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With more and more families traveling shorter distances this summer, now is a great time to discover some of Ohio's best restaurants closer to home. In addition, the summer months are a great time to be on the road discovering hundreds of Ohio farmer's markets overflowing with fresh produce, homemade dishes and baked goods. Whatever your getaway, mapping out your food experiences is just as important as choosing lodging or entertainment. Food has the power to comfort us and complement our favorite memories, and Ohio's cities offer some of the best dishes reminiscent of your home-cooked favorites.

The Cleveland area is famous for many things including The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the Cleveland Cavaliers and a vibrant nightlife. The city is also known for its great food and celebrity chefs. Take Michael Symon for instance. The executive chef of Lola and Lolita was named the next "Iron Chef" by Food Network, and his downtown restaurants win over its visitors after the first forkful. Cleveland is also home to the notorious West Side Market, a beloved open-air market recently visited by Rachael Ray and her Food Network program Tasty Travels.

Macaroni and cheese lovers should head to Krazy Mac's on Detroit Avenue, where diners can

enjoy more than 20 different kinds of this popular dish. With menu items such as Lake Erie Mac and Cheeseburger Mac, you're sure to find a fit for each member of the family.

For Sunday breakfast, don't miss the gospel brunch at Cleveland's House of Blues. The delicious southern-style buffet is complemented by the uplifting and energetic sounds of gospel groups from around the region.

In Columbus, soul food gets an update at The Northstar Café in the Short North. This restaurant's commitment to sustainability means only locally grown, organic and artisan-produced foods are served. Get to the café early for a wholesome breakfast including fresh buttermilk biscuits and house-made sausage patties with pepper flakes and maple syrup. Then head over to the North Market for an array of unique snacking and dining options including Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream. This American favorite is transformed with specialty flavors like Salty Caramel and Honey Vanilla Bean made with Ohio honey.

End your day in Columbus at AfterFive, the restaurant and lounge created by Michael Wiley, former running back for the Dallas Cowboys and The Ohio State University. The homemade chili and Wiley's Western Burger are real crowd pleasers.

If you're headed to Cincinnati, leave time for a visit to Queen-City-signature Skyline Chili and a stop at Montgomery Inn for ribs, pulled pork and chicken – all barbecued with the Inn's famous sauce. During your visit, be sure to pick up a bottle or two of the barbecue sauce to create your own masterpieces at home. Pizza lovers will enjoy a stop at another Cincinnati favorite – LaRosa's Pizzeria. Established in 1954 by Buddy LaRosa, there are now more than 40 LaRosa's restaurants in the Cincinnati area, each serving Buddy's Favorite Topper pizza and much more.

Just outside of Cincinnati, in Fairfield, is A Taste of Julia's. With more than 20 years of catering experience, Julia Pitts opened the restaurant to serve busy families. Today, Julia's features numerous homemade favorites including southern fried chicken, pork chops smothered in gravy and meatloaf.

A short drive from Cincinnati, Dayton also entices visitors with some culinary classics. During your trip north on Interstate 75, stop at Paul and Pam Sturkey's Mesh in West Chester. The

menu features a blend of both savory and sweet items, and three decadent twists on classic "meat and potatoes." In Dayton, The Pine Club experience sits at the top of the list of "must-dos." This legendary Dayton steakhouse is known for its house specialties served alongside the steaks: stewed tomatoes, thinly sliced onion rings and signature house salad dressing. It is also known for being cash only and for enforcing its "no reservations" policy. Even a former president has been told to wait in line!

After the overnight stay in Dayton, grab breakfast at the Golden Nugget Pancake House. This legendary breakfast restaurant was founded in by Steve Thomas, who paid $10,000 for the secret flour recipe, which is still kept under lock and key. His daughters now run the restaurant, where the flour is custom milled by Rick Erikson in Chardon, Ohio, and every plate is cooked to order. Pancake syrup is made by hand from cane sugar, and all blueberries are wild and organic.

In addition to some of the hearty meals found throughout the state, visitors won't have to look far to find one of the state's numerous ice cream makers including Handel's Homemade Ice Cream based in Canfield, Utica's Velvet Ice Cream Co., Cincinnati favorite Graeter's or Young's Jersey Dairy in Yellow Springs. These frozen delights are truly the cherry on top of any great Ohio getaway.

Whether you're traveling light or livin' large, Ohio's cities and towns offer the best foods in the states. You can find additional information about Ohioans' favorite diners, dishes and desserts as well as other getaways at www.discoverohio.com .