

LOCAL FLAVORS

A Taste of Minneapolis

For a delicious slice of the City of Lakes' history and culture, tailor a tour to your tummy.

BY TERRI PETERSON SMITH

► **Standing on the iconic Stone Arch Bridge** in downtown Minneapolis with the Mississippi River rushing below, you get a sense of history swirling up in the cool mist from roaring St. Anthony Falls. Still considered sacred Dakota space, Native Americans called this location Mni Sota Makoce, "the land where the waters reflect the clouds."

It's also where timber and grain from around the Midwest came to market on the river and where—though it's no Niagara—St. Anthony Falls was big enough to power the flour mills of the Pillsbury family and others starting in the 1800s. Minneapolis has been a food town ever since, with each new wave of settlers adding its own food traditions and spicing up life in Minneapolis. That's one reason the city's chefs and restaurants regularly stack up James Beard Foundation Awards the way snow piles up in February.

Now, Minneapolis and its savvy food entrepreneurs are redeveloping the historic mills and industrial areas, blending the city's history with a host of new and trendy drinking and dining spots meticulously integrated into and around the old buildings. These creative and casual eateries offer a great way to explore Minneapolis, meet its people, and get a taste of the cultures they represent.

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Hai Hai, a restaurant in the Nordeast neighborhood, serves delicious dishes representing the bold flavors and tropical beauty of southeast Asia.

First Food

Start your tour in Mill Ruins Park and the adjacent Water Works Park on the downtown riverfront where walkers, runners, and bikers take to the historic paths. One of the city's newest restaurants, Owamni, is built into a former mill and perched above the river overlooking the sacred falls, Owámniyomni, a Dakota word that roughly translates to "the place of the falling, swirling waters." Chef and owner Sean Sherman, a.k.a. "the Sioux Chef," is an



Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is open daily. There are 60 sculptures, including a 25-foot-tall blue rooster.



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Oglala Lakota (Sioux), born on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation and a longtime proponent of authentic indigenous American cuisine that he describes as "decolonized cooking." No fry bread here. Instead, the menu offers fish, game, berries, and wild rice and leaves behind the dairy, wheat flour, and processed sugar that European settlers brought with them. His cuisine hit the spotlight with *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, which garnered a James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook in 2018.

At Owamni you can savor native corn tacos with cedar-braised bison, smoked trout with dandelion pesto, and grilled forest mushrooms. Crunch lightly baked crackers made from sweet corn's ancestor, teosinte. It's all de-lish!

Flour Power

In the 1800s, the mills and canals along the river made up the largest direct-drive, water-powered facilities in the world for flour production. Part of the complex, the Mill City Museum, is built into the ruins of what was once the world's largest flour mill and offers a look at the city's early days.

Tucked between the museum and the river, the Mill City Farmers Market pops up every Saturday April through October and monthly in the winter. Stroll the stalls and buy organic produce under the watchful gaze of some of the world's great

St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail, along the Minneapolis riverfront, loops under and over the 1883 Stone Arch Bridge, which is open to bicyclists and pedestrians only.



FINE PAIRINGS

Our budget-friendly pick is a crisp Italian pinot grigio, **L'Auratae Catarrato**, which complements grilled pork shoulder especially well. The wine's acidity cuts through the fattiness of the pork while the aromas mix well with the smoky, earthy flavors that come from grilling. Made with organic grapes, it offers intense aromas of citrus and mango (\$11). For a stylish Date Night wine, we chose **Lucien Albrecht Riesling Tradition**, from Alsace, France. It's a dry riesling—with spice and mineral notes—that pairs well with the Asian flavors of this dish (\$20).



On the Menu

Grilled Pork Shoulder with Tiger Bite Sauce

This dish is adapted from Hmong chef Yia Vang's recipe, but slightly simplified for camp cooking. For best results, let the meat marinate at least overnight.

YOU'LL NEED

- 2–3 lbs pork shoulder
- Marinade**
- 4 tsp chopped shallots
 - 4 tsp finely chopped cilantro
 - 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
 - 4 tsp lemongrass (optional)
 - 4 tsp fish sauce
 - 4 tsp oyster sauce
 - 4 tbsp canola oil
- Tiger Bite Sauce**
- 2 tsp canola oil
 - 2 small shallots, finely chopped
 - 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 - 1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped (add more or less according to taste)
 - 1 cup finely chopped cilantro
 - 2 tsp fish sauce
 - 2 tbsp oyster sauce
 - ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 2 limes)

MAKE IT

- 1) Butterfly the pork so it lays flat.
- 2) Make the marinade by adding ingredients one at a time and mashing with a fork. Seal pork in a Ziploc bag with the marinade. Turn it occasionally as it marinates.
- 3) Make Tiger Bite Sauce by adding ingredients one by one and mashing them together to combine flavors.
- 4) Cook pork on grill at high heat. Cook for 5 minutes on each side and continue until the internal temperature is 160° F.
- 5) Cut pork across the grain and spoon Tiger Bite Sauce over it. Serve with rice.

playwrights who look down from the walls of the acclaimed Guthrie Theater next door. Turn away from the river and you'll see the market's neighbor, U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings, looming over the area like a giant futuristic Viking ship.

Explore Nordeast

Cross the Stone Arch Bridge and you've entered the neighborhood fondly called "Nordeast." Stop at Kra-marczuk's, a longtime bastion of Nordeast cookery with hearty fare that reflects the Eastern European roots of folks who settled the neighborhood. You'll find varenyky (meat, cheese, and potato pierogis),

holubets (stuffed cabbage rolls), and freshly baked old-world breads and pastries. Purchase some of the variety of house-made sausages to take back to your campsite.

In contrast to the kielbasa, Hai Hai (hai means two in Vietnamese) serves gorgeous Vietnamese street food. Chef Christina Nguyen utilizes her grandmother's recipes to create eye-popping and mouthwatering dishes—all meant for sharing.

A stop at the 105-year-old Northrup King Building, home to more than 350 artists and creatives who open their studios daily, is a must.

Prospect Park

There's plenty of room for your crew, a brew, and your dog, too, at establishments that have popped up in a section of old warehouses and grain silos in the Prospect Park neighborhood. Surly Brewing landed here first and revolutionized the brewing and dining laws in Minnesota. Well known for its hoppy "Furious" IPA, Surly also serves fantastic food. Settle into the giant dining hall or lounge outdoors next to a fireplace to sip a brew and nosh on fish tacos or melt-in-your-mouth brisket.

Across the road from Surly an old machinery building houses The Market at Malcolm Yards, which is

filled with a delectable array of local food with offerings ranging from meatballs to empanadas and Korean fried chicken to sushi. Thanks to a system that links to your credit card, you can meander the market to sample food and pour your own drinks at self-serve taps.

From there, wander over to the O'Shaughnessy Distilling Co., a state-of-the-art operation partially built into a dilapidated potato-processing facility. The owners, two locally grown cousins of Irish descent, lured one of Ireland's top whiskey makers, Brian Nation, to Minneapolis, where he now makes American whiskey in the traditional Irish style that uses triple copper-pot distillation. Those shiny pots rise over the tasting room like giant sculptures.

Pedal and Paddle

When it's time to wear off some of that food, you're in luck because the Minneapolis waterfront lies smack in the middle of Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a 72-mile river park. Mississippi River Paddle Share (paddleshare.org), a self-serve kayak-sharing system, rents everything you need to get out on the river, all aligned with the city's bike-rental system, Nice Ride Minnesota (niceridemn.com), to get you back to where you started. Nice Ride provides both conventional bicycles and e-bikes for use around Minneapolis and St. Paul. Also, the folks from The Fit Tourist (thefittourist.com) will happily take you on biking and walking tours to explore Minneapolis along the river and beyond.

From the Mill Ruins Park area, it's a short bike ride downriver to Bohemian Flats, a lovely park inhabited mainly by University of Minnesota students throwing frisbees. It's a pastoral place to enjoy the view of the river and the futuristic Frank Gehry-designed Weisman Art Museum. Or, from the river, ride about 4 miles to the Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden. Snap pics with the giant blue rooster, "Hahn/Cock," by German sculptor Katharina Fritsch or the iconic Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen fountain, "Spoonbridge and Cherry."

From there, you may want to tour Minneapolis' famed Chain of Lakes, roughly 15 miles of paved bike paths. Enjoy the impressive architecture of homes around Lake of the Isles, paddle a canoe or stand-up paddleboard for rent at Lake Bde Maka Ska, or take in nightly concerts at Lake Harriet Park.

No matter how you slice it, Minneapolis offers enough activity to float any boat and fill any tummy. ■



nuCamp Cirrus 620 Truck Camper

At the helm of a half-ton truck outfitted with nuCamp's Cirrus 620 camper you can pilot the streets of Minneapolis, find parking, and then head out of town to camp in comfort. Inside the 620, you'll find a north-south queen bed with storage on each side, sleek Amish-made cabinetry, a sink and fridge, two-burner stove, and a hidden cassette toilet. Alde's quiet hydronic heating system keeps you cozy in this four-season camper.

nucampvr.com

WHY WE LIKE IT

- Weighs less than 1,500 pounds dry
- Queen bed plus convertible dinette
- Alde hydronic water and heating system



▲ Award-winning Minneapolis Chef Vang will open his restaurant, Vinai, this year. His cooking features large shared main courses, vibrant veggie dishes, and bold sauces, often cooked over an open fire. He shares a few recipes at exploreminnesota.com/culinarycampfire.