

## Celebrate National Soul Food Month With A Visit To One Of These Amazing Restaurants



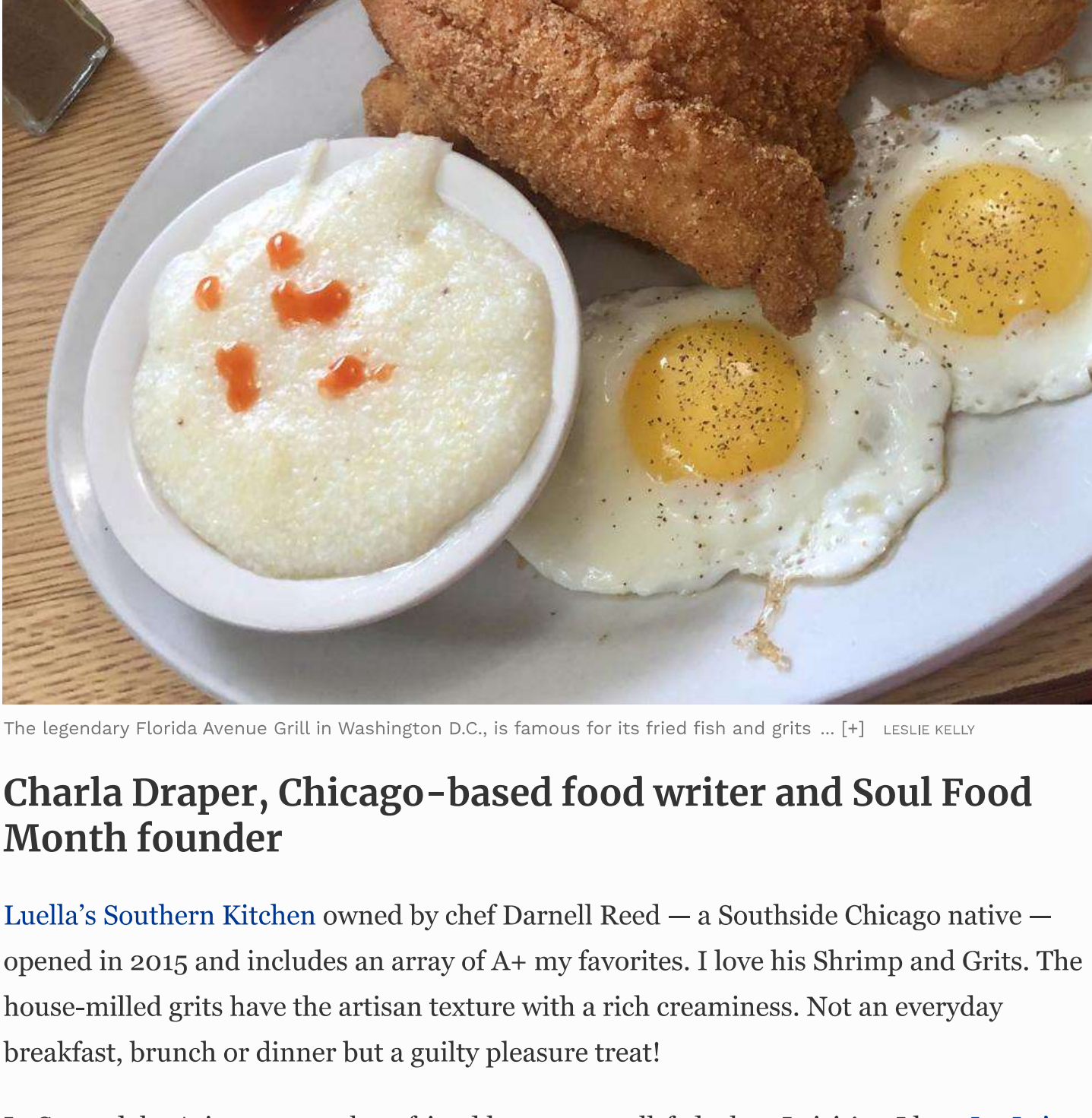
**Leslie Kelly** Contributor

Dining

*I write about food and travel while roaming around the U.S. in my RV*

We asked a few tastemakers to share their favorite soul food spots across the country to mark the 20th anniversary of this delicious [monthlong celebration](#) of the heritage and history of the foods and foodways of African Americans. “The culinary contributions of this group had an indelible impact on the American menu,” reads the official declaration.

Fair warning: These mouthwatering descriptions will probably make you very hungry.



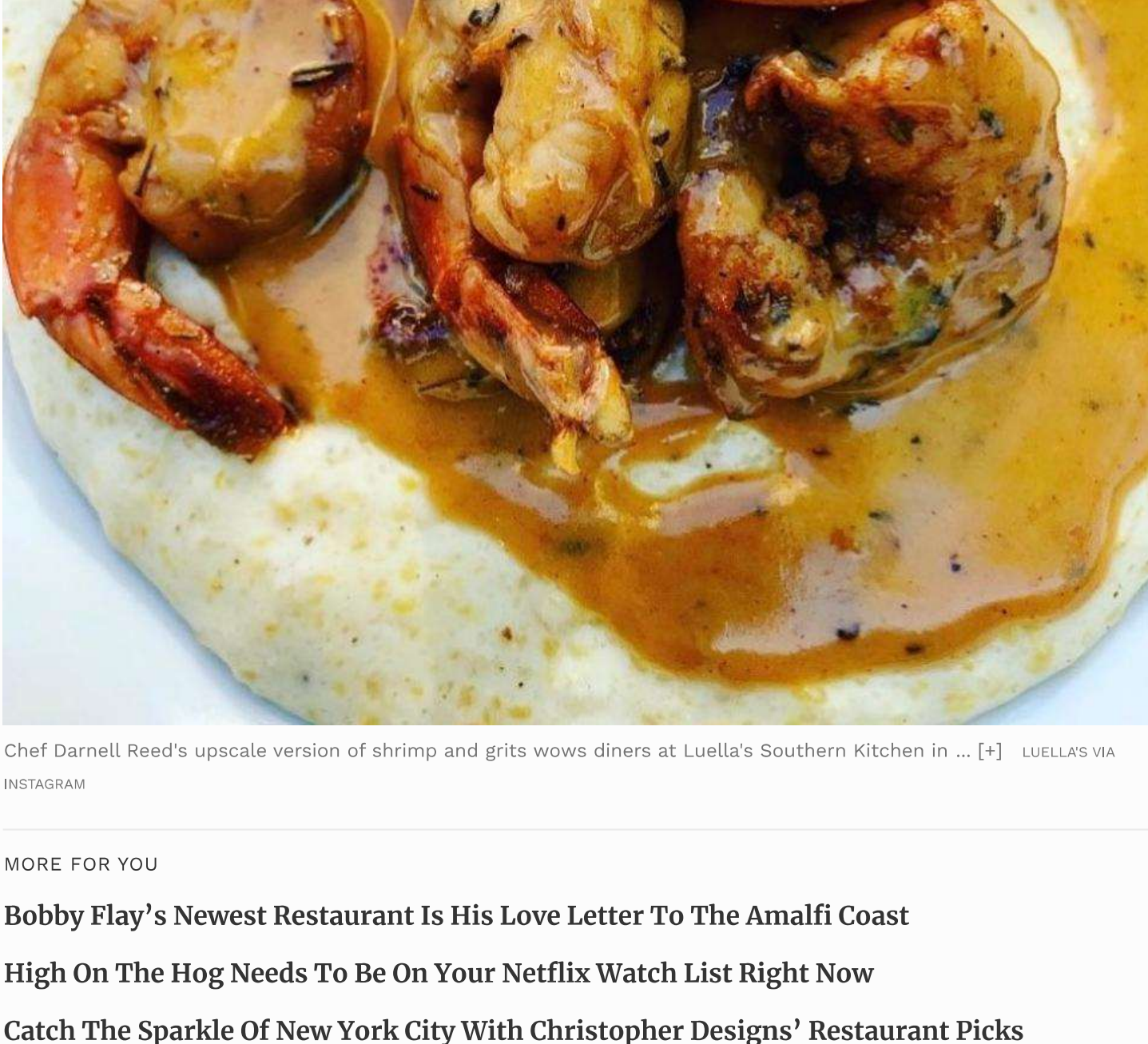
The legendary Florida Avenue Grill in Washington D.C., is famous for its fried fish and grits ... [+] LESLIE KELLY

### Charla Draper, Chicago-based food writer and Soul Food Month founder

[Luella's Southern Kitchen](#) owned by chef Darnell Reed — a Southside Chicago native — opened in 2015 and includes an array of A+ my favorites. I love his Shrimp and Grits. The house-milled grits have the artisan texture with a rich creaminess. Not an everyday breakfast, brunch or dinner but a guilty pleasure treat!

In Scottsdale, Arizona — my best friend keeps me well-fed when I visit! — I love [Lo-Lo's Chicken and Waffles](#). Don't let the name fool you, the menu includes tons of soul food favorites. My go-to choice is the chicken and waffles—dark meat chicken and fluffy waffles topped with maple syrup. They have fab service and staff that will let you know if you need to choose vegetarian or roast chicken, they will work with you.

At [Sugar Jam](#), I always order the catfish po' boy. If I see fried catfish on the menu, that pretty much sums up my choice. The crisp golden coating opens to a perfectly, cooked flavorful fish. It is served in French roll layered with tomato, romaine lettuce, and chipotle tartar remoulade sauce. The apple slaw is thumbs up, too! They also have a Shrimp Po'boy that is just as good!



Chef Darnell Reed's upscale version of shrimp and grits wows diners at Luella's Southern Kitchen in ... [+] LUELLAS VIA INSTAGRAM

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### Adrian Miller, Denver-based award-winning author who is known as the Soul Food Scholar

Fried chicken and key lime cake at [Busy Bee Cafe](#) in Atlanta.

Jamaican jerk ribs and a Beetarita (a frozen beet margarita) at [Hoover's Cooking](#) in Austin.

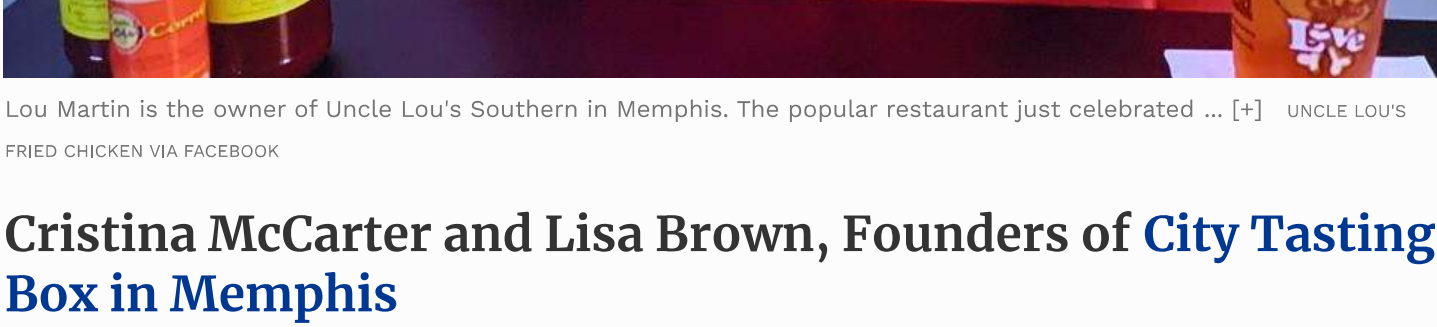
Salmon croquettes, fried fish and grits at [Florida Avenue Grill](#) in Washington D.C.

He's also a big fan of these soul food restaurants:

- [Deborah's Kitchen](#) in Philadelphia
- [Dulan's Soul Food Kitchen](#) in Los Angeles
- [Kleer-Vu Lunchroom](#) in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

- [Masada Cafe](#) at United House of Prayer for all People in Savannah, Georgia
- [The Seasoned Vegan](#) in New York City's Harlem neighborhood

**Also: Don't miss Miller's appearance on episode 3 of [High on the Hog on Netflix](#)**



Lou Martin is the owner of Uncle Lou's Southern in Memphis. The popular restaurant just celebrated ... [+] UNCLE LOU'S FRIED CHICKEN VIA FACEBOOK

### Cristina McCarter and Lisa Brown, Founders of City Tasting Box in Memphis

**Cristina:** There's a reason soul food is here to stay. It's the all-in-one that can be found all over the world. For some it's ramen or spaghetti, but for me it's fried chicken. Some of the best fried chicken I've ever had came from places like [Uncle Lou's Southern Kitchen](#) and Chef Tam's Underground Cafe. The best part is soul food doesn't have to stop there, we can add macaroni and cheese with a side of greens and it takes you to the heavenly place called Food Coma. It can also be reimagined. Places like [Trap Fusion](#) make it fun again! Soul food has been there for me during grief, joy, love and happiness. It's truly the best and Memphis has the best.

**Lisa:** Soul Food is my absolute favorite! Growing up in Memphis, I always identified soul food as the best African-American cuisine. It was the 10-dish Sunday dinner with my family, the food truck at the corner smoking the best pulled pork and ribs you've ever tasted, and my uncle's world-class fried fish and spaghetti.

We have an endless supply of world-class soul food in Memphis, so it's hard to narrow it down. [Chef Tam's Underground Cafe](#) is easily one of my favorites. First, you have to understand Chef Tam is cooking all day, everyday. She's probably cooking right now. Her recipes are insane. She takes classic, timeless soul food recipes and flips them. She's bold and daring in the kitchen. And I appreciate that. Her fried catfish, mac-n-cheese, greens, and fried chicken are worth the wait.

The [Four Way Soul Food Restaurant](#) is another favorite. As a staple to the community, they have been in South Memphis on Mississippi Boulevard at the corner of Walker Avenue for over 70 years, serving some of the best meals and dishes with love and laughter. It's a Memphis gem. When I'm there, I order turkey and dressing, green beans, fried catfish, macaroni and cheese, and a cornbread muffin. Don't judge me, LOL!

Another spot I enjoy is [Evelyn & Olive](#). They are not what we would consider traditional soul food in Memphis, serving Jamaican and Southern cuisine. The spices, flavors, and overall umami sensation leaves your tastebuds satisfied yet craving more. I love the Jamdown Jerk Chicken Wings and oxtails with fried plantains, rice and peas, and steamed cabbage. The Salmon Cakes and Grits are amazing as well. I could go on for days talking about soul food in Memphis. My absolute favorite is enjoying dinner with my family at my mama's after church on Sunday.

**By the way, City Tasting Box has just released a special collection called [The Majority Box](#) to commemorate Juneteenth.**



Negril BK offers clever twists on soul food classics in Brooklyn. This chicken and waffles creation ... [+] NEGRIL BK VIA INSTAGRAM

### Rene Johnson, the owner of Blackberry Soul Fine Catering, is known for her healthy vegan soul food and entertaining how-to videos

I love to go to [Negril BK](#) in Brooklyn. It serves Jamaican food in a smooth upscale style. When I go with friends to Negril BK we each get our favorite plates, which are the braised oxtails, curried goat and the jerk meatball and share plates. Every time I go, I leave full, happy and super satisfied.

[Gocha's](#) in Atlanta has some of the best brunch. The fish and grits is what I like the most, but everything on the menu is a winner. The fish is crisp, flaky and seasoned just right, the girls are creamy and buttery. You can't go wrong.

[Fixn's Soul Kitchen](#) in Sacramento always has a long line. It's worth the wait. I always start with which flavor of Kool-Aid I want: Red or purple? Then I go for the smothered chicken, the gravy is rich and smooth. The service is excellent and the decor makes you feel like you are at your Grandmother's house.

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By Leslie Kelly



I am a veteran food writer always dreaming about my next meal, whether it's a juicy burger or a fancy tasting menu. My work has appeared in various newspapers including the Memphis Commercial Appeal, The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, and online at Seattle Magazine, Tastemade, Allrecipes, Zagat, and Serious Eats. I'm a competition barbecue judge, a Washington state wine fan and am currently on an epic road trip around the country with my husband, a fellow freelancer. You can follow me on Twitter at @leslielines and on Instagram at @ourgrandtour. [Read Less](#)

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