



EXTRAORDINARY RECIPES FROM



# PITTSBURGH CHEF'S TABLE

LAURA ZORCH, SARAH SUDAR,  
AMANDA McFADDEN & JULIA GONGAWARE  
Photography by Cayla Zahoran

THE STEEL CITY





With three rivers, a thriving arts scene, and friendly folks who will hold the door open for you, Pittsburgh is easy to love. And it's just as easy to fall in love with the cuisine.

From comfort food, experimental food, ethnic food, and everything in between, chefs and restaurant owners are heightening the level of culinary offerings and making Pittsburgh the tastiest it has ever been.

With recipes for the home cook from over fifty of the city's most celebrated restaurants and showcasing over 200 full-color photos featuring mouth watering dishes, famous chefs, and lots of local flavor, *Pittsburgh Chef's Table* is the ultimate gift and keepsake cookbook for both tourists and locals alike.

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Editors: Kevin Sirois and Tracee Williams  
Project Editor: Lynn Zelem  
Text Design: Libby Kingsbury  
Layout Artist: Nancy Freeborn

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Restaurants and chefs often come and go, and menus are ever-changing. We recommend you call ahead to obtain current information before visiting any of the establishments in this book.



To Pittsburgh





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# Acknowledgments

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We also truly love the city of Pittsburgh. The levels of support we receive from 'Burghers would be unmatched if we were doing what we do in any other town. So, thank you, Pittsburgh. No one compares.

And, of course, this book obviously would not have been possible without the amazing Pittsburgh chefs and restaurant owners. You can't see or hear us right now, but we are giving you a standing ovation complete with catcalls. The work each one of you is doing in this city is applause worthy—and gosh darn it, we are applauding. You are putting Pittsburgh on the map as a place to eat. And a place to eat WELL. Thank you for talking with us, sharing with us, and feeding us.

Finally, a roll call of folks who help us to keep living the dream and keep balling so hard: Kevin Sirois, our editor and fellow mad baller; Tracee Williams, our new friend and coeditor; Cayla Zahoran, photographer extraordinaire; Tom McGraw, cocktail correspondent; Katy Zeglen, recipe tester and baker bud; Sally Turkovich Wright, recipe testing wiz; and Patrick Finan, Brandon Davis, Ben Siegel, David Horesh, Patrick Simons, and Sean Wrafter, our dapper Buffalo gents. Yinz are amazing!

Julia: For Bobby, my best friend, my partner in crime, and my little brother. Without you, life would be boring and I most likely would have starved to death by now. So thank you. For believing in me. And for being you. Seriously.

Amanda: High-five to my family and honorary family who continue to root for me, both in life and around the dinner table when they need someone to finish the last morsel of anything. And bear hugs to the friends who challenge me to be the best Mandy possible, push me forward when I just want to metaphorically lie down and take a nap (sometimes literally), and make me feel wonderful, so wonderful.

Sarah: To my family and friends, thank you for your constant love and support. Without you, I would be dining alone, quite often. To Julia, Laura, and Amanda, I can't believe we did it again! I truly love you gals, just like the three sisters I never had. To the chefs I've met along this journey, thank you for opening up your kitchens and your hearts, and sharing your stories and passion. You totally rock, and I'm glad to call you my new friends!

Laura: Many thanks to my parents for being the best. Really. I'm serious. The best. Going out to dinner would sometimes be impossible without the extra cash they hand me when I pass home—just like Monopoly. Plus, they are just fantastic people. So, thank you, Mom and Dad, for continually keeping my belly—and my heart—full.

# Introduction

Pittsburgh is easy to love.

It isn't sexy. No white sand beaches or glitterati. Just three rivers and folks who will hold the door open for you.

It isn't fancy. No \$100 million apartments or steak coated in gold leaf. Just abodes with solid views on firework night and grass-fed beef.

It is Pittsburgh. This charmer is a city behaving like a small town, with familiar faces at every turn. The co-worker: "Her father is my dentist." The neighbor: "His cousin sat behind me in eighth-grade homeroom." The bus driver: "We played deck hockey together last Tuesday." Pittsburgh is easy to love because you are always surrounded by friends or soon-to-be pals.

In recent years, this Pittsburgh love has spread. Media praise rains down on the 'Burgh, touting the city as the place to be, visit, live, work, play, and everything else in between. Visitors are shocked to see the city isn't covered in steely smoke (apparently these people only visit once every three decades) and that cool people live here not against their will. Technology happens here. Art thrives in neighborhoods. Let's just be real: Pittsburgh is so hot right now.

So what happened? How did we get here? Pittsburghers ask this question from time to time. The city was turned on its head when the steel industry crashed and burned.



Jobs were lost. Pittsburgh's identity as a titan of industry was lost. All hope, however, was not lost. The spirit of the people here is too strong to break. There was reevaluating and readjusting. It took time (decades). It took patience (plenty). And right now, even as the rebuilding continues, the city is bomb dot com.

The culinary landscape helps to bolster Pittsburgh's new image. Restaurants are sprouting and blossoming, reenergizing neighborhoods and palates. Pittsburgh is no longer a one-sandwich town. Neighborhoods like East Liberty, Downtown, Lawrenceville, and Highland Park are now dining destinations. National spotlights, from *Bon Appétit* to the James Beard Foundation, are shining on the kitchens. Pittsburgh is cooking, quite literally and figuratively.

Remember how we said everyone knows everyone in the 'Burgh? This remains a constant in the Pittsburgh chef community. The love and respect shared is palpable. While competition is a fact of life, the chefs choose to celebrate the successes of others and offer support in any way possible.

As we started our research, we did not anticipate learning about this communal pride of the chefs nested amongst the three rivers. We would often get the question during chef interviews: "So is [insert any number of names here] going to be included in your book? Because he [or she] is doing amazing work." What's more, the large majority of folk represented in the pages herein are buddies, not just admirers of excellent work. Collaborations pop up, much to the delight of every taste bud in town, like Root 174's Keith Fuller churning out tacos on the PGH Taco Truck, and Cure's Justin Severino cooking up meals at Bar Marco during No Menu Mondays. Working together, the chefs



of Pittsburgh's finest food destinations are heightening the level of culinary offerings in the city and making Pittsburgh the tastiest it has ever been. And it is only the beginning. Change is happening. Right here and right now.

"I'm getting goose bumps," observed Chef Brian Pekarick of Spoon as he summarized the culinary scene. "Being a Pittsburgh native, it's so refreshing to be a part of this organic culture that is being created within the restaurant community."

So what's for dinner in the 'Burgh? All things: Comfort food. Experimental food. Ethnic food. And, across the board: fresh food. Pittsburgh chefs are loving up on the farm-to-table movement, sourcing local produce and meats at every possible chance. Being geographically surrounded by farmland certainly doesn't hurt this quest.

We love the farm-to-table concept—who doesn't want to know where their food is from? We do, sure, but we really want to know who is creating the fare that makes Pittsburgh taste great. So allow us to usher in the new trend in dining (drum roll please): friend-to-table.

On the pages that follow, we will introduce you to over eighty of the finest chefs and restaurateurs in the city, from fifty different restaurants. The men and women interviewed, who raved about one another and praised this fair city, are all different kinds of awesome. These are folks you should know. They are magicians in the kitchen and community revitalizers. They are a group with outsize hearts and big dreams. They shared their stories with us, so now we can share them with you. The history, the inspiration, and the perspiration are spelled out so we might all gain a greater appreciation for the hands crafting delicious dish after delicious dish. They even share some kitchen secrets and recipes you can try at home.

So continue on, dear reader, and meet your new friends.

The chef: "That's my bud."

## How to Use This Book Like a Champ

"Hi friend! We want you to make the best use of this book!" Who are "we"? We are eatPGH: Julia Gongaware, Amanda McFadden, Sarah Sudar, and Laura Zorch. We love to eat and eat well. If at any point you have a question about a restaurant or recipe featured in this tome, look us up at [eatPGH.com](http://eatPGH.com), and we can help you out. We love to talk and talk to you.

We have been dining out in Pittsburgh and writing about it since 2009. So we know what is up. We talked to fifty of the hottest dining establishments in the 'Burgh—at the moment—and got the inside scoop, just for you.

Our friends took time out of their crazy schedules to chat about the who, what, when, where, and why of opening a restaurant, cheffing it up, and being pillars in the community. The best part? They also provided a recipe, or two or three, for you to try at home. These recipes best exemplify the hard work of each chef and restaurateur. A nice mix of recipes—from easy-to-prepare to "what is happening here?!" difficulty levels—are presented after each restaurant's introduction. The recipes provided also represent a variety of courses including appetizers, entrees, desserts, and cocktails.

If you have been searching for a way to impress your friends, now is the time to host a dinner party and make some mackerel (Fukuda's Saba with Grilled Cucumber Foam & Pickled Apple Fluid Gel on page 88) served with a fancy pants drink (Franktuary's Ginzer on page 82), or some other delectable combination.

Since we bet you aren't planning on feeding dozens or hundreds of folk, all of the recipes have been scaled down for home preparation. Most recipes will feed four to eight people. Cocktail recipes are for one. All of this information is spelled out before each recipe, so take note before you start cooking.

Make sure to enjoy your kitchen experiments. And remember, you can always make a reservation.

Happy eating!

## STEEL CITY



So what's the deal with steel? Pittsburgh's nickname, "The Steel City," was coined because the steel industry was the main economic driver of the 'Burgh for decades. Pittsburgh was built on steel, but the mills are now long gone. The smoky skies have cleared. While physical evidence of this industrial past has vanished, Pittsburgh continues to be proud of its hardworking, rugged past. Want more information about Pittsburgh's steel heritage? Visit Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, [riversofsteel.com](http://riversofsteel.com).



TUESDAY SATURDAY

10-17  
HAPPY HOUR

5-7

2 PONY 1/2  
BOTTLES  
MILLER LITE - 1/2  
TUMBLER - 1/2

WINE

Bottle 30 Glass 9  
WHITE Red

ALABAMA WINE  
CASTAL ESTATE  
TRUST WINE  
EMMA VALLEY  
CROCKET W

---

# 1947 TAVERN

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5744½ ELLSWORTH AVENUE  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15232  
(412) 363-1947  
1947TAVERN.COM

CHEF: SHAWN BAIN

BAR MANAGER: WES SHONK

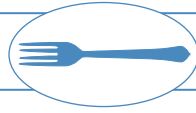
It started with a toaster. But not just any toaster. A broken toaster. You see, 1947 Tavern's bar manager, Wes Shonk, couldn't own a toaster for longer than two years before it would break. He was frustrated by this simple device that was destined to malfunction. "Why would you design something to break?" he muses. "I found my passion standing over that last broken toaster. I realized I want to produce an incredible product."

Enter 1947 Tavern. The bar and restaurant specializes in classic craft cocktails and American comfort food. "We want to do things the right way," Wes says. "We don't want to cut any corners." The bar menu features traditional drinks like the Sazerac and a long list of over fifty bourbons. Wes has spent countless hours perfecting each sip and keeping on mission to respect bartending's illustrious past.

Chef Shawn Bain thankfully has better luck than Wes with kitchen devices. His foray into his culinary career began with some interesting concoctions from grandma. "I would spend a lot of time with my grandma as a kid," Shawn reminisces. "She would give us cereal dipped in butter." This odd combo, while not exactly tasty, was comforting. You won't find cereal and butter on the 1947 menu, but you will find other dishes to fill your heart and stomach. Favorites include the macaroni and cheese with short ribs and the turkey potpie.

1947 Tavern is named for the year in which its sister restaurant, The Elbow Room, opened its doors. This historical mindfulness echoes throughout the restaurant from those time-honored cocktails to the old-timey tavern atmosphere. Because, in the end, if it isn't broke, don't fix it. And if it is broke, it is probably Wes's toaster.





## MAPLE SPICED NUTS

MAKES 8 CUPS

For the mixed nuts, anything works, but Shawn usually uses almonds, cashews, peanuts, and Brazil nuts.

- 1 ounce (¼ stick) unsalted butter**
- 8 cups mixed nuts**
- ½ tablespoon cayenne pepper**
- ½ tablespoon chili powder**
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¾ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- 2 cups maple syrup**

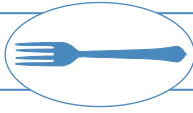
Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 x 13-inch pan.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the mixed nuts and sauté for 5 minutes.

Add cayenne pepper, chili powder, salt, ginger, paprika, and pepper into the pan. Turn the heat to high and continue to sauté until you can smell the spices cooking (about 4 to 5 minutes). Add the maple syrup, stirring to make sure all of the nuts are coated. Keep the heat on high, stirring occasionally. The nuts will become hard to stir as the syrup is heated. When this happens, pour the nuts onto the greased pan and spread them out in an even layer. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes, until the nuts are golden brown. Check the nuts frequently; there is a fine line between done and burnt!

Let the nuts cool, then enjoy.





## MAPLE WHISKEY SOUR

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

For the perfect party pairing for your spiced nuts, try a Maple Whiskey Sour. Impress your friends with this tasty twist on a classic cocktail.

2 ounces bourbon (Old Grand Dad  
Bonded Bourbon preferred)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce pure maple syrup  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce orange juice  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce lemon juice  
1 egg white (optional)  
Ice  
Orange slice, for garnish

Pour all of the ingredients (except the orange slice) into a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake furiously. Strain into a rocks glass over ice. Garnish with an orange slice.





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# ALLA FAMIGLIA

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804 EAST WARRINGTON AVENUE  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15210  
(412) 488-1440  
ALLAFAMIGLIA.COM

CHEF/OWNER: JONATHAN VLASIC  
SOUS CHEF: MARK McMANUS

Growing up, Jonathan Vlasic had the privilege of eating some of the best food of his life: simple, Italian cuisine prepared by his grandparents, mother, and four aunts. Today his family has not only influenced the flavors of his menu at Alla Famiglia but also his attitude as a chef. “My family would never think of not making everything and anything from scratch,” says Jonathan. “Here, we make everything. We have to, or it isn’t our food.”

After seventeen years of experience working in kitchens and a brief stint as a demonstration chef for a food purveyor company, Jonathan purchased Alla Famiglia in 2005 from the previous owner, David Ayn, of Davio in Beechview. Jonathan says he and his predecessor have many things in common: they are both Italian, both formally trained as chefs, and both lifers. “I’m going to be ninety years old and still doing this, just like him.”

The menu changes daily, featuring twelve items every night. Proteins such as goat, lamb, boar, fish, and veal are on constant rotation to keep things interesting and keep customers coming back for more. And come back they do for the softball-size mozzarella-cheese-stuffed meatball appetizer and the salt, pepper, and olive oil pasta tossed and served tableside in a cheese wheel. Yes, a wheel of cheese. Jonathan says that even if a customer favorite isn’t on the menu, he can probably make it and about thirty other staples that regulars have come to know and love.

Before Jonathan, Alla Famiglia was a five-table restaurant serving great Italian food. With Jonathan and his team in the kitchen, the restaurant is still doing just that, but with more tables, a cocktail lounge, and an outside patio. And on the horizon, Jonathan is looking to expand Alla Famiglia even more—into the space next door—and make it “one of the best restaurants this city has ever seen.”

*Benvenuti Alla Famiglia*

*Mio padre mi ha insegnato le cose che io insegno ai miei figli;  
onore, rispetto, tradizione—cento anni alla famiglia!*

“My father teaches me lessons I teach my family;  
honor, respect, tradition—100 years to the family!”

—Alla Famiglia proverb