



T H E W I N N E R S

RH's **BEST** **SANDWICHES** >> **IN AMERICA** CONTEST

ON THE **BEST SANDWICHES** entry form, the editors of **RESTAURANT HOSPITALITY** confessed our undying love for sandwiches. And from the overall response we got back, you may love them as much as we do. Hundreds of best sandwich entries poured in, and one thing has become quite clear: sandwiches in America have never been more interesting and creative.

Many of them resemble in a small way the sandwiches our parents and grandparents enjoyed. But, man, have you really jacked them up. Smart, clever touches and ingredients have elevated standard, even classic sandwiches, to another level entirely.

Originally, we had created eight sandwich categories to judge. But so many interesting entries were submitted, we expanded the

categories to 12. That should be good news for all because we're naming 12 Best Sandwich Contest winners and two honorable mentions in each category. And what's up with you, Los Angeles? Based on the number of entries and the results of this competition, L.A. is not taking a back seat to any sandwich-loving city.

We could talk all day about the rise of the "better sandwich segment" and bury you with facts and figures about how important sandwiches are to your bottom line, but we chose instead to show you exactly the types of sandwich that will make you a hero in your hometown. So without further ado, we present the winners of the Best Sandwiches in America Contest.— *The Editors*

B U R G E R S

W I N N E R

Farm-to-Table Wagyu Burger

Restaurant: Kahill's Steak-Fish Chophouse
South Sioux City, NE

Sandwich Creator: Chef Ryan Devitt

Inspiration: "This sandwich was inspired by the Midwest, which has the best farmland, the best beef and the best vegetables available."

Key Ingredients: Morgan Ranch Wagyu topped with sarsaparilla-seared local pork belly, Gruyere cheese, house bearnaise, a farm-fresh egg and house-made brioche. The sandwich is balanced on matchstick fries in a pool of veal demi-glace.

Price: \$16

Food Cost: 35 percent

What the Judges Said: "Not only is this a farm to fork sandwich, it's also a knife and fork sandwich. The house bearnaise, the duck egg and the veal demi-glace make this decadent sandwich a beautifully delicious mess. The wagyu had us at hello, but then the pork belly came walking through the door. The result was an irresistible



ménage a trois with us in the middle. We're in love."

Honorable mentions

★ **The Juicy Burkey** by Chef David Burke for Bloomingdale's in New York City

★ **Number One** by Chef Tim Goodell for 25 Degrees in Hollywood, CA

B R E A K F A S T

W I N N E R

Scrambled Egg & Chorizo Sandwich

Restaurant: The Sycamore Kitchen, Los Angeles

Sandwich Creators: Chef/owners Karen and Quinn Hatfield

Inspiration: The couple wanted to create a sandwich staple beyond the norm using house-made ingredients.

Key Ingredients: Scrambled eggs, Swiss cheese, chorizo and house-made bread.

Why It's Special: The perfectly scrambled eggs with hearty chorizo in house-made French-style pan de mie make this a breakfast sandwich that's a step above.

Price: \$10

Food Cost: \$1.97

Awards: Zagat named it one of the "10 Must-Try Breakfast Sandwiches in L.A."

What the Judges Said: "Sandwiches, by their very nature, invite an excess of ingredients. This egg and chorizo sandwich has basically three fillings and they combine into a simply perfect concoction that announces, 'Throw your best at me, Interstate 405, I just had the Hatfields' scrambled egg sandwich and you can't ruin my day!'"

Honorable Mentions

★ **The BaaadAss Breakfast Sandwich** by Melissa Rosen and Greg Horos of Locali Conscious Convenience in Los Angeles

★ **The Breakfast Sandwich** by Chef Michael Leviton of Area Four in Boston



DYLAN + JENI

CHICKEN

WINNER

Wood-Fired Rotisserie Chicken Sandwich

Restaurant: The Parish, Los Angeles

Sandwich Creator: Chef/owner Casey Lane

Inspiration: This sandwich was inspired by Britain's rich Indian culture while showcasing England's gastropub culture.

Key Ingredients: Wood-fired rotisserie chicken, house-made paneer cheese, avocado, romesco aioli and a runny, fried egg.

Why it's Special: Lane cooks the chicken on the restaurant's wood-fired grill from Tuscany and pairs it with an amalgamation of British, Indian and California flavors.

Price: \$11

Food Cost: \$6

What the Judges Said: "We've not tasted anything quite like this chicken sandwich and we were transported. Pairing Indian paneer with Spanish romesco and giving it a British accent took us around the world, and the flight cost us a measly 11 bucks. The addition of a fried egg may be gilding the lily to



some, but it made us feel like we were flying in first class with our tray tables down and our seat backs fully reclined. I'll have another, stewardess!"

Honorable Mentions

★ **The Hen House** by Mary Nguyen Aragoni of Saigon Sisters in Washington, DC

★ **Grilled Chicken Ciabatta** by Chef Bo Palker of Vinifera Wine Bar & Bistro in Reston VA



WRAPS

WINNER

Beef Tsukune Slider

Restaurant: Sumi Robata Bar, Chicago

Sandwich Creator: Chef Gene Kato

Inspiration: The beef tsukune is a playful interpretation of two culinary staples—the Japanese dumpling dish and an all-American hot dog.

Key Ingredients: Ground wagyu beef, Japanese seven spice, grated onion and house-made bao bun.

Price: \$4

Food Cost: 20 percent

What Others Said: "The three-bite dish features a beef sausage shaped like a miniature hot dog, wrapped in a soft bao and finished with a stripe of Japanese mustard. It's far and away the best slider being served in Chicago right now, in no small part because it doesn't look or taste like a slider at all."—*Time Out Chicago*

What the Judges Said: "It doesn't look or taste like a slider because, in our opinion, it ain't no stinking slider. But it is one hell of a wrap that's both creative and reminiscent of a Wisconsin bratwurst. It's a perfect little package that made us consider putting on some lederhosen and heading to a Kung Fu movie festival. It was an urge we resisted. But the wrap? It's pretty damn irresistible."

Honorable Mentions

★ **Falafel Wrap** by owner Gus Karalekas for Sanford's Restaurant in Queens, NY

★ **Pie Wood-Fired Pizini** by Linda Becher of Pi Wood-Fired Pizza, Rochester, MN

PORK

WINNER

The Yandawich

Restaurant: Ryleigh's Oyster, Baltimore

Sandwich Creator: Chef Patrick Morrow

Inspiration: The sandwich was named for Marshal Yanda, the 315-pound offensive guard of the Ravens. Yanda is a beloved regular at Ryleigh's.

Key Ingredients: Yanda is from Iowa, where a pork tenderloin and pickle sandwich is a favorite treat. Ryleigh's version replaces the pickle on the sandwich with a corn and poached Chesapeake Bay oyster salad for a distinctly Maryland touch. And since Yanda loves Guinness stout, a Guinness stout mustard is applied to the bread.



Price: \$11

Food Cost: \$4

What Others Said: "It's the hottest bite in town."—CBS Baltimore/WJZ

What the Judges Said: The folks at Ryleigh's are a smart bunch. They named one of their sandwiches after a Super Bowl hero and then made it big enough to intimidate a 315-pound bruiser. Maintaining its seafood focus with a poached oyster dressing was also very clever. Eating a sandwich like this won't likely get you a Superbowl ring, but it will make you unbuckle your pants while watching the big game on the telly.

Honorable Mentions

★ **Grilled Berkshire Pork Belly & Applewood-Smoked Bacon BLT** by Chef Steve Redzikowski of OAK at Fourteenth in Boulder, CO

★ **The Little Piggy** by Chef Edward Sylvia of Certé in New York City

VEGETARIAN

WINNER

Crispy Eggplant

Restaurant: Pain D'Avignon, Hyannis, MA

Sandwich Creator: Chef Matthew Tropeano

Inspiration: To offer a sandwich that far exceeds the expectations of a vegetarian.

Key Ingredients: Fresh eggplant, creamy Maplebrook Farms burrata, roasted garlic white bean hummus, roasted red peppers and house-baked rosemary pocket bread.

Price: \$8.50

Food Cost: \$5

What the Judges Said: "In the vegetarian category, many submitted sandwiches featuring one or two of the ingredients found in this winner, but Pain D'Avignon harmoniously combined several top-notch ingredients and then cradled them in house-made bread. It was the creamy white addition of burrata that made the angels sing. We imagined John Lennon and Yoko Ono eating this sandwich during their 1969 bed-in and it made us want to give peace a chance. That's all we are saying."



Honorable Mentions

★ **Chopped Chickpeas** by Sisha Ortuzar, 'Wichcraft, New York City

★ **Hippie Sandwich** by Brian Bullock of STATS Food & Drink, Atlanta

TURKEY

WINNER

Turkey Melt Sandwich

Restaurant: Greenleaf Gourmet Chopshop, Los Angeles

Sandwich Creators: Owner Jonathan Rollo & Executive Chef Kristi Ritchey

Inspiration: "Let's face it," says Rollo, "sometimes there's nothing better than a warm pretzel with mustard and this turns it into a seemingly decadent sandwich without being destructive to your gut."

Key Ingredients: Turkey, melted Gruyere cheese, sautéed spinach with truffle oil, caramelized onion and whole grain mustard served on Dolce Forno Bakery's pretzel bread.

Price: \$9.95

Food Cost: \$3

What the Judges Said: "For us, the turkey sandwiches our mothers made us were the equivalent of putting on sweatpants and giving up. It gave us nothing to live for. But Greenleaf has produced a turkey sandwich that makes you want to put on some big-boy pants and leave the house. It's a sandwich that demonstrates just how exciting this protein can be. And the truffle oil-kissed sautéed spinach and pretzel bread that accompany it had us cancel our therapist appointments. Hell, we may even go work out now!"

Honorable Mentions

★ **Roasted Turkey** by Sisha Ortuzar at 'Wichcraft, New York City (see honorable mention Vegetarian).

★ **Baja Turkey Jack** by Lisa Odom of Nature's Table, Orlando



SUBMARINE

WINNER

The Hog

Restaurant: Soda & Swine, San Diego

Sandwich Creator: Corporate Chef Jason McLeod

Inspiration: McLeod's menu features a classic American staple—meatballs—which one can order round or “smashed.” The meat is ground in an old-fashioned butcher shop setting and the sandwich is designed “with the simplicity of Main Street America” in mind.

Key Ingredients: Chorizo, brisket and pork butt with chipotle barbecue sauce and shredded mozzarella.

Price: \$7

Food Cost: \$2.19

What the Judges Said: “Meatball sandwiches have been all the rage the last few years, perhaps because their pure simplicity does not confuse those who wear wife-beaters and gold chains. And Soda & Swine does not veer far from ‘keep it simple, stupid!’



But what makes its meatballs excel is the care and quality that goes into the grind of multiple, excellent-quality meats. And then it veers away from a traditional tomato sauce in favor of a barbecue sauce. It's the kind of sandwich that just may make you smarter after you've eaten one . . . or maybe not. Yo, Adrian!”

Honorable Mentions

★ **Famous Breaded Steak** by owner Sam Ricobene of Ricobene's in Chicago.

★ **Philly Cheesesteak** by Jose Andres of The Bazaar, Los Angeles



FISH

WINNER

Black and Bleu Tuna

Restaurant: Mr. Fish Seafood Restaurant, Myrtle Beach, SC

Sandwich Creator: Chef/co-owner Sheina Hammerman

Inspiration: The restaurant also features a seafood market where customers can buy an assortment of fresh, uncooked seafood. The sandwich represents the possibilities one can achieve with the product.

Key Ingredients: An 8-ounce fresh, seasoned tuna steak cooked to the preferred temperature of the customer, topped with melted bleu cheese and house-made remoulade, as well as house-made blackberry wasabi sauce. It's served on a fresh roll with spinach, tomato and lemon.

Price: \$10

Food Cost: \$2.12

What Others Have Said: The Black and Bleu Tuna was featured as the Sandwich of the Week at thedaily meal.com.

What the Judges Said: “It's not often you see a sandwich prepared using fresh tuna that is cooked to temperature. And some might argue that it would be a shame to mess with its purity, but those know-it-alls have not likely eaten a fresh tuna sandwich with blackberry wasabi. It's evil-genius good and worth a ransom of one million dollars!”

Honorable Mentions

★ **Salmon Croque Monsieur** by Francois Payard at FP Patisserie, New York City

★ **Dungeness Crab Huarache** by executive chef Chris Mortenson of La Condesa Napa Valley, Saint Helena, CA

LOBSTER ROLL

WINNER

Lobster Roll

Restaurant: Hinoki & the Bird, Los Angeles

Sandwich Creator: Chef/owner David Myers

Inspiration: After traveling throughout Asia, this sandwich is a twist on one of Myers' favorite classics, the New England lobster roll, but with the addition of green curry and Thai basil.

Key Ingredients: Lobster, green curry aioli and Thai basil on Japanese charcoal bread.

Price: \$19

Food Cost: \$8.99



What Others Said: “The lobster roll, its meat tinted with green curry and cradled in a jet-black roll colored by charcoal powder, is easily the most visually stunning version in town, never mind one of the most delicious.”

—Garret Snyder, *Tasting Table LA*.

What the Judges Said: “We almost disqualified this lobster roll thinking the ingredients were stuffed in a hollowed-out avocado. What's with that, Myers? But once we realized the container was in fact a roll blackened with Japanese charcoal (what?), we were intrigued, even a little confused, but not convinced. The idea of black bread does mess with your mind, but not with your taste buds. Myers has created an astonishing, mind-blowing version of an old classic. We want what he's smoking!”

Honorable Mentions

★ **Maine Lobster Salad Taco** by former chef Stephen Dow for Murphy's on the Green in Hanover, NH

★ **JCT. Lobster Roll** by Ford Fry and Brian Horn for JCT. Kitchen & Bar in Atlanta

C H E E S E

W I N N E R***Crab-Grilled Cheese***

Restaurant: Restaurant R'evolution, New Orleans

Sandwich Creators: Chef/owners John Folse and Rick Tramonto

Inspiration: Adding some extra taste and oomph to a traditional grilled cheese sandwich.

Key Ingredients: Fresh local blue crab on brioche with grilled fontina, white cheddar and Gruyere cheeses.

Price: \$16

Food Cost: 29 percent

What the Judges Said: "Most times it's best not to tinker with a good thing, especially the gooey goodness of a grilled cheese sandwich. And while the use of three cheeses adds dimension to this creation, it's the addition of fresh crab that takes a traditional sandwich from Ford to Ferrari status. And at \$16, the toll on the road leading to R'evolution may be a bit steep, but one we'll gladly pay to ride in the fast lane."



Honorable Mentions

★ **Burrata Grilled Cheese** by chef/owner Jesse Schenker of Recette, New York City.

★ **Grilled Cheese** by chef Mike Ransom for Jasper's Corner Tap & Kitchen in San Francisco

D E L I

W I N N E R***Ham Blueberry***

Restaurant: P.I.E. Bake Shoppe, Charleston, SC

Sandwich Creator: Owner Paige Young

Inspiration: "We wanted to provide an alternative for a

delicious, yet creative sandwich that combines savory and sweet elements."

Key Ingredients: Ham, blueberry chutney, wasabi mustard, fig goat cheese, red onion and baby spinach on herbed focaccia bread.

Price: \$6.50

Food Cost: \$2.50

What the Judges Said: "We know this isn't your typical deli sandwich, which is exactly what intrigued us about this entry. There were plenty of great submissions for manly versions of corned beef, roast beef and meaty meat sandwiches that all deli-dwelling cave-men love. But here's a deli-style sandwich that appeals to those with a delicate appetite and to those who shave their knuckles every other day. Don't let the blueberry chutney fool you; the wasabi mustard provides a kick and savory balance. Still, we suggest you eat this sandwich with both pinky fingers pointing out."

Honorable Mentions

★ **Don Watson's Milk-Fed Lamb Sandwich** by chef Victor Scargle of Lucy Restaurant & Bar in Yountville, CA

★ **12-Hour Smoked Brisket Ruben** by line cook Andrew Graham of 3 Guys Basement BBQ in Hanover, NH 

