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THOSE FAMOUS PHILLY FLAVORS—DELICIOUS AND DECIPHERED *A Guide To The Philadelphia Region's Legendary Foods*

PHILADELPHIA, March 27, 2019 – Philadelphia's signature flavor is a dynamic mix of traditional recipes, new culinary inventions, well-known treats and obscure dishes—specialties that are available all over the region, in corner stores and at fancy restaurants. Among the region's best-known foods are Italian water ice, Pennsylvania Dutch pretzels and the ever-popular cheesesteak. More local favorites include pork roll and scrapple, which are available here in the region and through services such as **Taste of Philadelphia**, one of many companies that ship Philly goodies across the United States.

Here are some of the sandwiches, snacks, meats and more that have left a lasting mark on the Pennsylvania palate:

Sandwiches:

- **Cheesesteaks** – Everyone agrees that the cheesesteak, invented by Pat Olivieri in 1930, requires thinly sliced beef and a crusty roll. But the choice of cheese—provolone, American or Cheez Whiz—is a matter of great debate. So too is the choice of where to get one. The decades-old feud between [Pat's King of Steaks](#) and its across-the-street rival [Geno's Steaks](#) draws thousands of visitors to South 9th Street and Passyunk Avenue for taste-offs. Local specialists [Dalessandro's Steaks and Hoagies](#), [John's Roast Pork](#), [Joe's Steak + Soda Shop](#), [Steve's Prince of Steaks](#), [Tony Luke's](#) and [Jim's Steaks](#) have their own legions of devoted fans. (Jim's Steaks goes so far as to ship steaks out of town.) High-end interpretations of the city's humble sandwich await at restaurants such as [The Continental Restaurant & Martini Bar](#) and its sibling [The Continental Mid-town](#), which serve cheesesteak eggrolls with a spicy Sriracha ketchup dip. [Bing Bing Dim Sum](#) stuffs traditional steamed bao buns with nontraditional chopped ribeye, onions and melted cheddar. Rittenhouse Square's [Barclay Prime](#) serves an opulent \$120 wagyu ribeye, truffle cheese and foie gras concoction that comes with a half-bottle of Champagne. For vegans and vegetarians, popular meatless variations on the classic sandwich come from [Blackbird Pizzeria](#), [Royal Tavern](#), [V Street](#) and [HipCityVeg](#), a Philly born fast casual chain.
 - **Hoagies** – The hoagie, Philly's answer to the sub or hero, can be traced back to South Philadelphia's European immigrant population. The sizeable sandwich comes stuffed with fresh meats, cheeses and veggies—or some combination of these ingredients. The quintessential Italian hoagie comes layered with cured ham and salami, cheese, oil, oregano, lettuce, tomato and more. The bread is critical too: Amoroso's and Sarcone's bakeries are among the most popular
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roll-makers in the city. One of the biggest local sandwich chains, **Lee's Hoagie House**, has built a small empire with its special house-spiced oil and expansive selection; **Primo Hoagies** is another brand with roots in the region. Other creative combinations await at **Campo's Deli** and **Tony Luke's**. New-school purveyor **Matt and Marie's** delivers a fresh take with choices such as the Italian Stallion, topped with coppa and salami, locally made Claudio's provolone, house-pickled peppers and pepperoncini aioli. In South Philly, still the spiritual home of the hoagie, loyalists swear by go-to shops like **Antonio's Deli**, **Ricci's Hoagies**, **Cosmi's Deli** and more. Sandwich progressives have been eating up **Middle Child's** tongue-in-cheek takes on the hoagie, such as a Vietnamese-inspired vegan Pho-agie and a classic Italian that's amped up with artichoke spread.

- **Roast Pork Sandwiches** – While it's not quite as well known as the cheesesteak or hoagie, the roast pork sandwich is nevertheless a regional delicacy born from Italian-American cookery. Meltingly tender, oven-roasted pork shoulder, usually shaved or chopped, gets layered with sharp provolone cheese and garlicky sautéed broccoli rabe. **John's Roast Pork**, **Tony Luke's**, **George's Sandwich Shop** and **DiNic's Roast Pork** all deliver classic renditions, as their long lines of customers can attest. South Philly's **Old Original Nick's** serves its roast pork thinly sliced, dipped in jus and piled onto a Kaiser roll. Old City's new-school **High Street on Market** adds fermented broccoli rabe and a homemade semolina roll. **Paesano's** has innovated the Arista with fiery long hot peppers and suckling pig meat. Newcomer **Vernick Coffee Bar** puts its slow-roasted porchetta and sharp provolone on a pressed Cuban bun, with a side of bright broccolini.

Meats:

- **Scrapple** – A mixture of pork, spices and cornmeal, scrapple is a crispy-fried breakfast meat native to the Pennsylvania Dutch (who, in fact, are German—or *Deutsch*—in origin). Today, scrapple can be found in all manner of venues—luxury hotels, greasy-spoon diners and countless local breakfast joints in between. The region's best known scrapple makers are **Godshall's Quality Meats**, **Habbersett** and **Hatfield**, though plenty of restaurants concoct their own versions in-house. Meat-centric **Kensington Quarters** and mid-century chic **Bud & Marilyn's**, for example, feature their house-made scrapples on their weekend brunch menus.
- **Pork Roll** – Popularized in the region during the 19th century, pork roll, also known as Taylor ham (after a well-loved brand name), is a bologna-like breakfast meat often served on a Kaiser roll with eggs and cheese. Originally from the Trenton, New Jersey area, but extremely popular in Philly, this Mid-Atlantic favorite rivals scrapple as the breakfast meat of choice for locals. It can be found in pretty much any area diner, but there are local versions too. **Hungry Pigeon** serves its pork roll from Country Time Farm in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, served with egg and cheese on a house-made English muffin. The **Northeast Sandwich Company** makes a pork roll hoagie with chopped Taylor ham, scrambled eggs, caramelized onions and American cheese sauce. East Passyunk vegan diner **The Tasty** takes on the specialty by way of the Dirty Jersey, a breakfast sandwich of “porky” roll, made with tofu “egg” and dairy-free cheese.

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Snacks:

- **Soft Pretzels** – Introduced to the region by German settlers centuries ago, pretzels have long been a favorite local snack. Philly’s signature variety is the soft pretzel, an everyday treat purchased from a street vendor, corner store or from a multi-location bakery such as the **Philly Pretzel Factory**. No matter what form the pretzel takes—braided, sticks, nuggets or even sandwich rolls—they always taste better with mustard. From 4 a.m. until noon, Washington Avenue wholesaler **Center City Pretzel Company** sells their fresh-baked twists from a walkup window.
- **Tastykake** – Visitors would be hard-pressed to find a Philadelphian who doesn’t have nice things to say about Butterscotch Krimpets or iced Chocolate Juniors. Tastykakes have been Philadelphia’s favorite convenience-store dessert for more than a century. Founded by a baker and an egg salesman in 1914, the **Tasty Baking Company** revolutionized the snack-cake industry with its individually wrapped fruit pies. The company’s headquarters at The Navy Yard spans 25 acres and features a LEED-certified bakery. Tastykakes can be ordered directly from the bakery or found in any local convenience store, such as the popular chain **Wawa**. Their latest creation: Scoop Shop mini doughnuts inspired by flavors of Philly’s own **Bassett’s Ice Cream**.
- **Water Ice** – While its name is somewhat confusing, water ice is a perfectly logical solution for those in need of relief on a hot Philadelphia summer day. Elsewhere known as Italian ice, the combination of fruit and/or syrup with finely shaved ice is a refreshing treat. **John’s Water Ice**, **Mancuso & Son** and **Rose’s Real Italian Water Ice** are just a few age-old favorites, while charming suburban options such as the **Yardley Ice House** amaze with an astounding variety of flavors. Sit-down restaurants even get in on the chilly fun: **Little Nonna’s** is known to serve blood orange basil, Concord grape or tomato water ice, depending on the time of year. Come warmer weather, mobile operation **D’Emilio’s Old World Ice Treats** makes weekly stops at farmers’ markets to vend water ice in exotic flavor, including coconut lemongrass and strawberry amaretto.
- **Goldenberg Peanut Chews** – The quintessential Philly confection, **Goldenberg Peanut Chews** are dense bars of nuts and sweet syrup enrobed in milk or dark chocolate. The candy bar is the 1890 invention of a Romanian immigrant named David Goldenberg. They’re now a mainstay of regional trick-or-treat bags and a sweet pick-me-up any day of the week.

Sending Philly Food Love:

- Those who can’t get to Philadelphia to experience these delicacies for themselves can have the city’s specialties shipped right to their door. **Campo’s Deli** sends cheesesteaks, hoagies, soft pretzels, Tastykakes, Herr’s Potato Chips and other Philly foods throughout the U.S. and to select international destinations. The **Pennsylvania General Store** in the historic Reading Terminal Market vends Pennsylvania-made Asher’s chocolate-covered pretzels, Anastasio Italian Market Reserve Coffee, Melrose Diner butter cookies straight from South Philly, Goldenberg’s Peanut Chews and lots more regionally made goodies, and gladly packages them into specialty gift baskets. National gourmet delivery service **Goldbelly** can deliver Jim’s Steaks right to the doors of homesick Philly friends and family—with free shipping. Since 1978, **Taste of Philadelphia** has been delivering hoagies, cheesesteaks, soft pretzels, Amoroso rolls, Taylor Pork Roll and Habbersett scrapple to Philly-philes across the U.S. and Canada.

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