



Hello, World!

THE GCI NEWSLETTER

INSPIRATION FOR PROGRAM PLANNING FROM THE GLOBAL CULINARY INITIATIVE COMMITTEE

October 2019

The Immigrants & Diverse Flavors of Tennessee & Southern Appalachia

Tennessee Roots

Tennessee's history is rooted in the [Watauga Association](#), a semi-autonomous government created in 1772 by frontier settlers living along the Watauga River. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, "These were the first men of American birth to establish a [free and independent community](#) on the continent." The association was the first step toward establishing the state of Tennessee, nicknamed the "[Volunteer State](#)."

Early Immigrants

Early immigrants to the Watauga area included the English, "[Scotch-Irish](#)," Welsh, Scotch-Highlanders, French Huguenots, and Germans. They were hard-working, independent-minded farmers, hunters, back-country gentry, and statesmen. [James Robertson](#), a North Carolina farmer of [Scotch-Irish descent](#), arrived in 1770 and played an important role in the history of Watauga. He left the area in 1777 to become a colonizer of [Nashville](#) and became known as the "Father of Middle Tennessee."

The Lost State of Franklin

The Wataugans [purchased their land](#) in the spring of 1775 from the Cherokee Indians. After the Revolutionary War was won, North Carolina claimed it, but the frontiersmen independently [formed their own state](#) within the union—the

short-lived [State of Franklin](#) (1784 to 1788).

It became part of upper East Tennessee when statehood occurred in 1796. Tennessee was the 16th state in the Union.

Three Grand Divisions

- Three stars in the state flag represent [Tennessee's three Grand Divisions](#): mountainous East Tennessee, the hilly farm country of Middle Tennessee, and West Tennessee with its flat cotton lands along the Mississippi.
- Principal cities are [Knoxville](#) (East Tennessee) in the cradle of Appalachian cuisine. [Nashville](#), the state capitol (Middle Tennessee) serves up a rich heritage of Southern cuisine with [global influences](#). [Memphis](#) (West Tennessee) is a mecca of [barbecue](#). There is also great representation from areas such as [Latin America](#), the [Middle East](#), and [Japan](#).
- Memphis is famed for blues music on Beale Street and the soul food that goes with it. If you spend [48 hours](#) there, here is everything you'll need to eat and drink.
- [Volunteer state vittles](#) include hot chicken, fluffy biscuits, dry-rubbed ribs, and potent moonshine.

Welcoming New Immigrants

- Immigrants have made a big impact on Tennessee's culture and cuisine. The first settlers also included those of [Irish](#), [Scotch](#)

([Scots](#))-[Irish](#), and [German](#) heritage.

- Here is an in-depth look, with photos, at Nashville—a [city of newcomers](#).
- [Jennifer Justus](#) explores Nashville's diverse cuisine offered along [Nolensville Pike](#).
- [Refugees](#) helped create Knoxville as we know it today. In 1848, a "[Swiss Colony](#)" was created four miles north of Knoxville on a 275-acre farm. The Colony of Gruetli-Laager started in 1869 when 100 [Swiss families](#) immigrated to Middle Tennessee.
- Population demographics are shifting to embrace [new immigrants](#), a majority being Mexican; a second cohort coming from India. In Smyrna, near Nashville, [Karen refugees](#) from Burma (Myanmar) helped save an Episcopal church on the brink of shutting down.
- There are large [Laotian](#) communities around Murfreesboro and Nashville. In Memphis, food is connecting people at the [Global Café](#), where authentic, affordable dishes are prepared by refugee food entrepreneurs from places such as Syria, Nepal, Venezuela, and Somalia. For twenty years in Knoxville, [Hispanic heritage](#) has been celebrated during the annual [HoLa Festival](#).
- The [Knox Asian Festival](#) provides a glimpse into several Asian cultures and celebrates traditions and talents from the Asian continent.

Tennessee Rhythms

- Music is Appalachia's most effective [cultural ambassador](#). In 1927, in a makeshift Bristol,

- Tennessee studio, a New York talent scout discovered Jimmie Rodgers, the “Father of Country Music,” and the Carters—The First Family of Country Music. The U.S. Congress officially declared Bristol the “[Birthplace of Country Music](#)” in 1998.
- Nashville, known as “Music City,” is the home of the [Grand Ole Opry](#)—the longest-running radio broadcast in American history.
 - Bluegrass music evolved from an earlier type of country music called [old-time music](#), mostly played on acoustic instruments like the banjo, fiddle, and mandolin. Spirited and upbeat, it is designed for square dancing and clogging.
 - [African-American music](#) had an important influence on Appalachian music.

Women’s Suffrage

- Tennessee’s ratification of the [19th Amendment](#) granted American women the right to vote in 1920.

Appalachia Folkways

- [The Encyclopedia of Appalachia](#), edited by Rudy Abramson and Dr. Jean Haskell, is the first encyclopedia dedicated to explaining the region, people, culture, history, and geography of Appalachia.
- [The Museum of Appalachia](#), a Smithsonian Affiliate, is an authentic mountain village and farm that tells the story of the mountain folk that live in Southern Appalachia.
- Author [Ronni Lundy](#) says that her people [Southern Appalachians] were right all along, in pronunciation (“viddles”), practice, and sentiment.
- [Sister Cities of Nashville](#) connects the people of Nashville with the people of the [world](#).
- [Blackberry Farm](#), Tennessee is nestled in East Tennessee in the Great Smoky Mountains—an idyllic escape from urban life. By reading their cookbook you are transposed, for even a few moments, into their luxurious world.
- News coverage often reveals the hard life of some Appalachia residents. We applaud the nutrition education information at [Food and Nutrition](#) –TN.gov, which aims to make all citizens aware of healthier food choices.

Appalachian Foodways

- [The food of humble Appalachia](#)

is rapidly becoming the next big thing in American regional cooking.

- Here are 11 iconic [Tennessee foods](#) to try.
- “Let’s Eat: Origins and Evolutions of Tennessee Food” is currently on [exhibit](#) at the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville.
- [Chef Rufus Estes](#), born in Murray County, Tennessee, in 1857, was a former slave who helped teach America how to cook.
- In East Tennessee, the [Cruz Farm Dairy](#) and [dairy queen](#) Colleen Cruze Bhatti are churning up the most delicious ice cream, artisan buttermilk, and cream you could imagine.
- [Sorghum](#) is made from the pure, sweet juice of sweet sorghum cane. It was a primary Southern sweetener in the nineteenth century. Here’s a recipe for [sorghum ice cream](#).
- [Ramps](#), a spring delicacy, are wild onions (also called wild leeks or wild garlic) with an onion-garlic flavor and a pungent odor. Ramp festivals are held in mountain towns throughout Southern Appalachia.
- The [cast iron skillet](#) is one of the most important pans in the Appalachian kitchen. Here is a list of the best cast iron skillets you can buy, and tips for [seasoning a skillet](#) from renowned Chef Sean Brock.
- [Rebecca Lang](#) shares a recipe for Nashville’s [signature](#) chicken dish—[Tennessee Hot Chicken](#).
- Here’s a recipe for [Apple Stack Cake](#) from Appalachia.
- The smokehouse of Bob Woods, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, produces the [finest country ham](#) in the South—and probably in the country. Award-winning Nashville and Charleston Chef Sean Brock agrees!
- East Tennesseans grew up eating tamales long before Mexican restaurants appeared. One cook makes them [Delta style](#) (“hot tamales”); cornmeal dough and spicy filling shaped into parchment-wrapped bundles and simmered. Texas tamales steamed in corn shucks are a family business for the owners of Nashville’s [Sisterhood of the Tamale](#).
- Global Appetites: Ruby Banerjee is one of Western North Carolina’s most celebrated instructors of the [cuisine of India](#).
- [MoonPies](#) were created in 1917 at the Chattanooga Bakery, Inc.



for Kentucky coal miners.

- Listen to a [honky tonk song](#) about RC Colas and MoonPies—a classic Southern combination! [Click here](#) for a recipe to make your own.

The Whiskey Trail

- Five of the [best distilleries](#) on the American Whiskey Trail are in Kentucky and Tennessee.
- Southeast of Nashville is legendary Lynchburg, the famed home of Jack Daniel’s—producer of [sublime Tennessee whiskey](#). You may sniff, taste, and wonder at the golden-amber liquid, but you’ll have to go outside Moore County to taste.
- Sing the country song “[Tennessee Whiskey](#)” while sipping on [Tennessee-Style Ice Tea](#) or [Lynchburg Lemonade](#).
- Spin the “Lazy Susan” at [Miss Mary Bobo’s Boarding House Restaurant](#) and enjoy a mid-day Southern dinner with fried chicken, ham, collards, cornbread, okra, stewed tomatoes, creamed corn, and more. Then wait for dessert!
- “[Ya-hoo, Mountain Dew](#)”—The carbonated, high-caffeine drink has a “hillbilly” heritage and was created as a whiskey mixer in Knoxville in the 1940s. The phrase “Mountain Dew” is old-time slang for moonshine—illegal, unaged whiskey made at night during prohibition to hide smoke from the stills. There’s a [growing movement](#) to promote (legal) moonshine.
- Mountain Dew Mouth refers to [tooth decay](#) caused by frequent consumption of soft drinks.

- [Illegal moonshining](#) wasn’t just part of a man’s world; women were in the business too.
- The origin of NASCAR is linked to “whiskey trippers” who were skilled in outriving revenue agents.
- Kentucky Dames recommend [Buffalo Trace Distillery](#), [The Woodford Reserve Distillery](#), and [Four Roses Distillery](#) for hand-crafted, artisanal bourbon whiskey.

Resources

- A city newspaper, printed or on-line, captures the essence of an area and its food culture—from restaurants to agriculture and food education. Check out [The Knoxville News Sentinel](#); [The Tennessean](#) (Nashville); and [The Chattanooga Times Free Press](#).
- Here’s a map of the [Appalachian region](#) and its counties.
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Global Culinary Initiative

GCI Committee: Co-Chairs Susan Fuller Slack, Editor (Charleston) and Roberta Duyff (St. Louis); GCI Founder Suzanne Brown (Atlanta), Teresa Farney (Colorado), Margaret Happel Perry (New York), Anita Lau and Cecilia Filetti (Los Angeles), Advisor Sandy Hu (San Francisco). Photos, Page one: musician (Tim Mossholder), neon sign (Paul Brennan), and apple skillet from Unsplash. Photos of Tennessee biscuits, fried pies, and nettles by Susan F. Slack. Page two: Election Day, Library of Congress.