

TRAVEL

DISPATCHES



RICK OSENTOSKI, USA TODAY SPORTS

Detroit fans love to soak in their city's successes on the field.

Detroit is No. 1 in sports cities

The winners of the 10Best Readers' Choice Awards for Best City for Sports are in. Nominees in the contest, sponsored by USA TODAY and 10Best.com, were chosen by a panel of experts and then voted on by the public.

1. Detroit
2. Indianapolis
3. Dallas/Fort Worth
4. Chicago
5. Green Bay
6. Boston
7. Ann Arbor, Mich.
8. Pittsburgh
9. New Orleans
10. Oakland

CHIME IN

A new Readers' Choice contest category launches each week. To vote for Best American Riverfront, visit 10best.com/awards/travel/. You can vote once a day.



HOTELTONTONIGHT.COM

The HotelTonight app now lets you book rooms a week in advance.

HotelTonight opens booking window wider

HotelTonight, the last-minute booking mobile app, will now let travelers book rooms up to seven days in advance.

Call it Hotel Next Week.

The move pits the company against more established websites such as Travelocity, Expedia and Kayak that already have apps allowing travelers to book hotel rooms in advance.

Sam Shank, CEO and co-founder of HotelTonight, which launched in late 2010, says the company decided to expand the window in which customers can book rooms because there is demand for it.

For their part, the major online travel agencies have tried to tap into the niche market of last-minute booking. Expedia has a "Tonight" section, Orbitz has "Nearby & Available Tonight," and Travelocity has "Deals Tonight."

But so far, HotelTonight has had the dominant app in this space, says John Burns, president of Hospitality Technology Consulting in Scottsdale, Ariz. Typically, customers are able to get 30% discounts on hotel rooms.

In addition to the week-ahead booking, the updated HotelTonight app will have themed "playlists" of hotels such as best places to book for weekend beach getaways and hotels with great pools for Sunday Funday. The app will be available for iPhone, iPad, and any Android device or Windows phone and tablet.

Nancy Trejos

AUTUMN FLAVORS WE'RE

FALLING FOR

It's the season to enjoy crisp apples, ripe pumpkins and chilly nights with glowing fireplaces. Many restaurants across the USA are transforming and enhancing their offerings to reflect the season with an assortment of seasonal menu items that incorporate the delectable flavors of autumn in their dishes. **Marla Cimini** selects some fall favorites for USA TODAY.

SWEET POTATO CANNELLONI

LAS VEGAS
Despite the warm desert sunshine, Culinary Dropout at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino offers diners a robust seasonal specialty, the sweet potato cannelloni. Thinly sliced sweet potatoes are wrapped around delicately smoked shallots, mushrooms, snap peas and Parmesan cheese to create a full-flavored autumn dish. The plate's fresh ingredients succeed in producing a palate-pleasing and health-conscious seasonal delight.



TAVISTOCK RESTAURANT COLLECTION

PROSCIUTTO WRAPPED SCALLOPS

LOS ANGELES
Pan-seared and butter-basted with thyme and garlic, the scallops at Napa Valley Grille are served over maple butternut squash puree, with a Fuji apple and Brussels sprouts salad tossed in a cider-cumin vinaigrette with just a dash of aged balsamic. Says executive chef Taylor Boudreaux: "These scallops showcase some of the best things about fall. ... Fresh apples and maple syrup add an extra layer of flavor that truly speaks to the season." And since nothing wraps up an autumn-inspired dinner better than an apple dessert, Napa Valley Grille also features an heirloom apple tart tatin, a classic French tart with puff pastry crust, served à la mode with homemade calvados ice cream.

BANANA CREPE

DENVER
A hidden oasis in the middle of downtown Denver, the lovely Bistro Vendome has a charming outdoor patio — and offers an array of delectable seasonal specials throughout the year. And their desserts are just as dreamy as the ambience. Their signature French-style banana crepe dessert combines an exclusive house-made bananacream cheese mousse drizzled with a dollop of rich cognac caramel sauce. This sweet creation is served along with blended crunchy house-made granola.



CAMERON R. NELSON

SPICED DUCK BREAST

NEW YORK CITY
This autumn entrée at The Regency Bar and Grill embodies the season, encompassing black barley, dried cherries and pistachios. Executive chef Dan Silverman points out, "The duck and cherries are a classic combination, and the black barley is an interesting and healthy grain with a nutty flavor profile." With the savory pistachio salsa providing a burst of color and a distinct texture, it combines well with the duck, enhancing the barley and sweet-tartness of the cherries.



JASON VARNEY

SMOKED PUMPKIN TORTELLONI

PHILADELPHIA
A hotspot in Old City Philadelphia, High Street on Market offers a smoked pumpkin tortelloni made with smoked kabocha squash (kabocha is Japanese for "western pumpkin"), which has a velvety, smooth consistency and a deep orange color. The smoked filling is puréed with brown butter and warm cream infused with sage, which is grilled to achieve a distinctive, charred flavor. Meanwhile, the rye is served in very thin toasted shards and placed randomly on the plate for an added crispy texture.

PUMPKIN CHOCOLATE CHIP WHOOPIE PIE

BANGOR, MAINE
The fall season means all things pumpkin at Dyserts, a family-owned and -operated 24-hour casual restaurant/truck stop that has been serving hungry guests for more than 40 years. A seasonal favorite is their homemade pumpkin chocolate chip whoopie pie, a true twist on the original dessert. Available with either traditional or cream cheese filling, these popular favorites have been attracting avid fans who keep coming back for more. Still craving pumpkin? No worries, this establishment also offers pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread and even pumpkin pancakes.



RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

PEACH FRITTERS

RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIF.
This fall, Veladora, the fine-dining restaurant at the luxurious Rancho Valencia resort, is offering its signature rustic peach fritters, made with grilled farmer's market yellow peaches and spicy cinnamon cream, developed by the eatery's pastry sous chef, Stephanie Tesnow. She says: "Yellow peaches are so sweet — and to have them warm and grilled brings out the sweetness and creates the perfect texture. And who doesn't like anything fried?"

MARYLAND STRIPED BASS

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.
At Herringbone, seasoned roasted potatoes and spiced charred chorizo complement each other while the sunchoke puree adds an unexpected buttery taste to an already silky finish. The dish's sauce Americane, which uses a base of lobster stock, adds a strong boost of seafood essence to the striped bass. Executive chef Brian Malarkey created this dish to embody the vision of the restaurant. He says, it's truly "fish meets field."

PUMPKIN-CHOCO-CHIP CRISP CAKE

ATLANTIC CITY
A big winner in all respects, this seasonally spiced, moist pumpkin cake is served at the Palace Court Buffet and studded with rich chocolate chips and hints of cinnamon, nutmeg and honey. When blended, the highest-quality pumpkin filling and bittersweet chocolate morsels create a silky smooth texture. Topped with salty, crispy oatmeal streusel, it's an ideal accompaniment to a steamy cup of coffee on a crisp fall evening.

WISCONSIN CHEESE CURD STUFFED MEATBALLS

CHICAGO
Meet the new meatball: The Windy City's Atwood restaurant features an autumn spin on a classic favorite. This eatery's zesty cheese curd stuffed meatballs feature spicy tomato sauce topped with herb bread crumbs blended with basil and parsley, creating a vibrant emerald color. Executive chef Brian Millman explains: "Since we have access to the best cheese curds just to the north, in Wisconsin, this meatball dish seemed like a perfect fit. We caramelize the meatballs and finish them in the sauce."