

10Best: Places to dine down on the farm

Larry Bleiberg, Special for USA TODAY 7:45 a.m. EDT October 17, 2014



★ White Oak Pastures in Bluffton, Ga., a 150-year-old family farm located about 180 miles south of Atlanta, offers seasonal Friday and Saturday night dinners served in the same farm kitchen used to feed employees. (Photo: whiteoakpastures.com)



(Photo: freshandwyld.com)

With farm-to-table restaurants booming in popularity, farms themselves are now getting in on the act, offering meals to diners craving super-fresh cuisine that's often raised on site. "The producers are honoring the ground, presenting the fruits of their labor in a fun and delicious fashion," says **Matt Jones** of [Slow Food USA](#), an organization dedicated to sustainable, local agriculture. He shares some favorites with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY. Many of these meals are offered seasonally and often support food-based charities.

Fresh and Wyld Farmhouse Inn and Garden

Paonia, Colo.

On Friday nights from May through Thanksgiving, this inn sets a table replete with fresh ingredients, many grown on the farm or produced in the area. "It's all organic and all local. It's the epitome of a farm dinner," Jones says. "It's a very engaged agricultural community. This is our Shangri-La, our gem on the western slope of Colorado." 970 527-4374, freshandwyld.com

Our Table in the Field

Sherwood, Ore.

This Portland-area farm regularly hosts meals built around food raised right in the area. "Typically the dinners showcase local culinary talent and raise money for non-profits," Jones says. A recent dinner featured Pinot Noirs from the nearby Willamette Valley wine region. "It's a shining example of the vast variety and biodiversity of the Pacific Northwest." 503-217-4304; ourtable.us

Suzie's Farm

San Diego

This farm near the Mexico border takes a playful approach to its dinners. "They have really fun parties. They'll have music. As opposed to the formal sit-down dinners, it's



more of a celebration," Jones says. In the past, organizers have themed events to the Day of the Dead, and have brought in food trucks to serve produce from the region. "There's a lot of acknowledgment of the local cultural diversity." 619-662-1780; suziesfarm.com

New Town Farms

Waxhaw, N.C.

Expect an elaborate and tasty meal at this Charlotte-area farm, which raises heritage and heirloom vegetables and livestock, including poultry and hogs. "Their dinners are spectacular. They're loaded up and they're exquisite," Jones says. "They're able to put together a full meal from the farm." Proceeds benefit local charities. 704-843-5182; newtownfarms.com

White Oak Pastures

Bluffton, Ga.

This 150-year-old family farm located near the Florida border has adapted with the times, and focuses on the humane treatment of its grass-fed livestock. It runs a restaurant and offers seasonal Friday and Saturday night dinners served in the same farm kitchen used to feed employees. "They're opening it up to the public and sharing the bounty of the farm," Jones says. 229-317-0203; whiteoakpastures.com

Shelburne Farms

Shelburne, Vt.

Throughout the growing season, this famous New England farm and restaurant hosts upscale outdoor family-style dinners by its vineyard on the shores of Lake Champlain. The meal, which include cheeses, vegetables and other products from Vermont farm partners, benefits a charity that educates children about healthy eating and sustainable agriculture, Jones says. "The backdrop is fairly spectacular." 802-985-8686; shelburnefarms.org

Spence Farm

Fairbury, Ill.

This multi-generation Midwest farm dates to 1830, but in the last decade has focused on increasing crop diversity and raising rare livestock breeds. "They've taken on rejuvenating the farm, raising a vast variety of heirloom products," Jones says. "The lesser-known vegetables and breeds in their dinners set them apart." The farm often collaborates with top chefs from nearby Chicago. 815-692-3336; thespencefarm.com

Glynwood Farm Dinners

Cold Spring, N.Y.

Monthly dinners showcase sometimes surprising seasonal products from New York's Hudson Valley. Dinners are often topical, and have highlighted ingredients from goat meat to hard ciders. "They have wonderful stuff going on all the time up there," Jones says. "I would fly there just to go to that cider dinner." Often meals welcome a guest farmer as a speaker. 845-265-3338; glynwood.org

Fox Hollow Farm

Crestwood, Ky.

There's no doubting the origin of the ingredients at a "Wheelbarrow to Table" dinner offered by this Louisville area cattle and vegetable farm, which brings in top chefs from the region. "It's in an old Kentucky farmhouse, a simple expression of locality and freshness," Jones says. 502-241-9674; foxhollow.com



Harley Farms

Pescadero, Calif.

This restored 1910 dairy farm produces award-winning goat cheeses and holds dinners year-round. A November five-course dinner in a restored Victorian hayloft offers barbecued Cornish game hens, lamb or skewers of fresh vegetables. 650-879-0480; harleyfarms.com

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