

A LITTLE DISH OF COMFORT

BY LAURA KINIRY /

Looking for a little repose from the still-struggling economy? Then eat up, because there's nothing like some good ole familiar comfort food to nostalgically recall the simpler (and more secure) times of childhood — and even the trendiest restaurants are catching on to this.



Clockwise from top: Fried green tomatoes at **Kent Rathbun's Blue Plate Kitchen**, **Jones**, and **Absinthe Brasserie & Bar**

Absinthe Brasserie & Bar *San Francisco*

True to her New York roots, executive chef (and former *Top Chef* contestant) Jamie Lauren's house-made hot dog is an instant classic: a mix of American Kobe beef, pork shoulder, and bacon served on a brioche hot dog bun topped with Guinness mustard, chili ketchup, and sauerkraut. \$12, www.absinthe.com

Artisanal Fromagerie Bistro & Wine Bar *New York City*

Still bustling after nearly a decade, this Midtown Manhattan Parisian-style bistro partially owes its success to its primary offering: cheese. Opt for a pot of bubbling Gouda and stout fondue with bread for dipping — the Petite is more than enough for two. \$24, www.artisanalbistro.com

Founding Farmers *Washington, D.C.*

Keeping in mind collective interests, Pennsylvania Avenue's farmhouse-inspired space sports reclaimed woods, communal tables, and a locally sourced menu of familial plates, including Southern panfried chicken served with waffles and a helping of macaroni and cheese. \$16, www.wearefoundingfarmers.com

Hash Restaurant *Los Angeles (Venice Beach)*

Former Gordon Ramsey chef Micah Fields's "twisted comfort food" menu meshes perfectly with this artsy eatery's beachfront surrounds. Craving a stress-free brunch? Relax at an outside table with an order

of Cap'n Crunch-stuffed brioche French toast (\$9.50), paired with a make-your-own Bloody Mary (\$11). www.jdvhotels.com/hotels/losangeles/erwin

Jones *Philadelphia*

This Stephen Starr creation boasts cushy booths, swivel seats, and retro-inspired decor, but it's executive chef Steven Petrecca's from-scratch menu that really hits home: chicken pot pie, deviled eggs, and meatloaf complete with whipped potatoes and buttered peas. \$15, www.jones-restaurant.com

Kent Rathbun's Blue Plate Kitchen *Dallas*

Southern comfort is the specialty at *Iron Chef America* winner Kent Rathbun's casual gathering place, where choices like polenta-crusted fried green tomatoes (\$11) and Dr. Pepper-mopped rotisserie chicken (\$16) add an innovative touch to Texas cuisine. The hands-on, knowledgeable staff also gives new meaning to Southern hospitality. www.kentrathbun.com

Urban Farmer *Portland, Oregon*

Situated off the eighth-floor lobby of downtown's luxury Nines Hotel, Portland's modern steak house brings new height to traditional dishes. For primo afternoon satisfaction, Chef Matt Christianson suggests the Wagyu barbecue brisket: six ounces of Texas beef slow-cooked in an heirloom-tomato and Moroccan-spiced rub, accompanied by house-made corn bread. \$16, www.urbanfarmerrestaurant.com

