

For country music lovers, there's only one place in the world to be June 6–9, 2024:

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BlueShoe Nashville

May 3, 2024: Dining Suggestions for your Nashville trip during CMA Fest 2024

Hello, BlueShoe/CMA Fest 2024 travelers:

In a little over a month, you'll be here in Nashville! In preparation for your trip, we want to offer some resources for finding good places to eat. From unique foodie discoveries to down-home classics, the food scene in Nashville is ever-evolving and offers something for everyone. All of BlueShoe's partner hotels (The Hermitage, Hampton Inn downtown, Courtyard Marriott downtown, Home2 Suites downtown, Tru by Hilton, and Hampton Inn Capitol View) are situated within walking distance of many restaurants. So you don't have to drive or take a taxi or Uber to find your meals. However, our little guide here includes some places that do require a bit of travel and we include them because they're worth the trip and are considered by Nashvillians to be "the real thing."

RESOURCES

There is a good general guide to dining that can be found on the [Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) (NCVB) website. Restaurants are arranged by different categories such as Live Music & Food, Locally-Sourced, Vegetarian and Vegan, Gluten-Free, Cheap Eats. If you scroll down, you can also find restaurants arranged by cuisine type. To access this resource on your phone, click the above link, scroll down, and then swipe horizontally (or click on the direction arrow) on your phone when you come to the various categories. You can also find on the NCVB site a month-by-month listing of new Nashville restaurants that have opened over the past year [HERE](#).

[Eater Nashville](#) has several excellent articles on Nashville dining, including [An Eater's Guide to Nashville](#) (organized by neighborhoods), [The Hottest New Restaurants in Nashville, May 2024](#) (with a focus on new establishments), and their classic [38 Essential Restaurants in Nashville](#) (a guide to the best restaurants in Nashville, spanning neighborhoods, cuisines, and prices).

Casual to high-end restaurants (including one of our favorites, City House) are featured in Southern Living's February 2024 piece on [30 Best Restaurants in Nashville for Every Type of Meal](#).

Finally, don't overlook the sometimes surprisingly wonderful resource of **local expertise**. Specifically, we suggest that you ask the staff people in your hotel (front desk clerks, concierges, managers, valets, and housekeeping staff) for their personal recommendations for restaurants they like that are within walking distance of the hotel. These people know the neighborhood intimately and may point you to a dining spot you won't find in the professionally curated resources cited above.

BLUESHOE FAVORITES

[Assembly Food Hall](#)

5055 Broadway Place (within walking distance of your hotel)

Opened in 2021, Assembly Food Hall features over 30 eateries and bars. Located in the heart of downtown, across the street from the iconic [Ryman Auditorium](#), we wouldn't be surprised if you find yourself at the Food Hall multiple times throughout CMA Fest. Think of it as a food court, but with local, rather than chain, restaurants. While the location will be convenient, as with all other downtown dining venues, it will also likely be quite crowded, especially at peak hours. The Food Hall is packed with excellent choices, and we recommend you walk around and see what most appeals to you. Read on below for a couple of BlueShoe favorites.

[Prince's Hot Chicken](#)

Level 2 South, Assembly Food Hall:: 629-895-4688

5055 Broadway Place (within walking distance of your hotel)

While Nashville-style hot chicken has become a worldwide sensation served in restaurants from L.A. to Melbourne to Singapore, [Prince's Hot Chicken](#) is where it all began. Named by [Eater](#) as one of [America's 38 essential restaurants](#), if you're a fan of the heat, you won't want to miss your chance to dine where the hot chicken phenomenon originated. Prince's in Assembly Hall opens at 10:30 AM daily; you may want to arrive early in the day to avoid long lines.

[The Pharmacy Burger](#)

Level 2 South, Assembly Food Hall

5055 Broadway Place (within walking distance of your hotel)

A favorite among locals, these hand-smashed regionally sourced burgers will make your mouth water. The classic burger is a solid choice that will not disappoint. If you'd like to turn up the flavor, try the Mission City Burger (guacamole, pico de gallo, black beans) or the White Oak BBQ Burger (applewood smoked bacon, house-made Coca-Cola BBQ sauce, crispy fried onions). Top it all off with tater tots, hand-cut fries, or a milkshake. [The Pharmacy Burger Parlor and Beer Garden](#) is the larger, original location in East Nashville, a 10-minute drive from downtown (located across the Cumberland River). Here you will find an expanded menu that includes a salmon burger, chicken sandwiches, and bratwursts. You can also enjoy the charming outdoor beer garden.

[The Pharmacy Garden](#)

Level 2 South, Assembly Food Hall (within walking distance of your hotel)

5055 Broadway Place (within walking distance of your hotel)

An excellent choice for plant-based burgers and fresh garden salads, this sister restaurant of the Pharmacy Burger offers flavorful vegetarian and vegan options. You'll find the Pharmacy Garden located adjacent to The Pharmacy Burger in Assembly Food Hall.

Monell's

1235 6th Ave. N, Nashville, TN 37208 (about 1.5 miles from downtown):: 615-248-4747

Set in historic [Germantown](#) a mile from downtown in a beautiful Victorian-style home, Monell's serves a sit-down style all-you-can-eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. (Please note: dinner is available Tuesday - Saturday from 5 PM - 8:30 PM; breakfast is served daily beginning at 8 AM; on Saturdays, a midnight country breakfast is available from 11 PM - 3 AM.) The specialty skillet fried chicken is featured with every meal, including breakfast. They also serve some of the best southern vegetables in town, great iced tea, and delicious desserts. This long-time local favorite is one of the restaurants you'll want to visit at least once during your stay in Music City to get a true taste of Southern cuisine. Street parking is available near the restaurant. We recommend reserving some time to walk the brick sidewalks among the charming historic neighborhood.

While you're in the Germantown neighborhood you can learn more about Tennessee's history, art, and culture with a visit to the [Tennessee State Museum](#). Located adjacent to the [Nashville Farmers' Market](#), the museum is open Tuesday - Saturday from 10 AM - 5 PM, Sunday from 1 PM - 5 PM, and is closed on Mondays. Admission is free. The Nashville Farmers' Market is a great option for lunch, featuring a plethora of cuisines and unique shops.

Jack's BBQ

416 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203 (downtown location within walking distance from your hotel):: 615-254-5715

1601 Charlotte Ave, Nashville, TN 37203 (about 1.3 miles from downtown):: 615-341-0157

Jack's BBQ is located downtown at [416 Broadway](#) and is walkable from all the downtown hotels. It is worth a stop (for the full southern experience, order your BBQ with cornbread, turnip greens, and baked beans). If you don't mind a short car ride, Jack's also has a restaurant at [1601 Charlotte Avenue](#) (same name, Jack's BBQ) and it won't be as crowded as the one on Broadway. The Charlotte location is not within walking distance of downtown, but it's very near (it's about 1.5 miles from the Broadway location).

Wendell Smith's

407 53rd Ave N, Nashville, TN 37209 (about 4.5 miles from downtown):: 615-383-7114

A throwback to the classic meat and three diner, Wendell Smith's is a place where the waitresses will call you "honey" and keep refilling your coffee or iced tea without your having to ask. Breakfast here is hearty—savory home-fried potatoes, grits cooked right, fresh sliced tomatoes, eggs the way you like them, and, of course, biscuits and gravy. If you can't make it for breakfast, try Wendell's for lunch or supper. We recommend their fried chicken and fresh vegetables, including fried corn, turnip greens, cucumber and onion salads, and cornbread. When you're finished, you can walk across the street for dessert to the second place we think is worth the drive from downtown, Bobbie's Dairy Dip (read on). Note: Wendell Smith's is closed on Sundays.

[Bobbie's Dairy Dip](#)

5301 Charlotte Avenue (about 4.5 miles from downtown):: 615-864-5576

Located directly across from Wendell Smith's, Bobbie's is a half-century-old bit of Americana with old-fashioned walk-up windows. The menu features made-to-order hamburgers, fresh-cut fries, and soft serve ice cream (with chocolate dip, if you like). Nothing says summer like drinking a milkshake from Bobbie's, sitting on their outdoor patio, and listening to doo-wop played on their speakers.

[The Loveless Cafe](#)

8400 TN-100, Nashville, TN 37221 (approximately 18 miles from downtown):: 615-646-9700

According to Southern Living, The Loveless Cafe has "[the best biscuits in Tennessee](#)" and the "**fried chicken is mighty fine too.**" We haven't tried all the biscuits in the state, but we suspect the magazine may be right: the Loveless biscuits (complimented by the various fruit preserves they bring to your table as a side), is a peak culinary experience. Originally opened in 1951 to feed hungry travelers along historic Highway 100, the Loveless Cafe offers an iconic Nashville dining experience. All menu options are homemade from scratch with many ingredients sourced from local Tennessee farms. Breakfast is served all day (beginning at 8 AM Monday - Friday and at 7 AM on Saturday and Sunday) with the dinner menu available after 11 AM. Bonus: you can watch them make your biscuits. After breakfast, spend some time perusing the gift shop on the premises and don't forget a picture in front of the flashing neon sign. The Loveless Cafe can become quite crowded at breakfast, particularly on weekends — we recommend visiting on a weekday morning, if possible. Located approximately 18 miles from downtown, it is the farthest away from the hotels of all the dining options listed here, but the biscuits alone make it worth the trip.

A parting suggestion: there is so much happening on the food scene in Nashville, we suggest you do a few searches on Google and see the array of articles and websites dedicated to restaurants here. You'll probably discover some places we don't even know about yet.

Bon appétit!