

SEVEN SURPRISING BURGERS

Chefs are shaping all sorts of ingredients into burgers. Beef isn't going anywhere, but there are lots of other ways to get your patty fix.



BEST ASIAN TWIST
Leave it to meat maven Michael Landrum to make a delicious hybrid of a burger and the area's hot sandwich, Vietnamese *bánh mì*.



BEST TASTE OF GERMANY
Birch & Barley has a German beer hall in its DNA, so it's fitting that chef Kyle Bailey's burger is made of pork butt, pork fatback, and veal shoulder. Spiced with ginger and nutmeg, it's topped with Emmentaler cheese and house-made sauerkraut—and there are more than 500 beers to pair with it. **Birch & Barley**, 1337 14th St. NW; 202-567-2576; birchandbarley.com.



BEST IF YOU'RE WATCHING YOUR WEIGHT
The calorie-counting set should zero in on the ahimna option at BGR the Burger Joint. It includes a slab of fish whose sweet garnishes—grilled pineapple and teriyaki sauce—are offset by pickled-ginger shavings. **BGR the Burger Joint**, multiple areas; locations; bgrtheburgerjoint.com.



BEST TRIP TO GREECE
The menu at Liberty Tavern couldn't feel more American: There's a Maine lobster roll, a Pittsburgh Primanti Bros. sandwich, and that *Mad Men*-era favorite, beef stroganoff. But when it comes to the tasty lamb burger, chef Liam LaCivita looked to the Mediterranean: It's garnished with shaved fennel, oven-dried tomatoes, and goat cheese. **Liberty Tavern**, 3195 Wilson Blvd. Arlington; 703-465-9360; thalibertytavern.com.



BEST HANGOVER CURE
The secret to the fried-egg-topped bison burger at Cashion's Eat Place lies in its "come-back" sauce, a Mississippi-born condiment not unlike spicy Thousand Island dressing. The sandwich is available when a drinker would want it most: on the late-night menu (Friday and Saturday from midnight to 2 AM) and at Sunday brunch. **Cashion's Eat Place**, 1819 Columbia Rd. NW; 202-797-1819; cashionseatplace.com.



FIRST-RATE FISH BURGER
Chef Eric Ripert is renowned for his New York seafood palace, Le Bernardin, so it's no surprise that one of the best things at Westend Bistro, the casual DC restaurant he oversees, is a fish burger. The patty, made from ground and diced wild striped bass, is served on a brioche bun with slices of fennel and roasted tomato plus saffron aioli. **Westend Bistro**, 1190 22nd St. NW; 202-974-4900; westendbistrodc.com.



BEST VEGGIE OPTION
Veggie burgers get a bad rap—too sweet, too health-foody—and it's often deserved. Not so the version at the Woodmont Grill, which treats a black-bean-flecked patty like a regular burger, with mustard, shredded lettuce, and a sesame bun. It's had a cult following for years starting when the restaurant was known as Houston's. **Woodmont Grill**, 7715 Woodmont Ave. Bethesda; 301-656-9755; hillstone.com (click on Restaurants).



At Meridian Pint's tap tables, the "feel" is beer pick-and-choose.

At Meridian Pint's tap tables, you can pour your own.

Best Bars for Beer

TOPS FOR TAPS

Meridian Pint, 3400 11th St. NW; 202-588-1075; meridianpint.com
Meridian attracts mostly young patrons looking to sample American craft beers on draft. Skip the crowds at the bar and sit at one of the three ten-seat tap tables, where groups can pour their own pints—priced per ounce—from a rotating selection of kegs such as Scrimshaw Pilsner and DC Brau.

BEST BEER PAIRINGS

Birch & Barley, 1337 14th St. NW; 202-567-2576; birchandbarley.com
Beer sommelier Greg Engert matches chef Kyle Bailey's seasonal, six-course tasting menu with an array of food-friendly sips, from German bottles to pints of a rotating selection of five cask ales. The pairings—including the hard-to-find Paulus from Brouwerij Leroy in Belgium—are as fine as wine pairings at other places but half the price.

BEST ALFRESCO SIPPING

Little Miss Whiskey's Golden Dollar, 1104 H St., NE; no phone; littlemisswhiskey.com
The violet lanterns, wrought-iron benches, and lion-head fountain on Miss Whiskey's

back patio evoke the Big Easy, as does the vibe. The crowd is as eclectic as the 60-deep list of microbrews. You can wash down fare such as shrimp po' boys from the outdoor grill on weekend nights.

BEST BREWERY TOUR

Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria; 703-797-2739; portcitybrewing.com
Owner Bill Butcher leads groups through Alexandria's first production brewery since Prohibition. The Saturday tours are a bargain: Five dollars gets a taste of each of Port City's four brews, a glass, and a spin around the facility with a knowledgeable guide.

RAREST FINDS

Birreria Paradiso, 3282 M St., NW; 202-337-1245; eatyourpizza.com
Greg Jasgur—"beer bootlegger" at this bar below Pizzeria Paradiso's Georgetown location—is known for working directly with producers such as Captain Lawrence Brewing Company of Pleasantville, New York, to obtain sought-after suds that aren't imported by DC wholesalers. He sometimes rents a truck to haul back his finds—such as Three Flavours Pride & Joy, one of his favorites—for Piz-

zeria Paradiso restaurants in Georgetown and Dupont Circle. (There's another location in Old Town, but Virginia allows beer to be imported only through a wholesaler.)

GREAT BEER AND PIZZA

Lost Dog Cafe, 5876 Washington Blvd., Arlington; 703-237-1552; 2920 Columbia Pike, Arlington; 703-553-7770; 1690-A Anderson Rd., McLean; 703-356-5678; lostdogcafe.com
Part deli, part pizzeria, and part fundraiser for the Lost Dog & Cat Rescue Foundation, each of these family-friendly eateries stocks more than 200 varieties of beer. The list ranges from accessible favorites such as Dogfish Head 60 Minute IPA to rarer brews such as Ballast Point Sculpin drafts.

BEER LOVERS' DIVE

Quarry House Tavern, 8401 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring; 301-587-8350; quarryhousetavern.com
Quirky dive bars often offer generic beers, but not so this subterranean Silver Spring hideout. Yes, two-buck Natty Boh is an option, but connoisseurs can pick from a list of 300 brews and prime draft including Flying Dog Simcoe Single Hop Imperial IPA.