

Food Truck Heaven

If you haven't gotten a tasty meal or morsel from a food truck lately, you are in for a treat. The food truck industry is absolutely exploding. While the restaurant industry has shown steady 2% annual growth, the food truck sector has grown an impressive 7.9% annually for the past five years. There are at least 4,000 food trucks, most of them in large coastal cities and college towns.

Portland boasts the most food trucks of any city at 500, followed by Austin, Seattle and San Francisco. Many cities have places where food trucks converge on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Check your local event listings to see if there are any near you.

Just as YouTube has allowed regular people a new way to reach people and showcase their talents, food trucks have democratized access to interesting, diverse and delicious food.

In the past, if you wanted to go into the restaurant business, you needed to have a considerable amount of capital. The median cost to open a brick and mortar restaurant is \$275,000 plus monthly rent, and if you opt to own the building too, it goes up to \$425,000.

These prices made it practically impossible for most talented chefs to go into business for themselves, until the advent of the food truck revolution. Since it only takes about \$100,000 to start up a food truck business with no rent, just fuel and maintenance, more amazing chefs are able to bring their food creations to your taste buds.

Because food trucks are not tied to a fixed location, they are free to go where the people are, including local parks, concerts, sporting events and corporate office building areas. If you find a food truck that has food you crave, you can follow them on social media to find out where they will be next, kind of like a food truck groupie.

Food trucks that are really successful, of course need to have good tasting food. But beyond that, they offer something unique and unexpected. That is why many food trucks feature gourmet or ethnic foods that you might not be able to experience at a regular restaurant. Some of them emphasize fresh and sustainable ingredients as an added benefit.

Here are some of the most popular food trucks:

The Grilled Cheeserie, Nashville, TN – With two trucks around the Nashville area, the Grilled Cheeserie is owned by a Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef. She creates gourmet grilled cheese melts including one with buttermilk cheddar cheese and bacon and one with home-made pimento cheese cheddar, macaroni and bacon bits.

Customers can make their own combinations with different cheeses and breads, and can even choose vegan cheese.

The Taco Truck, Hoboken, NJ – The Taco Truck may sound basic, but it sells authentic Mexican street food including one with marinated pork, onion, cilantro and fresh green salsa and another with crispy avocado, black beans, sesame seeds, pickled onion and chipotle salsa.

Fukuburger Truck, Las Vegas, NV – This innovative food truck fuses West Coast burgers with Japanese flavors, including wasabi mayonnaise and pickled red ginger for a flavor explosion.

Luke's Lobster, New York, NY – You may not think of lobster as a kind of food you can get on the street until you experience Luke's Lobster. It sells lobster, crab and shrimp rolls, lobster grilled cheese and chilled lobster tail platters with cocktail sauce and butter.

Kogi BBQ, Los Angeles, CA – The owner of this food truck, Roy Choi, is considered to be the godfather of the food truck movement. A Korean-American trained at the Culinary Institute of America, he creates fusions of Korean and Mexican food. Some of his offerings include spicy pork tacos and kimchi quesadillas.

You probably have noticed yourself becoming hungry reading about some of the wonderful foods you can get at food trucks. This is really just the tip of the iceberg – food truck offerings cover food creations and combinations that are only limited by the chefs' imaginations. So get online to discover where you can experience local food truck cuisine for yourself!