

# MISSISSIPPI

## Italian

Area: Delta and Coast

Towns: Greenwood and Biloxi

Food: Spaghetti

Many Italian immigrants settled in Mississippi river towns, Gulf Coast communities, and the Delta to work in a variety of endeavors, such as farms, factories, and small businesses. Italians who opened groceries or restaurants popularized Italian food throughout the state, creating a long-standing influence on Mississippi food cultures and tastes.



## Greek

Area: Capital and Coastal areas

Towns: Jackson, Hattiesburg, and Biloxi

Food: Gyro

Greeks settled throughout the United States and were regularly involved in the restaurant trade. In Mississippi, Greeks established many lunch spots and diners throughout the state in the 20th century, especially during the 1950s and 1960s.



## Lebanese

Area: Delta

Town: Clarksdale

Food: Rolled, stuffed cabbage

Many early Lebanese started as peddlers and later settled in the area to run groceries and restaurants, often offering Southern food alongside Lebanese cuisine.



## Choctaw/Native American

Area: Eastern and Eastern Central MS

Towns: Pearl River

Food: Banaha

The Mississippi Choctaw have a long-standing food tradition developed from years of farming and harvesting the earth's bounty. Their food traditions not only contributed to their rich cultural history, but early colonial settlers learned from the skills and knowledge of Choctaw farmers and cooks.



## African American

Area: Delta to McComb

Towns: Western and Central MS

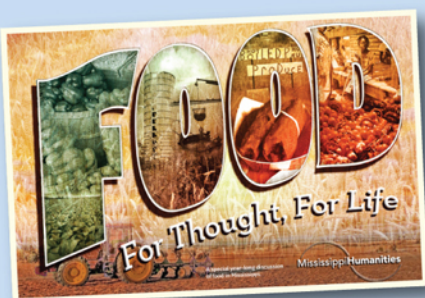
Food: Fried chicken, greens, and okra

African American Southern and Soul food are foundational cuisines to all of Mississippi. The dishes that early and contemporary African American chefs cooked and served represent much of Mississippi's culinary legacy.



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# FOOD TRADITIONS

## Cajun

Area: Southwest MS

Towns: Biloxi

Food: Gumbo

Cajun influences in MS were rare prior to the Cajun revival of the 1970s, although there has been a significant Cajun population in Biloxi since World War I. Despite its recent influence, Cajun cooking has transformed coastal food cultures and spread throughout the state.



## Creole

Area: Southwest MS

Towns: All coastal and Mississippi river towns, especially Natchez

Food: Red beans and rice

Creole influences shaped life on the Mississippi River from colonial times to the present. Many creole populations settled in the state before the Civil War and have since assimilated into mainstream Mississippi culture. Yet, the influence of Creole culture and food on Mississippi has been great.



## Jewish

Area: Capital and Delta Regions

Towns: Jackson, Greenville, Natchez, and Vicksburg

Food: Latkes

The earliest Jewish settlements were in Natchez, Vicksburg, and Jackson, but by 1937 Jewish immigrants lived in 107 Mississippi towns. Jewish immigrants generally ran small businesses, but the combination of their Jewish religious and cultural identity, and Southern roots contributed to a deep tradition of Southern Jewish food.



## Chinese

Area: Delta

Towns: Greenville, Cleveland

Food: Chow Mein

The Chinese came to MS as field labor, but made their mark on Mississippi food traditions by becoming especially involved in the grocery trade.



## Mexican

Area: Delta and Central to Southern MS

Town: Yazoo City, Jackson, Laurel, and Gulfport

Food: Tamale

While many Mexican immigrants came to Mississippi to work as laborers in farms and other businesses, some opened up shops or restaurants that provided food to farm labor. Although sometimes mistakenly attributed to Spanish conquistadors and although often prepared by African American cooks since the 1930s, the Mississippi tamale was brought to the Delta by Mexican laborers around the 1920s.



## Vietnamese

Area: Gulf Coast

Towns: Gulfport, Biloxi, Jackson, and Hattiesburg

Food: Pho

Vietnamese supporters of the American war in Vietnam came to the US following the fall of Vietnam to communism in 1975. Immigration increased steadily and between 1980 and 1990, the Vietnamese population doubled. Although relatively recent immigrants, Vietnamese have shaped southern Mississippi's foodways both through involvement in the seafood industry and in restaurants.

