



An American's Guide To American Food in India

Uncle Sam's favourite foods are found all over the country

by Elizabeth Flock | Aug 8, 2009

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Homesickness grabs you by the throat, but food-sickness sinks its claws into your stomach and won't let go until you get that back-home food you crave: The dish your mother fed you as a kid; the after-school snack you looked forward to all day; the meal only your hometown can get right.

Finding American food isn't easy — tougher still because the cuisine defies easy definition, being inspired mostly by immigrants — but for any one born in the USA, they know what it is. I thought it impossible to find the New York Deli sandwich outside of Manhattan, or the zing of Cajun fish outside Louisiana. And certainly not the Jewish water bagel.



American food is here, all over India, and not just in tourist towns or five star hotels. So, if you're a homesick expat, or an Indian looking for that nebulous "American" cuisine, come 'n' get it!

The All-Day Breakfast

A meal that will leave you loosening your belt and closing your eyes in a food hangover for hours afterward, but it's well worth it. Fluffy waffles, stacks of pancakes, fatty burgers, hot dogs, malts and shakes are ubiquitous 50s American diner food, and the [All-American Diner](#), New

Delhi, has it all in true greasy form.

The All-American Diner, Habitat World at India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

Tel: 011 43663162

The East Coast Jewish Bagel

The bagel with cream cheese is the staple New York American Jewish breakfast. The ideal bagel is topped with salt and malt and then boiled in water before baking it in an oven, and is puffy with a moist crust. At the Bagel Shop, Mumbai, their holey bread isn't exactly the real deal. But I won't kvetch too much — because although they skipped out on the salt and malt, they do make real 'water' bagels. That alone makes it worth the trip, even for goys.

The Bagel Shop, Anand Villa, 13 Pali Mala Road, Bandra West, Mumbai.

Tel: 022 26050178

West Coast Raw Foodism

American health gurus embraced raw foodism, and California totally adopted it. The promise: eating uncooked and unprocessed food promises a beach-ready body! (Believe it or not, it can also taste great). At the hippie-inspired Mocha Mojo (Chennai and Mumbai), you can eat a whole raw food garden lasagna before you realise they used almond paste instead of cheese.



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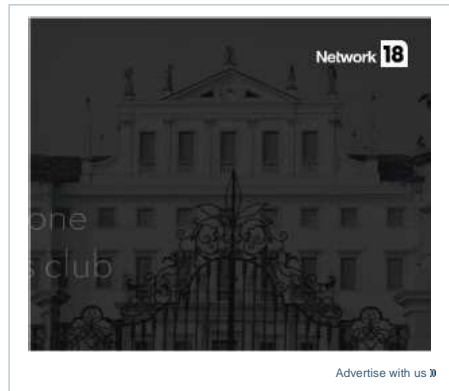
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Mocha Mojo, 72, 1st Avenue, Indra Nagar, Adyar, Chennai.

Tel: 044 42337025

Down South BBQ

Summer and backyard get-togethers and Independence Day celebrations just wouldn't be complete without a dad in an apron messing with the charcoal grill, hovering over the meat. At [The Barbeque, Taj Bengal, Kolkata](#), they use a gas fire, but the result is the same: Sizzling chargrilled chicken, pork chops and lamb.

The Barbeque, Taj Bengal, 34B, Belvedere Road, Alipore, Kolkata.

Tel: 033 22233939

The New York Deli Sandwich

A Deli sandwich says a lot about a person. What kind of bread? And which cold cut do you want: Turkey? Roast beef? Then choose your cheese; and then how many toppings; and what kind of sauce; the type of wet salad. The counter of the [Indigo Deli](#), Mumbai, is so well stocked it's nightmare for the indecisive. But it's an NYC foodie's dream.

The Indigo Deli, 5, Pheroze Building, Chattrapati Shivaji Maharishi Marg, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai.

Tel: 022 6655 1010

The Cops-on-Breaks-Inspired Doughnut

American movie fans know that all highway cops really do is hang out in coffee shops and eat doughnuts. But hey, everyone in America loves doughnuts, even Homer Simpson. At [Mad Over Donuts](#), Mumbai, they clearly share the love, serving ringed donuts and filled donuts and iced donuts, with kitschy names like Nutty Buddy and Mamma Mia.

Mad Over Donuts, 63, Bhulabhai Desai Marg, Breach Candy, Mumbai.

Tel: 022 3211 0000 (Plus three other locations in Mumbai, and two in Delhi)

Louisiana Cajun

In New Orleans, Cajun is king. The seasoned, spiced, hearty meals of rice and game and fish go down real smooth with jazz. India's well-versed on spice, so [Arthur's Theme](#), Pune, does a pretty good imitation of Down South jalapeno and cheese poppers, fish with cayenne pepper, fish croquettes, and chicken marinated in Cajun sauce with ailloli.

Arthur's Theme, 2, Vrindawan Apartment, Lane No 6, North Main Road, Koregaon Park, Pune.

Tel: 020 26132710

Wood-Fired Oven New York Pizza

You can't get a real Chicago-style pizza outside the Windy City. But you can get a damn good replication of its cousin, the thin-crust wood-fired oven pizza, at La Terrasse, Pondicherry. The simple semi-open-air joint has pizzas with every kind of cheese imaginable and toppings like pineapple that will truly melt between oven and your mouth.

La Terrasse, No 5, Near Beach Corner, Subbiah Street, Puducherry Ho, Pondicherry.

Tel: 413 2220809



The California Maki Roll

When Japanese Sushi chefs flocked to LA in the 60s to make their fortunes, their experiments brought the inside-out California roll into existence. Containing cucumber, avocado and crab meat or imitation crab stick, and an outer layer of rice, it's the perfect starter for the uninitiated. And at Harima, Bangalore, their Japanese chef got the California roll just right.

Harima, 131, Devatha Plaza, Residency Road, Bangalore.

Tel: 080 41325757

Tex Mex Fajitas

In the southwest US, Spanish colonial settlers, Native Americans and Mexicans brought mouth-watering fajitas across the border. The dish of grilled meat served on a flour or corn tortilla, with added veggies, sour crème, and guacamole can be found in all its glory at the Rodeo Bar, New Delhi, along with mock saddles for seats and

The New York Deli sandwich

cowboy-hat-wearing waiters.

Rodeo Bar, 12A, Connaught Place, New Delhi.

Tel: 011 23354859



American Vegetarian

Vegetarians exist in the US, believe it or not. And it's clear that [Bean Me Up](#), Anjuna-Vagator, Goa, was started by an expat American. It gives you the whole range of substitute meats: Tofu, seitan, and tempeh, the organic salads Californians love, vegan cakes and pies, and of course soyabean, which the place does justice to with soya whipped cream and even soysage! You can almost pretend you're at Portland's hippest new vegan café.

Bean Me Up, 1639 Deulvaddo, Anjuna-Vagator, Goa.

Tel: 0832 2273479

Seattle Coffee and Cakes

Seattle is known for two things: rock music and coffee. After all, it's the place Starbuck's was born. In this town, coffee is a religion. And just like chai goes with biscuits, American coffee must be accompanied by a muffin or cake. At Moonpeak Espresso, McLeodganj, Himachal Pradesh, you can get just that: A slice of Seattle with your Tibetan meditation.

Moonpeak Espresso, Temple Road, McLeod Ganj, Himachal Pradesh.

Fried Chicken

Don't go to KFC, I beg you. The breaded mixture or batter for fried chicken is something you have to get just right. And at [Apple Bee Inn](#), Uttarakhand, they get it. May be it's influence of people like Tom Alter's parents, American missionaries long settled in the area. Or may be that it's not a fast food joint. It's a good thing the restaurant doubles as a hotel; proper fried chicken has a tendency of weighing you down, and you'll want to sprawl out on your bed after gorging.

Apple Bee Inn, Village Masrana, Dhanaully Road, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.

Tel: 0135 2115290

The Health Food Craze

After McDonald's, health food became obese America's new obsession. At [Eco-nut](#), Kodaikanal, in this town founded by Americans, you can find every variation of US dieting made delicious: Granola-y cereal, dried fruits and seed mixes, and even home-made yoghurt. Eat up and you'll be ready to master Kodi's hills.

Eco-nut, PT Road, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu.

Tel: 04542 43296

American Style Burger

Since the time the cheeseburger originated in Pasadena, California, a true American burger has evolved to include the works: Pickles, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, bacon, sauces, and ... that's just the start. At [Café 0294](#), Udaipur, they've just got lettuce and tomato but the meat patty is juicy and the buns are soft.

Café 0294, Hotel Raja Place, Burman Chambers, UIT Bridge, Saheli Marg, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Tel: 0294 25600400

Elvis Presley's Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich

Elvis may not have invented the sandwich, but this was his favourite snack. Him, and most American kids, who wolf them down as an after-school snack. And at Peace, Puri, they've figured out the perfect ratio of spread to banana.

Peace Restaurant, Chakratirtha Road, Puri, Orissa.

Thanksgiving Dinner — Turkey, Cranberry and the Works

Arguably the most American of meals, it has its origins with the first European settlers and their feasts with Native Americans. Every holiday season, [Le Brasserie, Le Meridien, Bangalore](#), serves up an authentic imported Butterball Turkey and cranberry sauce. If only they had American football on big screen TVs, and cousins, and drunk uncles, and the Macy's Day Parade... well, maybe food can't get rid of all homesickness.

Le Brasserie, Le Meridien Hotel, PB No 174, 28, Sankey Road, Bangalore, Karnataka.

Tel: 080 22262233

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