



The Southern Belly: The Ultimate Food Lovers Companion to the South

John T. Edge

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In the tradition of Ed Levine's *New York Eats* and Patricia Wells' *Food Lovers Guide to Paris*, *The Southern Belly* is a tour de force, the first authoritative and comprehensive guide to the food and drink of the American South. It is a place-specific book that fuses good advice with entries that provide historical and cultural perspective to the appreciation of Southern standards like barbecue, catfish, sweet tea, and hot sauce. In *The Southern Belly*, Edge does much more than simply steer you to good eats, he tells the story behind the food, people, and places that have become Southern institutions; much more than just your ordinary guidebook grocery list of every smoke shack from Hattiesburg to Hahira. More than 200 entries run the gamut from rib shacks, fish camps, hot pepper sauce manufacturers, and micro-breweries to former speakeasies, places made famous in movies, famous birthplaces (such as the home fried dill pickle), and temples of haute cuisine including food landmarks in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and southern Virginia.

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From Reader Review The Southern Belly: The Ultimate Food Lovers Companion to the South for online ebook

Graham Oliver says

I'm not sure I understand the point of this book.

I picked it up originally because I've fallen in love with John T. Edge's work on the Gravy podcast and with Southern Foodways Alliance in general. I learned about him when he was interviewed on Serious Eats' Special Sauce podcast. He is fantastic on the radio, and if he guides their content much, he also has a keen eye for finding stories. If you picked this book up because of the subject matter, I highly recommend you go check that out: <https://www.southernfoodways.org/grav...>

But this book is silly. Each place gets maybe two long paragraphs that are superficial to the point of uselessness and quickly become repetitive. The only potential use I see for it is as a guide for a massive roadtrip through the south, but a) hardly anyone will do that and b) that means the book became outdated maybe two years after it was released.

His voice here is fantastic, it's just not used to do anything meaningful. I don't think this is a book that's meant to be read, but instead one that's meant to be placed on a shelf next to other cleverly titled books about the south, which the owner can then pull out to show the entry for some restaurant nearby or that they visited once. It's a shame, too, because if a book existed that took instead 12-20 of these places and wrote in a similar vein but with more depth I would absolutely love it.

Jen says

Definitely not what I was expecting. Just short write-ups on restaurants and foodies from around the South. I'll stick to Southern Living if I want that, thanks.

Crystal says

This is a quaint type of guide book covering canonical territory. It does include a few surprises, though. I have added "slaw burger" to my Tennessee eating list.

Jennifer says

This book goes on every road trip with my family.

Ash Crowe says

Excellent read with more than just restaurant recommendations. The history and the stories of food in each state are as wonderful as the restaurants described.

Rachel says

More of a Road Food of the South than anything else. I intend to keep it in my husbands car as we travel the South for his job.

Arrel says

A well-informed tour of eateries of the South by someone who knows all about it. Places, people, foods, and more with some nice B/W illustrations and numerous "side-bars" about interesting things, be they eateries, people, food, or something else.

Jeannie Graves says

This is not a cover-to-cover read. This is a book you dip into here and there. And it is pure delight, especially if you are familiar with the culture of Southern foods and John T Edge's other writings. I bought my copy in Oxford, MS, in early February, while visiting my son and his family(I live in California). For those who have read the book, I celebrated my 60th birthday with catfish and hush puppies at the Taylor Grocery.

Heather says

I read the 2012, fully updated version. This is a fun book and one I will consult as a restaurant guide before traveling in the south.

eric says

Short pieces about a host of different restaurants (etc.) across the south. Well-written, with a knack for turning what could be tired anecdotes, into lively/colorful stories.

Lauren says

The subtitle is a serious misnomer. Would have loved more thorough stories about the history of each location (as the book's summary suggested), but was left with half page summaries of a menu. Come on, Mr. Edge!
