

G Now, THAT'S D!



Carolina country produces some of the best eats anywhere. What do you think tastes best?

Maybe you've seen the list that begins "You Know You're From North Carolina If . . ."

- You know that Coke tastes better in the little bottles and that peanuts make the Coke taste even better.
- Your idea of a really good tenderloin is when the meat is twice as big as the bun and comes with cole slaw on top.
- You consider being a "Pork Queen" an honor.
- All festivals around the state are named after a fruit, vegetable, fish or tobacco.
- You know how to put molasses into a hot biscuit.

We have our own way of eating, and we know what we like. Published here are some of your ideas of "the finest North Carolina food," Carolina Country style. Thanks to everyone who wrote to us. See more on our Web site: www.carolinacountry.com Go to page 12 to see the remaining themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series.

— Michael E.C. Gery



The tomato (with salt and Papa)

The best food in North Carolina hands down is the tomato. A tomato sandwich with mayonnaise is a classic, Southern summer dish. Add a fresh, buttered ear of corn, and your meal is complete. For a little variety, add cucumbers to your tomato sandwich.

Or how about the famous BLT sandwich? For those of us who grew up in the country, a slice of tomato on a freshly baked homemade biscuit will make your mouth water.

During the summers of my childhood, I remember going out to the garden in the evening with my Papa Eli and gathering the vegetables. Once back at the house, Papa would have me pick out a tomato, and he would clean it and get the salt. We would then proceed to eat the tomato like you would an apple. Nothing tastes as good as eating a freshly picked tomato with a little salt and Papa.

*Michelle Callicutt
Carthage
Randolph EMC*

A Krispy Kreme donut with milk

The finest food in North Carolina is an oven-fresh, original glazed donut from Krispy Kreme. A single bite of just one of these soft, melt-in-your-mouth morsels brings with it an overwhelming sensation of satisfaction, unmatched by anything you have or will ever taste. These pastries are so sweet that you feel a rush of energy, even after the smallest nibble, as the saccharine scrumptiousness stirs your taste buds into a frenzy.

Alone, these donuts are wonderful, but what's even better is eating them alongside a large glass of creamy milk. The refreshing milk and invigorating donuts are so compatible that when partaking of the two together, you feel you are experiencing a small part of heaven.

*Jonathan Gunson
Butler High School
Matthews*

Scallops

My criteria for choosing "The Finest Food in North Carolina" include taste, availability and cost. My vote goes to the scallop. Not only is it tasty right out of the shell, it can be pan-fried in butter, baked, deep fried or prepared just about any way you choose. It can be served by itself, in or with anything from soup to linguini, and takes no time to prepare.

Scallops are available to Tar Heels everywhere, including restaurants, food stores, local docks and roadside stands, always at reasonable prices. They can also be taken personally in the coastal sounds and marshes by wading or drifting in a small boat or offshore by dragging the bottom. Taken in small



quantities, there is no fee or license required, and permits for larger quantities are inexpensive.

In our house, scallops are often both an appetizer and the main course. When eating out, my “choice of two” (or three) always includes scallops.

How can I be sure scallops are the finest? We serve friends and guests everything from barbecue to crabs, from flounder and shrimp to venison, but their eyes light up at the mention of my wife’s scallop dishes.

*Bert Speicher
Emerald Isle
Carteret-Craven Electric*

Shrimp

What is North Carolina’s finest food? That is an easy question. Why, the shrimp, of course.

Who can resist the sight of a big pot of shrimp boiling and the smell of the spices, knowing that soon you will be peeling hot shrimp and dunking them in a big bowl of spicy hot cocktail sauce? I certainly can’t.

Fresh shrimp are available from street vendors or fish markets all season. Or, if you are very lucky and have a boat, you can catch your own shrimp and bring them on home for the best meal you ever had. Simply pinch off the heads and throw them into a pot of boiling hot water with your favorite spice.

For another taste treat, batter fry the shrimp and watch the faces of your family light up as you put them on the table. Add some sauce for dipping, and a once-noisy room of yelling kids will suddenly be quiet and content. Shrimp is the favorite food of my family. It is North Carolina’s finest meal no matter how you fix it.

*Janet Hammer
Emerald Isle
Carteret-Craven Electric*

God’s Country barbecue

Barbecue, barbecue, barbecue. Best in the free world.

I was born and grew up in the Tar Heel State and left to pursue my career aspirations in other parts of this great country. In Texas, I met my wonderful wife, got married and started a family (two boys now). I moved them all to Indiana to be closer to our families. Although I enjoyed the time that I spent in Texas, and

now in the Heartland, I have to come back to “God’s Country” to get good barbecue. Not too heavy on the red sauce, but spicy and hearty, with side dishes that are worth their weight in gold (coleslaw, beans, hush puppies, potato salad, iced tea, etc.) I get hungry, just thinking about it!

*Mark Gilliland
Clyde
Seasonal member of Haywood EMC*



Lexington barbecue

I have eaten barbecue in the eastern and western parts of North Carolina, Virginia and Texas. None compared to the barbecue cooked in Lexington.

I ate some good barbecue while traveling in Pooler, Georgia. Don Yates moved from Lexington to Pooler, and he introduced the people there to Lexington-style barbecue. The barbecue dip (sauce) and pit-cooked pork shoulders can’t be beat, in my opinion.

I have seen people who travel through Lexington stop and fill large coolers with barbecue meat, dip and the good barbecue slaw. Thousands come to Lexington every year in October for our Barbecue Festival.

I’m so glad that my uncle taught me how to make the dip before he passed away. I can prepare my own dip and put it on pork, beef, chicken or venison, or just dip hushpuppies in it.

Be sure you stop in Lexington and try some Lexington-style barbecue.

*Darlene Owens
Lexington
Energy United*

Eastern barbecue

The finest food in North Carolina is barbecue. Not just any barbecue, but the barbecue found in the eastern part of the state.

Eastern North Carolina barbecue is made from delicious pork, vinegar and red pepper. The pork is so tender it will melt in your mouth. Scrumptious spices add to the pleasure of this delicacy.

Enhancing the barbecue, which definitely can stand alone, are french fries, red coleslaw, hush puppies, rolls or buns. This wonderful entrée can be served on paper plates or china plates. It can be served at a formal occasion or a cookout. One of the most common ways to eat eastern barbecue is at a “pig-pickin’.” The hog is cooked overnight to perfection in an open pit. Guests can then “pick” their portions and devour.

Don’t worry about your blood pressure. Remove all of the fat, and you have the leanest, healthiest white meat available.

*Tamara Nifong
Lexington
EnergyUnited*

Sweet tea

Growing up a southern girl in North Carolina as part of an oversized family, I have always been surrounded by nothing but the most wonderful southern meals and extraordinary cooks.

Trying to single out one particular food in such a vast group seems almost impossible, especially because they all work together to create an incredible meal. The South has always prided itself on such delicious cuisine as fried chicken, biscuits, green beans, potatoes—all extremely important in preparing a perfect southern dish. So, considering this, I realized just about the only southern specialty that stands alone and can top off each one of these great foods would have to be sweet tea.

Sweet tea is the essence of southern spirit, brought out through our cooking. Sweet tea not only can be found almost anywhere in the South, it is also unique to the South. In many cases, the most amazing tea comes straight from the family kitchen. Each person can make their tea their own.

*Hannah Thornton
Butler High School
Matthews*

continued on p. 12

Mama's biscuits, gravy and livermush

I grew up in Caldwell County as the second of nine children in the family. As long as I can remember, Mama had an old, oblong wooden bowl she kept in the cupboard with flour in it and covered with cheesecloth. As far as I know, every day of her married life Mama fixed biscuits for breakfast, except for the times she went to the hospital to bring home another sister or brother.

Even in the many years I lived away from home, each time I visited, no matter for how long or short a time, I would be awakened by the smell of biscuits, gravy and usually fried livermush. Of course, she knew these were my favorites, and she never failed to treat me every day I was home.

Mama passed away 13 years ago, but each time I close my eyes and concentrate, I still smell those fabulous smells and taste the wonderful flavor of Mama's homemade biscuits and gravy. Even though to me, the "finest food in North Carolina" is gone, the memories of it and my Mama will live with me forever.

*Steve Angley
Grover Beach, Cal.
Haywood EMC*

Cake and fried chicken

My all-around first favorite, finest food is the famous North Carolina Pig Pickin' Cake. It excels. But a close second is a cake made my Mrs. Vida Faircloth of Peter's Creek. And a third choice is the fried chicken at Lakewood Plaza.

I just couldn't narrow down to one thing.

*Candy Jones
Roseboro
South River EMC*

Cheerwine

During the summer, when the North Carolina sun is beating down on my back, the only drink that I want to grab is the North Carolina-made Cheerwine. No other soft drink can compare to the way Cheerwine tastes and feels. Some people might reach for a bland water or an imposter cherry soft drink, but they wouldn't be getting the same satisfaction as I would. Cheerwine has to be the best thing to come out of North Carolina since Michael Jordan.

There's just something about the way the red-tinted drink fills my cup and the fizz jumps up from the top like it's on fire. As I reach for the glass, my taste buds start to melt. I can't stand it anymore. I bring the glass to my mouth, take a huge gulp and I'm in heaven. Ahh! My thirst is quenched the best way it can be.

If North Carolina were to enter a contest for the best drink in the world, we would definitely win first prize every time. North Carolina's Cheerwine is absolutely the one and only drink to have when quenching your thirst on a hot summer day.

*Ryan Dunham
Butler High School
Matthews*

Apples

This is a hard choice! I mean, what could be better than North Carolina seafood, barbecue, sweet potatoes, strawberries, sweet corn or tomato sandwiches? Maybe one thing has an edge: North Carolina apples.

I know some people who do not care that much for seafood or even barbecue. But I do not know of anyone who doesn't like apples in some form or another. That in itself is one beauty of apples. Think of how many ways you eat them: in a pie, in a fresh apple cake, baked in the oven, raw in a salad, or our favorite way – cooked in an old iron frying pan.

Then there is the variety grown here in North Carolina: Red and Yellow Delicious, Winesap, Limbertwig and a recent favorite, the Gala. You can find them fresh beginning in August. You can find them in Lincolnnton, Taylorsville, Wilkesboro, Hendersonville and other western North Carolina towns. But I like to find them on a tree, pull one, wipe it off and eat it. Let the juice run down the side of my mouth!

*Ralph Powell
Statesville
EnergyUnited*



Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

AUGUST 2003

"The Funniest Story I Ever Heard"

True, or not so true.
Deadline: June 15

SEPTEMBER 2003

"My Favorite Photo"

Our annual photo gallery of North Carolina people and places.
Deadline: July 15

OCTOBER 2003

"Why I Like My Electric Cooperative"

Is a cooperative different than other utilities?
Deadline: August 15

NOVEMBER 2003

"The Finest Neighbor I Ever Knew"

Tell us why and send a photo.
Deadline: Sept. 15

DECEMBER 2003

"How to Live a Long and Happy Life"

Do you know an older person who sets a good example for staying healthy and happy? Send a photo, too.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com