



# KANSAS & OKLAHOMA

Your clients may travel to the two states for horseback riding, history, Route 66 or great music, but there's great food and drink to enjoy too! **Matt Bates** chooses six (actually, 12) of the best Kansas and Oklahoma eating places

## 1 BLAZIN' BARBEQUE

It's hardly surprising that Kansas and Oklahoma – two states in the very heartlands of the US – lay claim to offering perhaps the finest, homeliest American food served with the biggest, friendliest smiles ... and that's especially true when it comes to Barbecue! Think finger-lickin', melt-in-your-mouth meat cooked for hours. It's intensely flavoursome and deeply satisfying.

**FIND IT:** Backfire Barbeque, Kansas City, KS. Don't be fooled: it may look like a chain restaurant but this eye-popping diner on the edge of Kansas City is a one-off and the real deal. Try the 'burnt ends' (ribs) with three kinds of BBQ sauce. [backfirebarbeque.com](http://backfirebarbeque.com)

**ONE MORE BITE:** Smokin' Joe's Rib Ranch, Davis, OK. A no-frills joint that's always busy – tender ribs and melting brisket. [smokinjoesribbranch.com](http://smokinjoesribbranch.com)

## 2 SIZZLIN' STEAK

Eating out – breakfast, lunch or dinner – is an American way of life, and home-style cooking is right at the heart of it. In the best of Kansas and Oklahoma's family restaurants, even the atmosphere provides nourishment for the soul, and locally-reared food (maybe a steak?) cooked properly to order is an unrivalled treat.

**FIND IT:** The Cattlemen's Restaurant, Oklahoma City, OK. In the heart of the Stockyards (cattle market) this is a locals' favourite (always a good sign) for superb steak – breakfast, lunch and dinner – and authentic western atmosphere.

Those feeling brave should try the calf fries!

[cattlemensrestaurant.com](http://cattlemensrestaurant.com)

**ONE MORE BITE:** Emma Chase Café, Cottonwood Falls, KS. Not so much a diner, more a way of life. Home-cooked food and great music. [emmachasecafe.com](http://emmachasecafe.com)



## 3 ROUTE 66 ROAD FOOD

Burgers and shakes go together like rock and roll, and no more so than along the legendary Route 66. Today it's food with theatre thrown in, but it started out with a serious purpose all those years ago – fuelling up those intrepid travellers heading across the continent for business or pleasure.

**FIND IT:** Lucille's Roadhouse, Weatherford, OK. Since 2006, the new Lucille's has carried on a tradition established in 1927 by Lucille and Carl Hamons – that's great home-cooked food, hospitality, stories from the Mother Road, and great souvenirs, too. [lucillesroadhouse.com](http://lucillesroadhouse.com)

**ONE MORE BITE:** POPS Arcadia, OK. Around 600-plus flavours of pop from around the world – from cream soda to bacon soda (seriously!). [route66.com](http://route66.com)

## 4 FINEST FRIED CHICKEN

There are few things that say 'family dinner' in Kansas and Oklahoma more than fried chicken, and almost everyone has a favourite 'breeding' (the ubiquitous coating). Both states are replete with chicken restaurants and although menus vary by far the most popular remains the deeply traditional chicken and mash, biscuits (actually, savoury scones) with gravy.

**FIND IT:** Brookville Hotel Restaurant, Abilene, KS. Fourth generation, family-style fried chicken dinners, cottage cheese & peaches; coleslaw; creamed corn; mashed potatoes, gravy and ice cream! [brookvillehotel.com](http://brookvillehotel.com)

**ONE MORE BITE:** Chicken Annie's Original, Pittsburg, KS. Established 1934 and still third-generation family-operated today. Wonderful chicken and fabulous sides. [chickenanniesoriginal.com](http://chickenanniesoriginal.com)

## 5 LEGENDARY LUNCH

It came to the UK as the 'Sub', but the lunch sandwich in the USA is much, much more. Myriad breads from rye to sourdough to muffuletta to pitta, filled to overflowing with turkey, cheese, pastrami and salad, reflecting the cosmopolitan origins of the US population and designed to fill up for an afternoon's work.

**FIND IT:** Old Mill Tasty Shop, Wichita, KS. Magnificently constructed (and gargantuan) lunch sandwiches; fluffy pancakes; blue-plate special lunches

for the soul, served with the friendliest of family welcomes. Try out the Saturday brunch – you'll be full until Tuesday! **ONE MORE BITE:** Cheever's Café, Oklahoma City, OK. A touch of elegance and a way with sandwiches, salads and desserts. Reservations may be needed. [cheeverscafe.com](http://cheeverscafe.com)

## 6 A PRIME PIECE OF PIE

Is any Kansas or Oklahoma lunch or dinner complete without a piece of pie (or cobbler) to finish it off? Probably not, and as your clients jump in the car to pick up their fly-drive route, or settle down to watch the Kansas/Oklahoma sunset, they'll realise – perhaps with some surprise – just how rich the food heritage is here in the heartlands of the USA.

**FIND IT:** Arbuckle Mountain Fried Pies, Davis, OK. Conceived to fend off the winter cold for cowboys at the turn of the 20th century. Try savoury or sweet (apricot, peach, apple and pecan) fried pies. [arbucklemountainfriedpies.webs.com](http://arbucklemountainfriedpies.webs.com)

**ONE MORE BITE:** Bradley's Corner Café, Topeka, KS. Made-from-scratch rolls, fries and 25 different kinds of pie; meatloaf, biscuits and gravy. Simple, down-home value.



