

the magazine

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Fresh and local dining in Charleston

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Charleston is well known as a beautiful waterfront city steeped in rich traditions, culture, history and outstanding food. With its abundance of places to eat and drink, to see and be seen, diners can find just about any cuisine under the sun. The city has become a creative mecca for food lovers, who often return again and again to enjoy the many culinary options the city has to offer.

Charleston restaurants have embraced the farm-to-fork (or farm-to-table) movement. With an abundance of farms and other suppliers so close, the emphasis is on locally sourced fresh ingredients. According to Hanna Raskin, food writer and critic for the *Charleston Post & Courier*, "Charleston

has fortunately reached the stage at which farm-to-table isn't a selling point: It's standard practice. Thanks largely to the efforts of organizations such as Grow Food Carolina and advocates such as Anson Mills' Glenn Roberts, chefs here are dedicated to cultivating personal relationships with their purveyors, and leveraging them to tell Lowcountry stories. What's more interesting now is the deepening exploration of Charleston's place in history as well as on the map."

Whether you're a Charleston native, a first-time visitor or a frequent traveler to this charming and historic place, here are five spots you won't want to miss on your next trip to "Chucktown."

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Magnolias

Executive Chef: Don Drake
185 E. Bay Street
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An institution since 1990, Magnolias helped ignite a culinary renaissance in Charleston. As Magnolias began to receive accolades from diners and critics alike, the restaurant flourished and Charleston began to gain prominence as one of the nation's leading gastronomic destinations. Today, Magnolias remains a forerunner in upscale Southern cuisine, blending traditional ingredients and cooking techniques with modern flair for artful presentations. Popular dishes include the Down South Egg Roll stuffed with collard greens, chicken and Tasso ham (served with red pepper purée, spicy mustard sauce, and peach chutney) and Shellfish over Grits with sautéed shrimp, sea scallops, lobster, creamy white grits, lobster butter sauce and fried spinach.

According to Chef Don Drake, Magnolias is committed to the farm-to-fork experience: "For us, it's being able to create innovative, seasonal menus that showcase the local harvest. Asparagus, field peas and lettuces in the spring; sweet corn, shell beans and a variety of tomatoes in the summer; and gourds



like pumpkins and squashes in the late fall/winter are all examples of seasonal produce that we incorporate into Magnolias' dishes. We like to use more specialty items with limited availability such as squash blossoms and soft shell crabs for daily/nightly specials as well."

Magnolias completed a six-week renovation early this year and has a new look as it approaches its 25th anniversary in 2015. The refreshed space provides an enhanced experience complemented by the original Southern charm for which Magnolias is best known. "As the menu evolves with time, it is important to us to also adjust the design and atmosphere, providing the best dining experience for our guests," says Magnolias Owner TJ Parsell. "The space has been updated with a sophisticated look, but guests will still feel like they are in their favorite spot for world-class Southern cuisine."

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