region		
Country	CMO Name	Notes
Argentina	SADAIC	Argentine authors' society.
Barbados	COSCAP	Copyright society of Barbados.
Bolivia	SOBODAYCOM	Performing rights organization.
Brazil	ECAD	Brazilian central office of music rights.
Canada	SOCAN	Canadian performing rights society.
Colombia	SAYCO	Colombian authors' & composers' society.
Costa Rica	ACAM	Performing rights organization.
Dominican Republic	SGACEDOM	Dominican rights society.
El Salvador	SAICM	Performing rights society.
Honduras	AACIMH	Official society managing performing rights.
Jamaica	JACAP	Jamaican authors'/composers' society.
Peru	APDAYC	Peru's CMO for performance and mechanical royalties.
Suriname	SASUR	National collection society for authors' rights in Suriname.
United States	ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, GMR	U.S. PROs (domestic only).
Uruguay	AGADU	Authors' society.
Venezuela	SACVEN	Venezuelan CMO.

American Music



American Heroes

These musical artists are part of a list of more than 200 American heroes selected by the White House as part of the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY (1779-1843)

Francis Scott Key was an American lawyer and amateur poet best known for writing "The Star-Spangled Banner," one of the most performed pieces in American history. Inspired by witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812, he wrote the words that later became the national anthem. Though not a professional musician, Key set the tune to a popular British song written by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a gentlemen's club in London.



IRVING BERLIN (1888-1989)

Irving Berlin was a prolific and beloved songwriter who produced several ballads, dance numbers, novelty tunes, and love songs that defined American popular song for much of the 20th century. At 13 years old, Berlin moved to the United States from Russia. Calling New York home, Berlin went on to write classics such as "God Bless America" and "Puttin' On The Ritz." His work includes Broadway and Hollywood standards, and his songs became a staple of American culture and music storytelling.

BILLIE HOLIDAY (1915-1959)

Billie Holiday was a songwriter, actress, and one of America's most influential jazz vocalists. As a young singer, Holiday became part of the vibrant Harlem Renaissance scene, performing in nightclubs and jazz clubs. Although not formally trained, she had an instinctive sense of musical structure and developed a singing style that shaped the evolution of jazz singing and influenced generations of vocalists across genres.

WOODY GUTHRIE (1912-1967)

Woody Guthrie was a foundational American folk musician whose storytelling chronicled the lives, struggles, and resilience of everyday people. His most famous song, "This Land Is Your Land," became a second national anthem, celebrating both America's beauty and its inequalities. Guthrie traveled the country writing songs about work, migration, and the human experience, helping define American folk music as a vehicle for storytelling and social commentary.

NAT KING COLE (1919-1965)

Nat King Cole was a pioneering jazz pianist and vocalist hailed as one of the most significant small-group leaders of the swing era. Beginning as a highly respected jazz pianist, he found global success with songs such as "Unforgettable" and "Mona Lisa." In addition to his career in music, Cole was the first Black artist to host a national television variety show, *The Nat King Cole Show* (1956-1957), shaping the landscape of American entertainment.

MILES DAVIS (1926-1991)

Miles Davis was one of the most transformative figures in American music and involved with nearly every major development in modern jazz. From the birth of cool jazz, modal experimentation, and electric jazz fusion, Davis continually reinvented the genre. Known for his minimalist phrasing, innovative bandleading, and experimentation, Davis's restless creativity cemented himself as the "Picasso of Jazz" and a pioneer of American culture.

JOHNNY CASH (1932-2003)

Johnny Cash was a groundbreaking American singer-songwriter whose deep baritone, storytelling style, and fusion of country, folk, rock, and gospel reshaped American popular music. Known as "The Man in Black," Cash brought empathy to the struggles of working people and those on the edges of society by centering their stories in his music. His authenticity, moral conviction, and genre-crossing impact made him one of America's most enduring cultural voices.

ELVIS PRESLEY (1935-1977)

Elvis Presley, known as the "King of Rock and Roll," blended blues, gospel, country, and R&B into the rock and roll genre. Bringing African American performance culture to mainstream audiences, Presley's dynamic stage presence and vocal versatility quickly launched him into international stardom. His influence spans rock, pop, fashion, cinema, and performance style, making him one of the most impactful entertainers in American history.

ARETHA FRANKLIN (1942-2018)

Aretha Franklin, known as the "Queen of Soul," created anthems that defined soul music. Highly regarded for her vocal power, gospel roots, passion, and command, Franklin blended gospel, R&B, and pop to become one of the most revered American musical icons. She was the first woman to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. She also received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, among many other honors.

RAY CHARLES (1930-2004)

Ray Charles, often called "The Genius," revolutionized American music by blending gospel, blues, jazz, and country into a innovative style that became the blueprint for soul music. By age 7, Charles lost his vision and began learning how to read, write, and arrange music in Braille. He then learned how to play piano, organ, sax, clarinet, and trumpet, and over the course of his career, became one of music's most respected artists. His experimentation and musical intuition molded the direction of rhythm-and-blues (R&B), soul, and American popular music for decades.



American Folk Music

Rooted in everyday storytelling and early ballads, American folk music emerged from rural and working-class Americans. Folk music is characterized by its simple melodies and acoustic instruments such as the guitar, banjo, fiddle, and harmonica. It explores themes such as love, hardship, nature, work, and community. This genre is also referred to as “roots music” due to its influence on genres such as rock, jazz, and R&B. From Appalachian to Cajun, Tex Mex, and Creole folk music, regional styles have developed that have further defined the genre. Between the 1940s and 1960s, American folk music experienced a tremendous resurgence and played a crucial role in social movements. The genre has continued to evolve, incorporating modern, experimental sounds and aesthetics while maintaining its strong foundation in storytelling.



Major Milestones

1700s

Ballads from England, Scotland, and Ireland, shared by oral tradition, formed the foundation of distinctly American folk music.

1800s

Folklorist Francis James Child collects and records traditional English and Scottish ballads, later called the Child Ballads, to preserve oral traditions.

1916-18

British folklorist Cecil Sharp, with collaborators Maud Karpeles and Olive Dame Campbell, records Appalachian folk songs.

1937-42

The National Folk Festival is held in Washington, D.C., at Constitution Hall.

1959

The Newport Folk Festival begins in Rhode Island.

1970s

Folk sounds fuse with rock music, incorporating more electric instrumentation.

1990s

A distinct genre, Americana folk music, blends traditional American roots styles with the storytelling characteristic of traditional folk.

1761

Lyrics to the oldest surviving American folk song, “Springfield Mountain,” are written, and later become the first published folk song by American composer Stephen Foster.

1911

John Lomax’s collection, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, preserves traditional cowboy and frontier songs about westward expansion from the late 1800s.

1928

The Mountain Dance & Folk Festival in Asheville, NC, is among the earliest organized celebrations of American folk music.

1940s-60s

American folk music experiences a revival, evolving from traditional folk music.

1960s

Artists including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Odetta, and Phil Ochs transform folk into a vehicle for socially conscious movements.

1980s

Folk continues to absorb contemporary and emerging sounds, including punk.

2000s

Indie folk, which merges rock with acoustic sounds and harmonies, explodes into popularity.



FOLK FOUNDATIONS

1. **Vernon Dalhart** – “Home on the Range” (1927)
2. **Mississippi John Hurt** – “Frankie and Johnny” (1928)
3. **Mississippi John Hurt** – “Spike Driver Blues” (1928)
4. **Joshua Daniel White** – “The House of the Rising Sun” (1942-44)
5. **Joshua Daniel White** – “One Meatball” (1944)
6. **Woody Guthrie** – “This Land is Your Land” (1944)
7. **The Weavers** – “Goodnight, Irene” (1950)
8. **Odetta** – “Take This Hammer” (1956)
9. **Elizabeth Cotten** – “Freight Train” (1957)
10. **The Kingston Trio** – “Tom Dooley” (1958)
11. **Peter, Paul, & Mary** – “Tiny Sparrow (Come All Ye Fair & Tender Ladies)” (1962)
12. **Bob Dylan** – “Blowin’ in the Wind” (1963)
13. **Pete Seeger** – “We Shall Overcome” (1963)
14. **Phil Ochs** – “I Ain’t Marching Anymore” (1965)
15. **Joni Mitchell** – “Both Sides Now” (1969)
16. **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young** – “Teach Your Children” (1970)
17. **Gordon Lightfoot** – “If You Could Read My Mind” (1970)
18. **Simon & Garfunkel** – “Bridge Over Troubled Water” (1970)
19. **James Taylor** – “Fire and Rain” (1970)
20. **Peggy Seeger** – “Gonna Be an Engineer” (1971)
21. **Cat Stevens** – “Morning Has Broken” (1971)
22. **Joan Baez** – “Diamonds & Rust” (1975)
23. **Pete Seeger** – “If I Had a Hammer” (1982)

Bluegrass

Bluegrass music emerged in Kentucky, the “Bluegrass State,” during the 1940s and is rooted in Appalachian traditions and shaped by Scottish, Irish, and English folk influences, as well as instruments adapted from West Africa and the Caribbean. Sonically, the genre features the banjo, fiddle, mandolin, guitar, and upright bass, and combines fast tempos, tight harmonies, and improvisational embellishments. Bluegrass lyrics often explore themes of love, hardship, faith, and life’s struggles, weaving vivid narratives that resonate with everyday experiences. Many songs reflect the resilience and storytelling spirit of rural American communities while embodying values of individuality and creativity. Over time, bluegrass has gained global recognition, inspiring musicians worldwide who embrace its exciting tempo and collaborative energy. Today, it remains a cornerstone of American musical traditions by exemplifying regional heritage while influencing genres across continents.



Major Milestones

1927

Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters make the first commercial recording of the popular work song “Nine Pound Hammer,” which remains a staple in bluegrass repertoire.

1945

Earl Scruggs joins the Blue Grass Boys, adding his three-finger banjo style and, along with bassist Howard Watts, guitarist Lester Flatt, and fiddler Chubby Wise, define the classic bluegrass sound. Flatt and Scruggs later gain fame as a duo.

1950s

The Lilly Brothers of West Virginia move to Boston and are credited with bringing bluegrass to New England.

1961

Bill Clifton organizes the first official bluegrass festival at Oak Leaf Park in Luray, VA, featuring top acts like Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers.

1967

“Foggy Mountain Breakdown” by Flatt and Scruggs is introduced to a worldwide audience because of its frequent use in the movie *Bonnie and Clyde*.

1985

The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) is formed.

1996

Bill Monroe’s death inspires new artists like Alison Krauss, Billy Strings, and Molly Tuttle to blend traditional roots with contemporary sounds, ensuring bluegrass’s evolution.

1939

Bill Monroe forms the Blue Grass Boys, which get popular with a radio performance at the Grand Ole Opry. The genre is named after the pioneering band.

1948

Martha White begins to sponsor the Grand Ole Opry show and continues to this day, making bluegrass and country music synonymous with the venue.

1960

The first bluegrass show on a college campus signals growing interest from the folk revival movement.

1960s-1970s

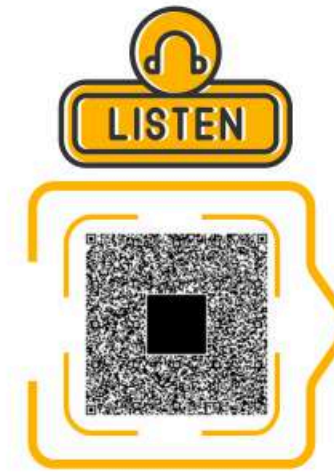
“Newgrass” emerges as musicians add jazz, rock, and pop to the traditional base, expanding the genre’s flexibility.

1989

Best Bluegrass Recording is established by the Recording Academy as a Grammy award category. In 1992, the category becomes Best Bluegrass Album.

2008

The International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum opens in Owensboro, KY.



▶ ROOTS OF BLUEGRASS

1. **Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters** - "Nine Pound Hammer" (1927)
2. **Bill Monroe & His Blue Grass Boys** - "In the Pines" (1941)
3. **Bill Monroe** - "Blue Moon of Kentucky" (1945)
4. **Ralph Stanley** - "Little Maggie" (1947-48)
5. **Flatt & Scruggs** - "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" (1949)
6. **The Stanley Brothers** - "I am a Man of Constant Sorrow" (1951)
7. **Flatt & Scruggs** - "Earl's Breakdown" (1951)
8. **Roscoe Holcomb** - "Across the Rocky Mountains" (1959)
9. **The Lilly Brothers & Don Stover** - "John Henry" (1959)
10. **Jimmy Martin & the Sunny Mountain Boys** - "Sunny Side of the Mountain" (1965)
11. **The Stanley Brothers** - "I'll Fly Away" (1966)
12. **The Osborne Brothers** - "Rocky Top" (1967)
13. **Jimmy Martin** - "Freeborn Man" (1968)
14. **The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band** - "Mr. Bojangles" (1970)
15. **Eric Weissberg & Steve Mandell** - "Dueling Banjos" (1972)
16. **Hazel Dickens & Alice Gerrard** - "Train on the Island" (1973)
17. **Ricky Skaggs** - "Uncle Pen" (1983)
18. **Ricky Skaggs** - "Country Boy" (1985)
19. **Emmylou Harris** - "Precious Memories" (1987)
20. **Alison Krauss** - "Dark Skies" (1990)

Blues

Blues music took shape in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, descending from African Americans in the rural South by blending oral traditions of spiritual and work songs with gospel, ragtime, and country dance music. Its hallmark sound features “bent” or “blue” notes that are played at a slightly different pitch for expression, call-and-response patterns, and raw, emotive vocals. Early blues music was primarily played with acoustic instruments. As the genre spread to urban centers and technology advanced, electric guitar and piano were layered with harmonica, bass, and horns to create a rich, rhythmic texture. Themes of love, loss, hardship, and perseverance propel the genre, tapping into personal stories that resonate universally. Over time the genre evolved, influencing jazz, rock, and countless other styles for musicians worldwide, who have embraced its sound by celebrating the blues as both a cultural landmark and a global language of emotion.



Major Milestones

<p>1912 The first blues songs, including W.C. Handy's "Memphis Blues," are published as sheet music.</p>	<p>1930s Large populations of African Americans move to northern cities, leading to the introduction of electric and slide guitar, harmonica, bass, and drums in blues music.</p>	<p>1960 Muddy Waters performs at the Newport Jazz Festival to tremendous acclaim.</p>	<p>1963 Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds record "Boom Boom" by John Lee Hooker. This begins the rise of blues in England and Europe, along with transatlantic collaborations such as Muddy Waters with the Rolling Stones.</p>	<p>1990s R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough gain popularity and bring recognition to hill country blues, and in 1995 <i>Billboard magazine</i> launches its Blues Albums chart.</p>	<p>2025 The film <i>Sinners</i> is released to critical audience acclaim. Set in the 1930s Mississippi Delta, blues music is a powerful backdrop for the narrative to unfold.</p>
<p>1920 Mamie Smith, along with a group of musicians called The Jazz Hounds, releases the first blues record, <i>Crazy Blues</i>.</p>	<p>1954 Elvis records his first single, "That's All Right," which was originally recorded in 1946 by blues artist Arthur Crudup. The song becomes a sensation, bringing new attention to the genre.</p>	<p>1962 American Folk Blues Festival tours Europe, bringing authentic blues music to international audiences.</p>	<p>1980 <i>The Blues Brothers</i>, a musical action-comedy film featuring Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi, is released and renews mainstream interest in blues, soul, and funk music.</p>	<p>2015 The Blues Hall of Fame opens in Memphis, TN.</p>	



▶ BOOK OF BLUES

1. **Mamie Smith** - "Crazy Blues" (1920)
2. **Bessie Smith** - "Baby, Won't You Please Come Home" (1923)
3. **Blind Willie Johnson** - "Dark Was the Night" (1927)
4. **Ma Rainey** - "Runaway Blues" (1928)
5. **Memphis Minnie** - "When the Levee Breaks" (1929)
6. **Lead Belly** - "Midnight Special" (1934)
7. **Robert Johnson** - "Cross Road Blues" (1936)
8. **Robert Johnson** - "Sweet Home Chicago" (1936)
9. **Big Bill Broonzy** - "Glory of Love" (1936)
10. **John Lee Hooker** - "Boogie Chillen'" (1948)
11. **Muddy Waters** - "Rollin' Stone" (1950)
12. **Willie Mae Thornton** - "Hound Dog" (1952)
13. **Elvis Presley** - "That's All Right" (1954)
14. **Muddy Waters** - "Mannish Boy" (1955)
15. **John Lee Hooker** - "Dimples" (1956)
16. **Howlin' Wolf** - "Smokestack Lightnin'" (1956)
17. **Chuck Berry** - "Johnny B. Goode" (1958)
18. **Buddy Guy** - "First Time I Met the Blues" (1960)
19. **Etta James** - "I'd Rather Go Blind" (1967)
20. **B.B. King & Tracy Chapman** - "The Thrill Is Gone" (1969)
21. **Stevie Ray Vaughan** - "Pride and Joy" (1983)
22. **Junior Kimbrough** - "Meet Me in the City" (1992)
23. **R.L. Burnside** - "Let My Baby Ride" (1998)

Jazz

Jazz, a musical genre that blends African rhythms, blues, ragtime, and European harmonic traditions, originated in New Orleans, Louisiana, in the early 20th century. Characterized by unexpected rhythms, rich layers of sound, playful pitch changes, and improvisation, jazz is recognized for its spontaneity, collaboration, and individual expression. Jazz compositions range from intricate melodies to free-flowing improvisations, creating a dynamic interplay between structure and freedom. Common instruments include the trumpet, saxophone, piano, double bass, drums, and guitar, often arranged in small groups or big bands. Over the years, jazz has expanded beyond its beginnings into styles such as swing, bebop, cool jazz, and jazz fusion. The genre also helped shape the sound of American musical theatre, with jazz elements becoming central to many Broadway scores and dance styles throughout the 20th century.



Major Milestones

Early 1900s

Jazz emerges from African American communities, blending blues, ragtime, and brass band traditions into a new, improvisational style.

1932

Louis Armstrong visits England for one of the earliest major jazz exports, followed by extended stays through 1935 and further tours in 1949 and 1965. His success overseas earns him the nickname "Jazz Ambassador."

1938

Benny Goodman's concert at Carnegie Hall is the first jazz performance in the prestigious venue. Broadcast globally and later released as a million-selling album, it legitimizes jazz as an art form on par with classical music.

1954

Newport Jazz Festival Debuts becomes the first major outdoor jazz festival in the United States. Newport attracted 14,000 attendees and featured swing, bebop, and cool jazz icons like Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie.

1959

Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* album introduces modal jazz and becomes the best-selling jazz album in history, profoundly influencing not only jazz musicians but rock, classical, and global music artists for decades.

1920

Louis Armstrong's recordings introduce virtuosic solo improvisation, shifting jazz from ensemble-based to solo-driven artistry.

1930s-1940s

Swing dominates popular music. Big bands led by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman bring jazz into mainstream dance halls and radio.

1940s

Innovators like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie transform jazz into a complex, fast-paced art form known as bebop, emphasizing improvisation and harmonic sophistication.

1956

The U.S. State Department develops the Jazz Ambassadors program to thaw Cold War tensions. Over the years, influential artists like Quincy Jones, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Sarah Vaughan travel the world to connect with international artists and audiences.

2011

UNESCO establishes International Jazz Day. Every April 30, UNESCO and the Herbie Hancock Institute host concerts, workshops, and discussions in nearly 200 countries.



▶ GREAT AMERICAN JAZZ STANDARDS

1. **George Gershwin** - "Rhapsody in Blue" (1924)
2. **Benny Goodman** - "Sing, Sing, Sing" (1936)
3. **Duke Ellington** - "Take the 'A' Train" (1941)
4. **Billie Holiday** - "I'll Be Seeing You" (1944)
5. **Charlie Parker** - "All the Things You Are" (1945)
6. **Thelonious Monk** - "Round Midnight" (1947)
7. **Chet Baker** - "It Never Entered My Mind" (1953)
8. **Sarah Vaughan** - "April in Paris" (1954)
9. **Erroll Garner** - "Misty" (1954)
10. **Ella Fitzgerald** - "Isn't This a Lovely Day" (1956)
11. **Cannonball Adderley** - "Autumn Leaves" (1958)
12. **Art Blakely** - "Blues March" (1958)
13. **Bill Evans** - "Night and Day" (1959)
14. **The Dave Brubeck's Quartet** - "Take Five" (1959)
15. **Miles Davis** - "Blue in Green" (1959)
16. **Charles Mingus** - "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" (1959)
17. **John Coltrane** - "In a Sentimental Mood" (1963)
18. **Frank Sinatra & Count Basie** - "Best Is Yet To Come" (1964)
19. **Lee Morgan** - "Totem Pole" (1964)
20. **Frank Sinatra** - "Fly Me to the Moon" (1965)
21. **Louis Armstrong** - "What a Wonderful World" (1967)
22. **Weather Report** - "Birdland" (1977)

Country

Country music emerged in the United States during the early 20th century, rooted in the rural South and Appalachian regions. It evolved from a blend of folk traditions, ballads, and fiddle tunes brought by European immigrants, and blended with gospel and blues influences of the day. While Nashville, Tennessee, is considered the home of country music, the genre has many branches that reflect country's varied regional influences including honky-tonk, bluegrass, outlaw, rockabilly, and modern country-pop. Its signature sound features simple, melodic structures and twangy vocals with lyrics that emphasize storytelling. Narratives of love, heartache, family, and working-class life are the backbone of the genre, and these personal lyrics speak to audiences worldwide. Country music festivals and artists attract international audiences, and its impact is reflected in music across the globe. Today, country remains a cornerstone of American identity and a powerful cultural export.



Major Milestones

1922

Fiddler Eck Robertson records "Arkansas Traveler" and "Sallie Gooden," becoming what many believe to be the first country music artist to make a recording.

1939

The Grand Ole Opry makes its first network broadcast on NBC.

1961

The Country Music Hall of Fame inducts Jimmie Rodgers, Fred Rose, and Hank Williams as its first members.

1982

The Bluebird Café opens in Nashville. It becomes an iconic hub for discovering new talent, including Taylor Swift in 2004.

2005

Carrie Underwood, a contestant on the reality competition show *American Idol*, becomes the first winner to launch a major career in country music.

1927

The Carter Family begins recording country songs and make more than 250 recordings over the next 14 years. In 1998, the U.S. Congress recognizes Bristol, TN, as the Birthplace of Country Music due to these recording sessions.

1940-45

The U.S. military introduces country bands to a wide audience of soldiers through United Service Organization shows. Honky-tonk, bluegrass, and other country standards spread across the world through these tours.

1977

Loretta Lynn becomes the first woman to win the Country Music Award for Entertainer of the Year.

2000

The film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* is released and its soundtrack, which eventually reaches 8x platinum status, receives several awards, including Grammy's for Album of the Year, along with Country Music Awards for Album of the Year and Single of the Year.

2026

The Recording Academy divides the Country category into two awards: the new Best Traditional Country Album category will be awarded alongside the now renamed Best Contemporary Country Album, to better reflect the genre's wide scope and popularity.



▶ COUNTRY CLASSICS

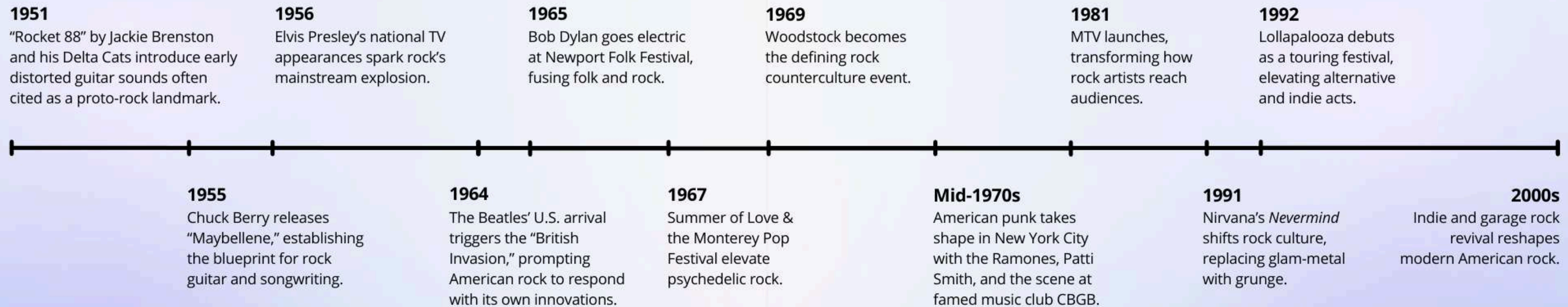
1. **The Carter Family** - "Wildwood Flower" (1928)
2. **The Carter Family** - "Can the Circle Be Unbroken" (1935)
3. **Gene Autry** - "Back in the Saddle Again" (1939)
4. **Patsy Montana** - "I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" (1939)
5. **Hank Williams** - "Lovesick Blues" (1949)
6. **Tennessee Ernie Ford** - "Sixteen Tons" (1955)
7. **Johnny Cash** - "I Walk the Line" (1957)
8. **Patsy Cline** - "Crazy" (1961)
9. **Johnny Cash** - "Ring of Fire" (1963)
10. **Merle Haggard** - "Mama Tried" (1968)
11. **Glen Campbell** - "Wichita Lineman" (1968)
12. **Charley Pride** - "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone" (1970)
13. **Tammy Wynette & George Jones** - "Something to Brag About" (1971)
14. **John Denver** - "Take Me Home, Country Roads" (1971)
15. **Loretta Lynn** - "Coal Miner's Daughter" (1971)
16. **Tanya Tucker** - "Delta Dawn" (1972)
17. **Dolly Parton** - "Jolene" (1973)
18. **Dolly Parton** - "I Will Always Love You" (1973)
19. **Linda Ronstadt** - "Blue Bayou" (1977)
20. **Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson** - "Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys" (1978)
21. **Kenny Rogers** - "The Gambler" (1978)
22. **George Strait** - "Amarillo By Morning" (1982)
23. **The Charlie Daniels Band** - "Devil Went Down to Georgia" (1983)
24. **Billy Ray Cyrus** - "Achy Breaky Heart" (1991)
25. **Alan Jackson** - "Livin' On Love" (1994)
26. **Deana Carter** - "Strawberry Wine" (1996)
27. **Lonestar** - "Amazed" (1999)

Rock

Rock music, which draws rhythmic and performance influences from African American musical culture, emerged in the United States during the 1950s. Growing out of blues, country, gospel, and rhythm-and-blues (R&B), this genre is characterized sonically driving backbeats, amplified sound, and expressive instrumental solos from electric guitar, bass, drums, keyboards and synthesizers. Rock lyrics frequently explore themes of identity, independence, challenging norms, experimentation, love, and personal struggle. Over time, rock has evolved into countless subgenres, from psychedelic and punk to metal and indie. Today, it remains a global cultural force, celebrated for its creative freedom and its enduring impact on music, fashion, and contemporary artistic expression.



Major Milestones





▶ ROCK N' ROLL REWIND

1. **Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats** - "Rocket 88" (1951)
2. **Chuck Berry** - "Maybellene" (1955)
3. **Little Richard** - "Long Tall Sally (The Thing)" (1957)
4. **Elvis Presley** - "Jailhouse Rock" (1957)
5. **Buddy Holly** - "That'll Be the Day" (1957)
6. **The Beach Boys** - "Wouldn't It Be Nice" (1966)
7. **The Doors** - "Break on Through (To the Other Side)" (1967)
8. **Jimi Hendrix** - "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" (1968)
9. **The Allman Brothers Band** - "Whipping Post" (1969)
10. **Creedence Clearwater Revival** - "Have You Ever Seen the Rain" (1971)
11. **Aerosmith** - "Dream On" (1973)
12. **ZZ Top** - "La Grange" (1973)
13. **The Runaways** - "Cherry Bomb" (1976)
14. **Ramones** - "Blitzkrieg Bop" (1976)
15. **The Eagles** - "Hotel California" (1976)
16. **Heart** - "Barracuda" (1977)
17. **Van Halen** - "You Really Got Me" (1978)
18. **Blondie** - "One Way or Another" (1978)
19. **KISS** - "I Was Made for Lovin' You" (1979)
20. **Journey** - "Don't Stop Believin'" (1981)
21. **Joan Jett & The Blackhearts** - "I Love Rock 'N Roll" (1981)
22. **Bruce Springsteen** - "Born in the USA" (1984)
23. **Metallica** - "Master of Puppets" (1986)
24. **Grateful Dead** - "Touch of Grey" (1987)
25. **Guns N' Roses** - "Sweet Child O' Mine" (1988)
26. **Nirvana** - "Smells Like Teen Spirit" (1991)
27. **Rage Against the Machine** - "Killing in the Name" (1992)
28. **Green Day** - "When I Come Around" (1994)
29. **No Doubt** - "Don't Speak" (1995)

American Cuisine



Key Culinary Figures

These trailblazing American chefs redefined the global culinary landscape.



GRANT ACHATZ (b. 1974)

Grant Achatz is a chef celebrated for pioneering modernist cuisine and molecular gastronomy, best known for his three-Michelin-star Chicago restaurant Alinea. His inventive, multisensory approach to dining has earned him numerous James Beard Awards and positioned him as one of the most influential chefs of his generation.



JOYCE CHEN (1917–1994)

Joyce Chen was a Chinese American chef, restaurateur, and TV personality who helped introduce northern Chinese cuisine to American audiences. She popularized dishes, including Peking duck and potstickers, and became one of the first Asian American women to host a national cooking show. Her influence helped broaden Americans' understanding and appreciation of regional Chinese cooking.



JAMES BEARD (1903–1985)

James Beard was an influential chef, cookbook author, and instructor often called the "Dean of American Cookery." He championed fresh, seasonal ingredients and helped shape modern American cuisine through his many books, television appearances, and culinary schools. His legacy continues today through the James Beard Foundation, which honors excellence and innovation in the culinary world.

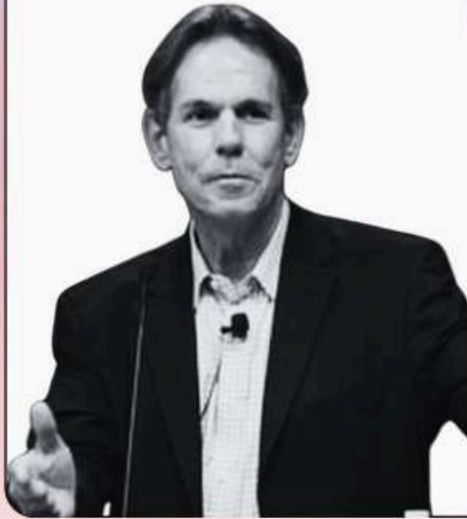
BOBBY FLAY (b. 1964)

Bobby Flay is a chef, restaurateur, and television personality best known for his bold Southwestern-inspired cooking and his long career on the Food Network, where shows like *Iron Chef America*, *Throwdown! with Bobby Flay*, and *Beat Bobby Flay* made him a household name. He has built a successful restaurant empire and is widely recognized for helping shape modern American cuisine through his signature flavors and high-energy cooking style.

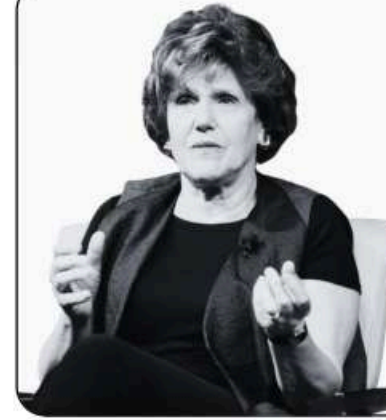


JULIA CHILD (1912–2004)

Julia Child was a chef, author, and TV personality who introduced French cooking to mainstream America. Her seminal cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, and her long-running show *The French Chef* made her a beloved culinary icon. Known for her warm, encouraging teaching style, she changed how Americans approached cooking at home.


THOMAS KELLER (b.1955)

Thomas Keller is a chef and restaurateur celebrated for his mastery of French-inspired cuisine and for leading award-winning restaurants such as The French Laundry and Per Se. He is the only American-born chef to have earned simultaneous three-star Michelin ratings for two different restaurants. His work emphasizes exceptional ingredients, meticulous technique, and hospitality standards that have influenced fine dining worldwide.


JOAN NATHAN (b. 1943)

Joan Nathan (b. 1943) is a cookbook author and journalist celebrated for documenting Jewish cuisine and preserving global Jewish food traditions. Often called the “Matriarch of Jewish Cooking,” she has written numerous award-winning cookbooks and hosted the PBS series Jewish Cooking in America.

EMERIL LAGASSE (b. 1959)

Emeril Lagasse is a chef, restaurateur, and television personality celebrated for his high-energy cooking style, Cajun-Creole flair, and signature catchphrases like “Bam!” and “Kick it up a notch!” He rose to national fame through hit Food Network shows such as Emeril Live and Essence of Emeril, while building a successful restaurant empire centered in New Orleans, Louisiana. His charismatic presence and innovative “New New Orleans” cuisine made him one of the most recognizable and influential American chefs of the early 21st century.


WOLFGANG PUCK (b. 1949)

Wolfgang Puck is an Austrian-born American chef and restaurateur known for pioneering California cuisine and creating influential restaurants such as Spago, where his signature smoked-salmon pizza became an iconic dish. His innovative blend of French technique and global flavors helped make him one of the world’s first celebrity chefs whose prolific career spanned fine dining, catering, media, and philanthropy.


ALICE WATERS (b. 1944)

Alice Waters is a chef, restaurateur, and food activist best known for founding Chez Panisse in 1971. The Berkeley, California-based restaurant helped spark the farm-to-table movement and define California cuisine. Her advocacy for organic, locally-sourced ingredients and her Edible Schoolyard program have made her a leading voice in sustainable food and food education in the United States.


EDNA LEWIS (1916–2006)

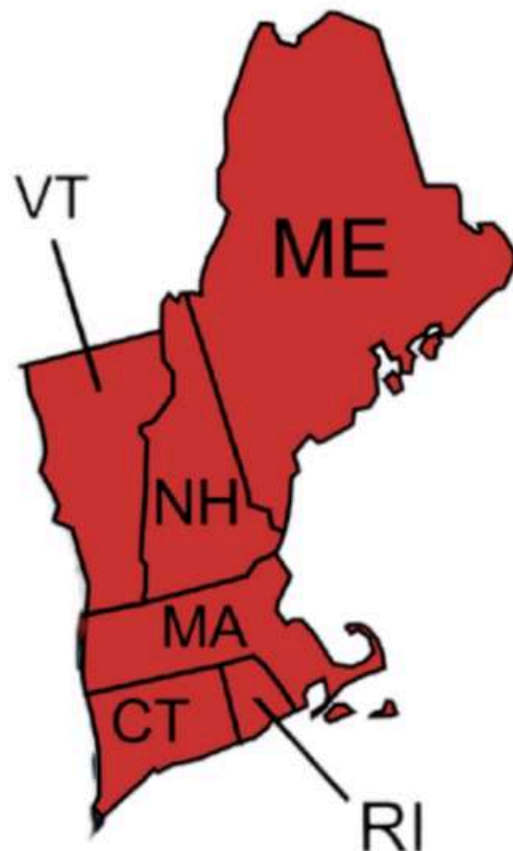
Edna Lewis was an influential chef and author whose work helped redefine Southern cuisine by emphasizing seasonal ingredients and the culinary traditions of rural African American communities. She introduced many Americans to the refined, nuanced cooking of the South through seminal books, such as *The Taste of Country Cooking* and *In Pursuit of Flavor*, which celebrated the flavors and farm-to-table practices of her Virginia upbringing.



Regional Cuisine

NORTHEAST

Characterized by seasonal dishes that reflect the four distinct seasons, Northeast American cuisine is steeped in tradition dating back to the region's Native American and English settler roots, along with later influences from Irish, Italian, French Canadian, and Portuguese communities. Staples include seafood such as cod, clams, and lobster, as well as crops such as corn, cranberries, and maple, with cooking methods that include boiling, baking, and steaming. Clam chowder, Boston baked beans, and lobster rolls are examples of signature dishes.



ICONIC RESTAURANTS

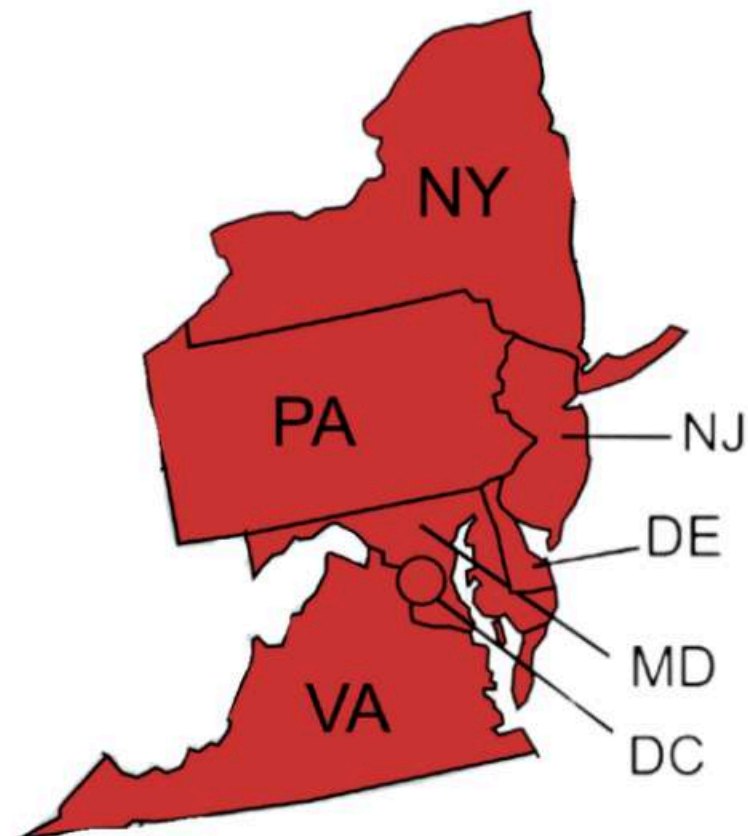
- **Faneuil Hall Marketplace (Boston, MA):** Proclaimed by America's founding fathers as "The Cradle of Liberty," Faneuil Hall has been a prominent meeting location since 1742.
- **Union Oyster House (Boston, MA):** Established in 1826; one of the oldest continually operating restaurants in the US, serving chowder and other New England seafood standards.
- **Frank Pepe Pizzeria (New Haven, CT):** Founded in 1925 by Frank Pepe, originally from Naples, Italy, to serve his version of "apizza," now known as New Haven-style pizza.
- **Louis' Lunch (New Haven, CT):** Regarded as the birthplace of the hamburger, established in 1895.



Regional Cuisine

MID-ATLANTIC

Major port cities welcomed an influx of new Americans in this region, particularly from Eastern Europe. Coastal foods include crabs and oysters, and ample farmland allows for staples such as seasonal produce and dairy products. Signature dishes from this region include influences from German and Dutch settlers (scrapple, pretzels), Jewish communities (bagels, lox/smoked salmon), Philly cheesesteaks, Buffalo wings, steamed blue crabs, and Chesapeake oysters.



ICONIC RESTAURANTS

- **21 Club (New York, NY):** Prohibition-era speakeasy that was legendary for its 33 jockey statues and hosting nearly every U.S. president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
- **Delmonico's (New York, NY):** Opened in 1837, this iconic restaurant is known as the birthplace of Eggs Benedict and Baked Alaska.
- **Grand Central Oyster Bar and Restaurant (New York, NY):** Opened on the lower level of Grand Central terminal in 1913 during New York's rise as a literary and arts hub.
- **Katz's Delicatessen (New York, NY):** Famous for its massive pastrami and corned beef sandwiches since 1888.
- **Old Ebbitt Grill (Washington, DC):** Located near the White House, this historic Victorian-style tavern offers classic American meals.
- **Pat's King of Steaks (Philadelphia, PA):** In 1930, the cheesesteak was invented by Pat Olivieri, a hot dog vendor and the restaurant's namesake.
- **Reading Terminal Market (Philadelphia, PA):** Open since 1893, this famous indoor farmer's market offers regional fares, bakeries, housewares, and specialties.

Regional Cuisine

SOUTHEAST/GULF

Cuisine of this region is marked by a blend of rich cultural influences from Native American, English, African American, Creole, Latino, and Caribbean communities. Signature dishes include abundant seafood, such as shrimp, oysters, crab, fish, and crawfish; hearty, grain-based comfort food such as jambalaya, grits, mac and cheese, cornbread, and biscuits; classic desserts like key lime pie, beignets, and sweet potato casserole; along with fresh Native and African produce that includes okra, corn, and pecans.



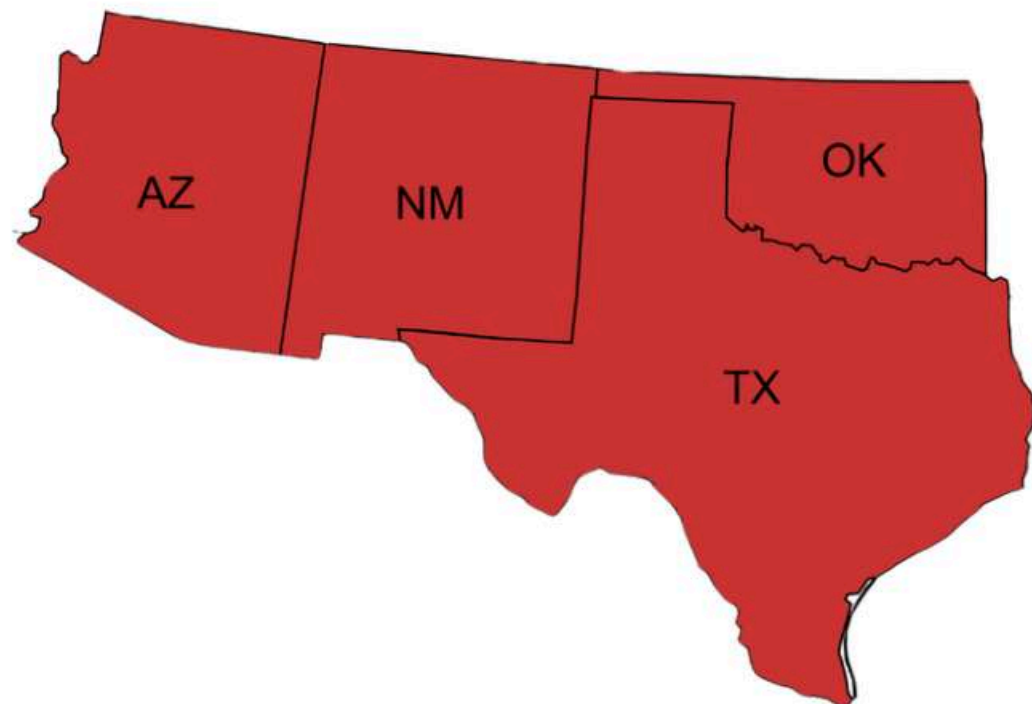
ICONIC RESTAURANTS

- **Antoine's Restaurant (New Orleans, LA):** Oldest family-run restaurant in the United States, opened in 1840 and known for inventing Oysters Rockefeller.
- **The Busy Bee Cafe (Atlanta, GA):** A family-owned diner since 1936 frequented by civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; this soul-food restaurant has earned accolades from James Beard and Michelin Bib Gourmand.
- **Cafe du Monde (New Orleans, LA):** An iconic and renowned coffee and beignet shop in the French Quarter of New Orleans.
- **Columbia Restaurant (Tampa, FL):** Florida's oldest restaurant, opened in 1905; it is famous for its Cuban cuisine and historic Ybor City setting.
- **Joe's Stone Crab (Miami Beach, FL):** A Miami Beach institution since 1913, best known for fresh stone crab claws and century-long family ownership.
- **Magnolias Restaurant (Charleston, SC):** An iconic, upscale Southern restaurant that is credited with the revival of Lowcountry fine dining since it opened in 1990.
- **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room (Savannah, GA):** A beloved Southern, family-style boarding-house restaurant since 1943, known for communal tables and classic home-cooked dishes.

Regional Cuisine

SOUTH/SOUTHWEST

Southwestern American cuisine is defined by its early influences from Native American, Mexican, and Spanish influences, with dishes featuring “the three sisters” crops (corn, beans, and squash), chiles, tomatoes, cheeses, and avocado. Many staples, such as tacos, tamales, and enchiladas, are also prevalent throughout Central America but include uniquely American additions that include various spices, herbs, and chiles distinctive of Tex-Mex, New Mexican, and Sonoran cuisine. Noteworthy barbecue styles include Texas—which focuses on the “trinity” of brisket, ribs, and sausage in a dry rub—and Oklahoma, which features hickory wood-smoke and more sauce. Other signature dishes from this region include hearty stews such as posole, Sonoran hot dogs, and fry bread.



ICONIC RESTAURANTS

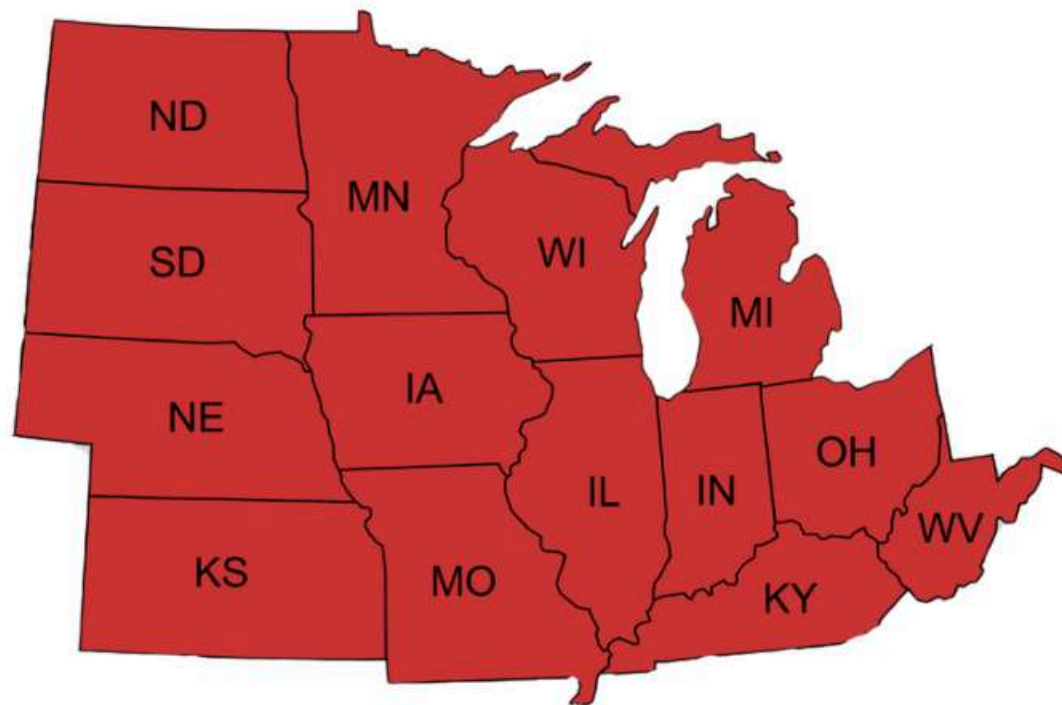
- **Bedlam Bar-B-Q (Oklahoma City, OK):** A legendary BBQ spot known for preparing meats in the old traditions of curing and dry-rub applications
- **El Fenix (Dallas, TX):** Widely regarded as Dallas’s oldest restaurant and a cornerstone of Tex-Mex history, this restaurant now has 14 locations across the region.
- **Franklin Barbecue (Austin, TX):** A BBQ spot, known for hours-long lines, redefined Texas barbecue with its legendary brisket.
- **The Salt Lick (Driftwood, TX):** A Texas Hill Country favorite since 1967, celebrated for its open-pit barbecue and rustic, family-style dining
- **The Turquoise Room Restaurant (Winslow, AZ):** An award-winning, fine-dining restaurant located inside the historic La Posada Hotel that serves contemporary Southwestern cuisine.



Regional Cuisine

MIDWEST

Nicknamed the “breadbasket of America,” the Midwest is the primary region that produces America’s grains, including wheat, corn, and soybeans. The region is also home to stockyards and ranches that produce beef and pork. Due to its long history in raising cattle and pork, Midwestern-style sweet and tangy barbecue is renowned. Midwestern cuisine is simple and draws from its farming traditions that include preserving food; Native American crops such as pumpkins, beans, and potatoes; as well as an influx of Scandinavian, Polish, and German settlers.



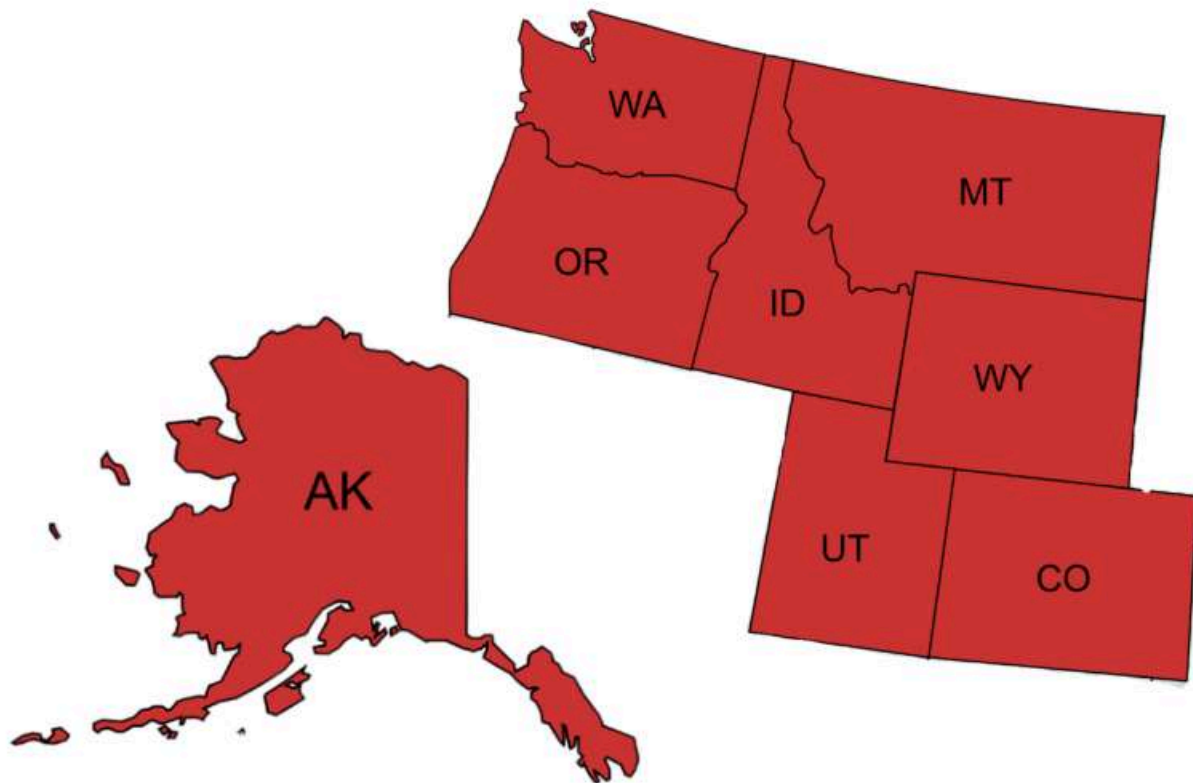
ICONIC RESTAURANTS

- **Alinea (Chicago, IL):** A 3 Michelin-star establishment was founded by Grant Achatz, molecular gastronomy and modernist cuisine innovator.
- **Archie’s Waeside (Le Mars, IA):** A James Beard Award-winning supper club is celebrated for its Greek-style steaks and welcoming atmosphere.
- **Browne’s Irish Marketplace (Kansas City, MO):** Kansas City’s oldest Irish business and one of the oldest Irish establishments in the world.
- **Fort Wayne’s Famous Coney Island Wiener Stand (Fort Wayne, IN):** Widely considered the oldest continuously operating hot dog stand in America, opened in 1914.
- **Fox and Pearl (Kansas City, MO):** An award-winning neighborhood bistro by Chef Vaughn Good; using a live fire hearth, smoker, and preservation techniques, Chef Good blends his French culinary background with regionally inspired comfort foods.
- **Gioia’s Deli (St. Louis, MO):** A St. Louis institution known for its hot salami sandwiches and a James Beard America’s Classics Award winner
- **Ishnala Supper Club (Wisconsin Dells, WI):** An iconic supper club in the Midwest; the Midwest supper club tradition is a cherished dining experience that combines comfort, nostalgia, and community.
- **Owamni (Minneapolis, MI):** A modern restaurant by Chef Sean Sherman with seasonal menus to reflect region, culture, and Indigenous food identities.
- **Pizzeria Uno (Chicago, IL):** Deep dish pizza, a thick crust pizza assembled in reverse with cheese on the bottom and tomato sauce on top, was invented here in 1943 and is an iconic Chicago dish.
- **Red’s Giant Hamburg (Springfield, MO):** A restaurant located on historic Route 66 that is believed to be the world’s first drive-through restaurant; it opened in 1947 during the post-war boom in long-distance automobile travel across America.
- **Runza (Lincoln, NE):** A sandwich shop known for “runza,” a unique take on the traditional pirog, has over 90 locations across the Midwest.
- **St. Elmo Steak House (Indianapolis, IN):** Opened in 1902, this legendary steakhouse is known for its fiery shrimp cocktail, dry-aged steaks, and historic atmosphere.

Regional Cuisine

PACIFIC NORTHWEST/NORTHERN ROCKIES

Cuisine from this region is heavily influenced by Native American and Asian ingredients and traditions, with a strong emphasis on local ingredients that are often foraged. Common foods include various types of salmon that are indigenous to the region, along with other types of seafood that include shellfish such as clams and Dungeness crabs. Game meats, including elk, moose, or caribou, are also common, as are cooking techniques that include smoking and cedar-plank grilling. Street food carts and market stalls are a signature of Seattle and Portland, as are locally owned artisan craft breweries, coffee shops, and cheese creameries.



ICONIC RESTAURANTS

- **Canlis (Seattle, WA):** Seattle's most iconic fine-dining institution since 1950, known for panoramic lake views, Pacific Northwest tasting menus, and a celebrated wine program.
- **Bowpicker Fish & Chips (Astoria, OR):** An emblem of coastal Oregon's fishing heritage, operates out of a converted fishing boat and is famous for its deep-fried albacore tuna.
- **The Gun Barrel Steak & Game House (Jackson, WY):** One of Wyoming's most famous restaurants, known for wild game (elk, bison, venison) and Wild West-inspired décor rich with cowboy history.
- **Ludvig's Bistro (Sitka, AK):** Chef Edith Johnson's restaurant is known for rustic Mediterranean fare specializing in fresh, Alaskan seafood and hand-crafted specialty foods.
- **Pekin Noodle Parlor (Butte, MT):** Considered one of the oldest continuously operating Chinese American restaurants in the United States.
- **Pike Place Market (Seattle, WA):** Seattle's original farmers market and the center of locally sourced, artisan, and specialty foods.

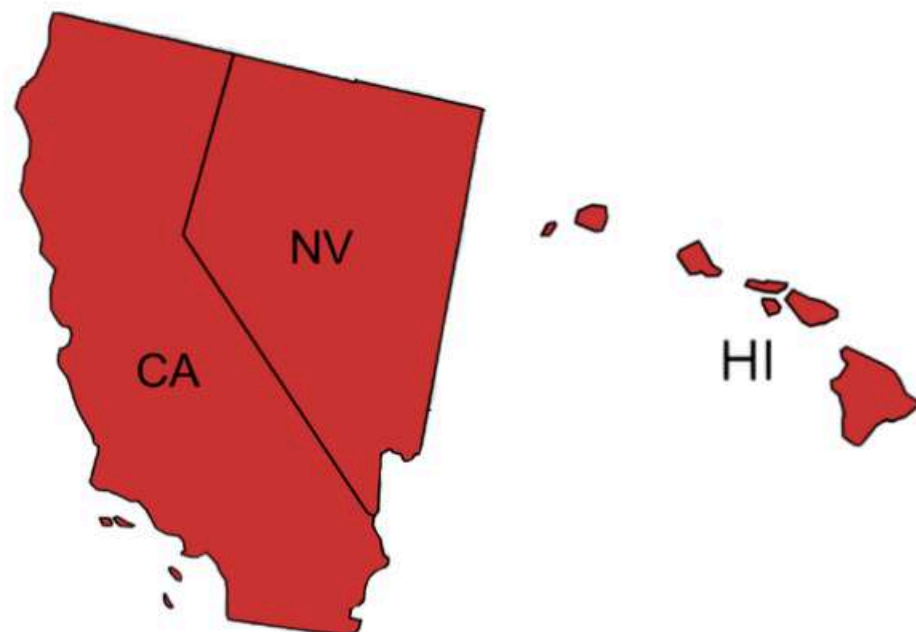


Regional Cuisine

WEST COAST

Dishes from this region, which is the birthplace of the farm-to-table movement, have a heavy emphasis on fresh, local ingredients; California's farms are the top producers in the United States, yielding tree nuts, dairy, cattle, fresh produce including avocados, fruits, and grains, among others. American Chinese food developed in the 1800s during the American Gold Rush and incorporated American ingredients, creating new dishes such as General Tso's chicken and fortune cookies. The region is also known for its celebrated wineries, sourdough bakeries, and fusion of Mexican, Asian, and Mediterranean foods.











Hawaii, located in the Pacific, has a rich blend of Polynesian, Japanese, Filipino, and American flavors that feature taro (poi), coconut, and fresh seafood in signature dishes that include spam musubi, loco moco, poke, and huli huli chicken.

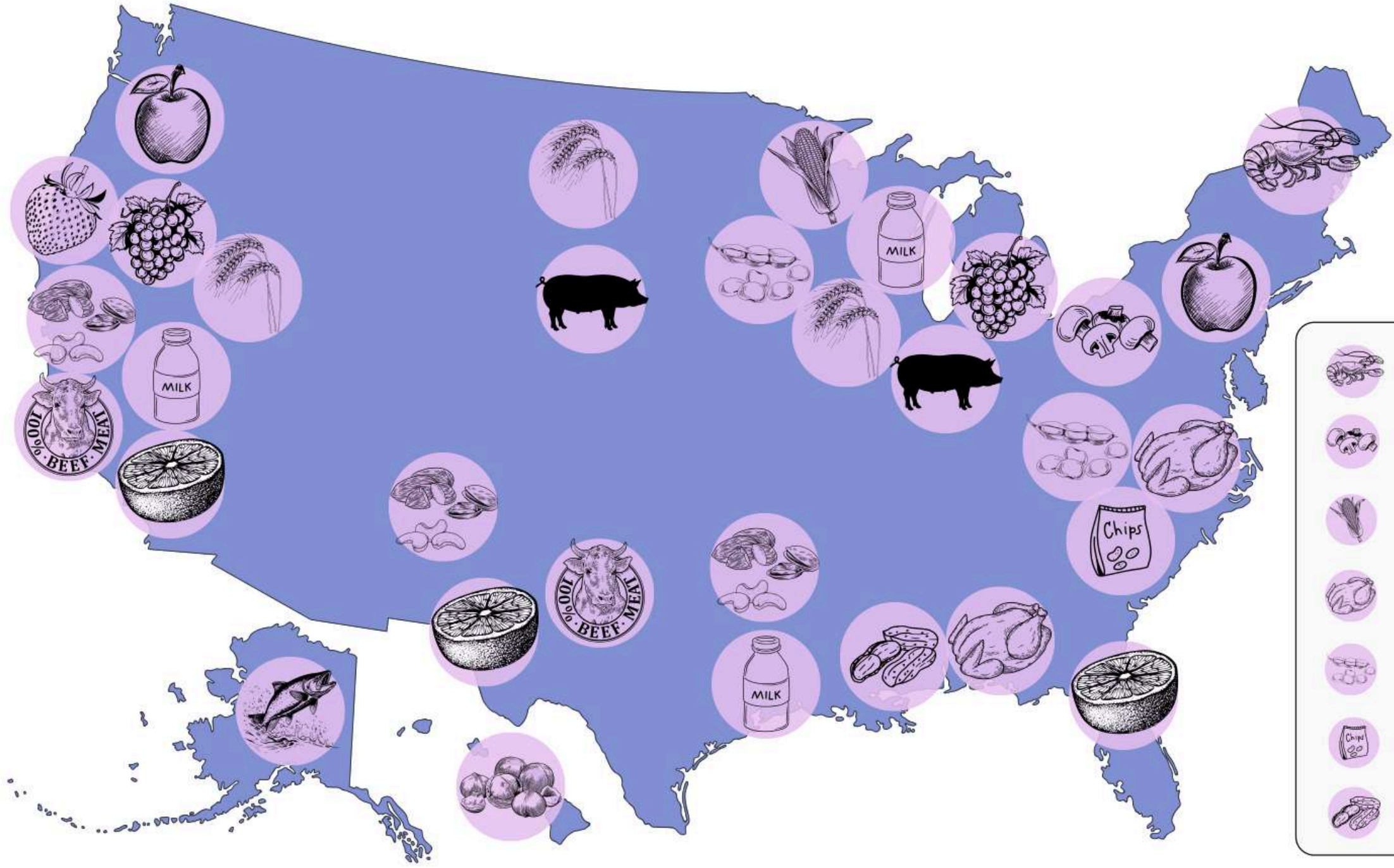









ICONIC RESTAURANTS

- **Chez Panisse (Berkeley, CA):** Opened and owned by Alice Waters, one of the originators of California cuisine and the farm-to-table movement
- **Buckhorn Exchange (Denver, CO):** Denver's oldest restaurant, which opened in 1892, is located in a National Historic Landmark building.
- **The French Laundry (Yountville, CA):** A world-renowned fine dining institution in Napa Valley. In 1994 Chef Thomas Keller purchased the restaurant and elevated it to a three-Michelin-starred destination known for its French cuisine.
- **The Golden Steer Steakhouse (Las Vegas, NV):** Las Vegas's oldest and most iconic steakhouse, open since 1958, once frequented by Elvis Presley and members of the Rat Pack, including Frank Sinatra
- **House Without a Key (Honolulu, HI):** A historic oceanside restaurant operating since the 1920s, known for Hawaiian music and classic island cuisine
- **McDonald's (San Bernardino, CA):** Founded in 1940 by the McDonald brothers, Richard and Maurice, has since grown to the world's largest restaurant chain by revenue
- **Musso & Frank Grill (Los Angeles, CA):** Hollywood's oldest restaurant, famed for its red-leather booths, martinis, and loyal celebrity/writer clientele since 1919
- **Tadich Grill (San Francisco, CA):** California's oldest continuously operating restaurant, founded in 1849, known for classic seafood and historic ambiance

Top U.S. Food Exports

-  Apples
-  Strawberries
-  Grapes
-  Tree Nuts
-  Grains
-  Beef
-  Dairy
-  Oranges
-  Pork
-  Salmon
-  Macadamia Nuts



-  Lobster
-  Mushrooms
-  Corn
-  Broiler Poultry
-  Soy
-  Snack Foods
-  Peanuts

P 57-58:

Photo by Mtaylor444. Pike Place Market Entrance, 2012.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pike_Place_Market_Entrance.JPG.

Cam-Fu. Line at Bowpicker, Astoria, OR, 2011.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/camknows/5913009178>.

Arts and Music Envoy Chef Edith Johnson at her restaurant Ludwig's Bistro in Sitka, AK, 2025.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DNWq5ToS4-u/>.

Pekin Noodle Parlor. Jerry Tam returned home to Butte in 2009 and worked alongside his father until taking over the business in 2020.

<https://pekinnoodleparlor.com/story>.

P 59-60:

Blaze, Matt. French Laundry, Yountville, CA, 2010.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mattblaze/4393011059/>.

House Without a Key. The iconic Halekulani Mai Tai, 2026. <https://www.halekulani.com/dining/house-without-a-key/>.

Jones, Adam. Sign of original McDonald's Restaurant, San Bernardino, CA, 2021.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/adam_jones/51709151291/.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to explore American excellence, history, culture, and innovation.

This toolkit will be continually updated; please check back for new content.