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Money

THE NEW RETIREMENT

5 REASONS IT'LL BE SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU THINK

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TRIPS TO SAVOR

EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH THESE FOUR
FANTASTIC FOOD TOWNS, WALLET INTACT.
YOUR WAISTLINE IS ANOTHER MATTER.

BY STIRLING KELSO



Taking a top-notch foodie vacation doesn't necessarily require hopping from one Michelin-starred restaurant to the next. In fact, getting a real feel for a place's culinary DNA also means seeking out those low-profile local spots where you may score a mind-bending meal for \$20 or less. Plus, you'll want to explore markets, visit favorite watering holes, and learn regional cooking techniques. Hungry yet? Here's a look at the affordable food scene in four cities—two well-known gourmet hotspots, and two that may surprise you.





FROM TOP: LUNCH AT THE BUTCHER & BEE; HUSK RESTAURANT (LEFT) AND NEXT-DOOR BAR.



OYSTER SHUCKING AT THE ORDINARY.

CHARLESTON

SOUTH CAROLINA

WITH SOUTHERN FOOD becoming increasingly popular in cities like New York and L.A., chefs in Charleston are drawing nationwide attention. Come for their South Carolina classics, as well as the new riffs on old favorites.

SIP A SOUTHERN SCREWDRIVER AT HUSK BAR.



★ **THE MUST-EAT** The \$35 Sunday Fish Fry at **Ordinary**, which includes soup or salad, seasonal veggies, and dessert. The restaurant is a favorite of Matt and Ted Lee, authors of *The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen* cookbook.

MORE TO TRY Take the Taste of the Lowcountry cooking class (\$25, including food and wine) at **Charleston Cooks**, a kitchen shop and classroom. Learn to make shrimp and grits while the head cook talks you through the region's diverse food influences. To practice at home, pick up a bag of stone-ground Carolina Plantation Grits (\$9) and Tiverton Farms' Low Country Seafood Seasoning (\$8).

Cocktail hour is sacred in Charleston, so pay your respects

at **Husk Bar**, says *Garden & Gun* magazine deputy editor Dave Mezz. You're in bourbon heaven—50 types line the shelves—so try a cocktail like *A Yard Too Far*, a mix of vanilla- and ginger-infused bourbon, pecan orgeat syrup, and bitters. For an affordable nosh, order a round of not-so-small plates (from \$6). You could also head next door to **Husk** restaurant, located in a restored 19th-century house. Dinner there is a splurge, about \$110 for two, but the nose-to-tail pork dishes, such as crispy pig ears topped with cucumbers marinated in sweet vinegar, are well worth it, says Mezz.

Need a casual lunch spot? It's tough to beat BYOB café **Butcher & Bee**. The menu changes daily, offering a range of tempting plates such as locally grown squash and smoked slaw or tender pork belly sandwiches starting at \$9.

DD Rent wheels at the Bicycle Shoppe on Meeting Street (from

THE LOGISTICS

✈️ **FLIGHT COST**
\$292 on United

🚗 **RENTAL CAR**
\$36/day

🏠 **RECOMMENDED HOTELS**
\$140-\$359

\$7 an hour) and zigzag through charming streets in the South of Broad neighborhood and along the waterfront Battery. Guides with the new Free Tours by Foot also lead themed walks for discretionary donations.

STAY The Lee brothers recommend Zero George hotel, which offers free breakfast and biweekly cooking classes (from \$359). Or, for a more affordable option, drive 15 minutes out of town to the Inn at i'On (from \$140, including breakfast), where you can start your day with the Wagyu beef hash and orange vanilla French toast.