

USA



Nashville

WHERE ON EARTH

# NASHVILLE

## *Country Cool and Hipster Hot*

by LAURA SUTHERLAND





### I DABBED A TEAR AS I LISTENED TO TENDER SONGS ABOUT LOST LOVES

and broken hearts, bad luck and trouble, daddies whose time had passed and precious daughters grown too fast. One singer's wife was holding their brand new baby at the back of the room and they locked eyes as he sang her a love song he'd just composed. She beamed, I cried, and then I took a long pull from my tumbler of Tennessee whiskey — another popular subject in country music and probably a tear accelerator for me.

Four singer-songwriters cradling guitars sat facing each other in the middle of the legendary Bluebird Café in Nashville, where we were listening to some of Music City's finest try out new songs and play old favourites. These musicians had written songs for stars like Garth Brooks, Eric Clapton, Emmy Lou Harris, Willie Nelson and Bonnie Raitt, and were clearly at the top of their game.

Nashville has always been the red-hot centre of the country music world and it's known for one of the most vibrant song writing communities anywhere. This is the place where Elvis Presley recorded 250 hits and stars like Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, and George Jones have entire museums devoted to them. Country music greats like Dolly Parton, Hank Williams and Loretta Lynn all recorded here, but so did musicians in other genres like Bob Dylan and REM.»

**THIS SPREAD**  
*Nashville Honky Tonk.*





LAURA SUTHERLAND



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PHOTOS THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT At the Johnny Cash Museum; Broadway street scene; A few dishes at Arnold's Country Kitchen; Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum; Kombucha flight at High Tea.



CHEEKWOOD BOTANICAL GARDEN AND MUSEUM



DANIEL RAMIREZ

LAURA SUTHERLAND

*...We filled our plates with pulled pork and ribs dripping in BBQ sauce...*



LAURA SUTHERLAND



«Homages to these artists are everywhere — the Country Music Hall of Fame is the best known and well worth a half day to explore, but the lesser-known Musicians Hall of Fame is worth a visit, too. Besides honouring hardworking back-up musicians, its amusing interactive exhibits give visitors the chance to sing and strum.

There are plenty of places to see live music of all kinds throughout the city, but the most concentrated few blocks is vintage-neon-clad Broadway Street, one long strip of honky tonks with names like Tootsies Orchid Lounge and rotating live bands that start at 11 am and end in the wee hours of the morning. But if you want to see the real Nashville beyond the tourist crowds, head into one of the trendy new neighbourhoods to eat, drink and explore with the locals.

In the last few years the town has seen an influx of creative young millennials, and wherever the young and hip move in, innovative restaurants, craft breweries and stylish coffee houses are soon to follow. Take The Gulch, a trendy neighbourhood between Music Row (centre of Nashville's music business) and downtown, that just a few years ago was filled with empty lots and abandoned warehouses. Today you'll find coffee bars like the Barista Parlor housed in the historic Golden Sound recording studio and Hops and Crafts, a 36-tap brewpub selling a fine selection of local craft beer.

But there are still important old-school stops in this neighbourhood — Arnold's Country Kitchen for one — where you can order Southern specialties like collard greens, fried chicken, biscuits and gravy, and pecan pie. Dolly Parton loves their chicken livers, but I fancied their fried green tomatoes, the herbed cracker coating a perfect counterpart to the tart interior.

Across the river, East Nashville — also called East Nasty — has been on the rise for the last few years as migrating 20- and 30-somethings move in to take advantage of the bohemian atmosphere, low housing prices and beautiful weather. We amused ourselves admiring vintage album covers at The Groove record store before heading to High Tea, a tea and herb room that looks right out of the Hobbit and has a kombucha bar with tasting flights.

In the chic new 12South neighbourhood we stopped for dinner at Epice, a sleek and modern Lebanese restaurant that was mentioned often by local epicures as a favourite. Updated family recipes have a clear Mediterranean focus and feature dishes bursting with flavour, like lahme, a pistachio-crust rack of lamb.

Locals kept bragging about Nashville's extremely cool coffee culture, but I was suspicious and wanted to see for myself. At Frothy Monkey, against my purist tendencies, I ordered a 'Lemon on a Prayer' that was flavoured with lavender and lemon. My first sip convinced me — the added flavours were so subtle and sophisticated that I pledged to try any specialty coffee drinks I came across, even if their names and ingredients scared me.»



USA

SERVES 6-8

## Nashville-Style Hot Chicken

### Whole Chicken

2 x 4 lb, each cut into 10 pieces (breasts halved)

**Freshly Ground Black Pepper** 1 Tbs

**Kosher Salt** 2 Tbs plus 4 tsp

**Eggs** 4 large

**Buttermilk** 2 cups

**Tabasco Sauce** 2 Tbs

**Flour** 4 cups

**Vegetable Oil** about 10 cups

**Cayenne Pepper** 6 Tbs

**Dark Brown Sugar** 2 Tbs

**Powder** 1 tsp

**Garlic Powder** 1 tsp

**Paprika** 1 tsp

**White Bread or Pancakes and Sliced Pickles** for serving

- 1 TOSS** chicken with black pepper and 2 Tbs of the salt in a large bowl. Cover and chill at least 3 hours.
- 2 WHISK** eggs, buttermilk and hot sauce in a large bowl. Whisk flour and remaining 4 tsp salt in another large bowl.
- 3 PAT** chicken dry. Working with 1 piece at a time, dredge in flour mixture, shaking off excess, then dip in buttermilk mixture, letting excess drip back into bowl. Dredge again in flour mixture and place on a baking sheet.
- 4 IN** a Dutch oven pour in oil to measure 2". Heat over medium-high heat until a deep fry thermometer registers 325°F.
- 5 WORKING** in 4 batches (and be sure to return oil to 325°F between batches), fry chicken, turning it occasionally until the skin is deep golden brown and crisp and an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of pieces registers 160°F for white meat and 165°F for dark, 15-18 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack set inside a baking sheet. Let oil cool slightly.
- 6 WHISK** cayenne, brown sugar, chili powder, garlic powder and paprika in a medium bowl; slowly and carefully whisk in 1 cup frying oil. Brush fried chicken with spicy oil. Serve with pickles and white bread.
- 7 CHICKEN** can be seasoned 1 day ahead and kept refrigerated until you're ready to cook.



«That led me to an 'Impeached' at Bongo Java. Yes, it sounded cloyingly sweet with peach nectar, cardamom and rose water, but I was in the South after all and it was peach season. The type of beans and roast had been selected to best enhance the flavours and it was deliciously understated and a surprising new way to enjoy coffee.


We kept with the coffee drinks until we realized we should walk off our jitters in the fresh air, so we drove through some of Nashville's most beautiful neighbourhoods to Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum, appropriately the former home of the Maxwell Coffee founders. After racing through the meditative Japanese Garden (too wired to meditate), we got in some mileage meandering through lavish gardens of dogwoods and wildflowers.

Since Nashville so seamlessly combines vintage and new, we decided to alternate old fashioned Southern eateries with trendy new places. The next day, after touring Ryman Auditorium, the home to the Grand Ole Opry for 30+ years until 1974 (and still a concert venue), we filled our plates with pulled pork and ribs dripping in BBQ sauce, baked beans and cornbread at Martin's BBQ, a pit joint where they feature low and slow whole hog cooking — a signature of West Tennessee BBQ.

The new Tennessee Whiskey Trail with its tour of 30 different distilleries around the state had just launched, and that inspired us to try whiskey cocktails at Pinewood Social, a compound with a small bowling alley, a bocce court, swimming pools and a modern menu of reworked American classics. We loved their cocktails' poetic names, like 'The Expense of Honesty,' 'Wrestling the Hourglass' and 'The Raft is Not the Shore.'

Every night we listened to live music — the Bluebird as often as we could get in and finally the Grand Old Opry, country music's most famous stage that started its weekly radio broadcasts in 1925 and is today housed in a large complex outside of town. Other clubs like the Exit Inn and Mercy Lounge were on our list but the days ran short.

On our final evening we headed to Party Fowl for some Nashville hot chicken. Legend has it that the recipe was created in the 1930s when a gentleman stepped out on his girlfriend one Saturday night. On Sunday morning she electrified his fried chicken with a big dose of hot pepper and to her dismay, he loved it — and it became an institution. The secret is to add the heat twice — once in the breading before it's deep fried and again in a sauce after it's been cooked.

A visit to Nashville has the most delicious sense of time travel. The old-school country music, classic BBQ and hot chicken, vintage record stores — and the new wave of innovative and trendy coffee, craft beer, farm-to-table bistros and music performed by artists just beginning their careers. It is a place to enjoy history and history-in-the-making. 



**Arnold's Country Kitchen**  
[www.arnoldscountrykitchen.com](http://www.arnoldscountrykitchen.com)

**Barista Parlor Golden Sound**  
[www.baristaparlor.com](http://www.baristaparlor.com)

**Bluebird Café**  
[www.bluebirdcafe.com](http://www.bluebirdcafe.com)

**Country Music Hall of Fame**  
[www.countrymusichalloffame.org](http://www.countrymusichalloffame.org)

**Epice**  
[www.epicenashville.com](http://www.epicenashville.com)

**Frothy Monkey**  
[www.frothymonkey.com](http://www.frothymonkey.com)

**The George Jones Museum**  
[www.georgejones.com](http://www.georgejones.com)

**Grand Ole Opry**  
[www.opry.com](http://www.opry.com)

**Johnny Cash Museum**  
[www.johnnycashmuseum.net](http://www.johnnycashmuseum.net)

**Martin's Bar-B-Que**  
[www.martinsbbqjoint.com](http://www.martinsbbqjoint.com)

**Musician's Hall of Fame**  
[www.musicianshalloffame.com](http://www.musicianshalloffame.com)

**Party Fowl**  
[www.partyfowltnashville.com](http://www.partyfowltnashville.com)

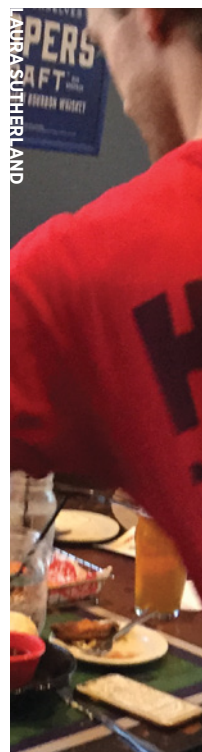
**Patsy Cline Museum**  
[www.patsymuseum.com](http://www.patsymuseum.com)

**Pinewood Social**  
[www.pinewoodsocial.com](http://www.pinewoodsocial.com)

**Ryman Auditorium**  
[www.ryman.com](http://www.ryman.com)



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USA

PHOTOS  
THIS SPREAD  
CLOCKWISE  
FROM TOP LEFT  
Fine embroidery on  
a costume; Taps at  
Hops and Craft; BB  
King at the Gallery  
of Iconic Guitars;  
Pinewood Social  
bowling; Partial  
menu at Arnold's  
Country Kitchen;  
Party Fowl uniform;  
Tasting flight at  
Hops and Craft.



ARNOLD'S & THREE NASHVILLE, TN	
<b>Monday</b> Roast Beef Sugar-Cured Ham Meatloaf Chicken & Dumplings Battered Grouper Green Beans Turnip Greens Mashed Potatoes Mac & Cheese Pinto Beans Creamed Corn Fried Apples Small Salad	<b>Tuesday</b> Roast Beef Sugar-Cured Ham Meatloaf Chicken & Dumplings Battered Grouper Green Beans Turnip Greens Mashed Potatoes Mac & Cheese White Beans Candied Yams Boiled Cabbage Small Salad
<b>Sandwiches</b> Roast Beef \$6.50 Grilled Cheese \$3.50	<b>Salads</b> Small Salad Cole Slaw Cucumber, Tomato & Onion Salad Medium Salad (counts as 2 sides)



SERVES 6-8

## Tennessee Whiskey Cake

**Unsalted Butter**  
4 oz, softened

**Brown Sugar**  
½ cup

**Granulated Sugar** ½ cup

**Eggs** 3 large

**Flour** 1 cup

**Baking Powder**  
½ tsp

**Ground Cinnamon** ½ tsp

**Salt** ¼ tsp

**Baking Soda**  
¼ tsp

**Milk** ¼ cup

**Molasses** ½ cup

**Tennessee Whiskey** ¼ cup

**Vanilla Ice Cream**  
and **Chocolate Sauce**  
for serving

**Candied or Roasted Pecans**  
to garnish

- PREHEAT** oven to 350°F. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt and baking soda.
- USING** a standing mixer, beat the butter on medium-high until creamy. Then gradually add the brown and granulated sugars and mix well.
- ADD** the eggs one at a time, beating well and scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition.
- ON** low, beat in the flour mixture, one-third at a time, alternating with the milk and ending with the dry ingredients.
- MIX** in the molasses on medium-low.
- MIX** in the whiskey until smooth — about 30 seconds.
- POUR** the batter into a greased, parchment-paper-lined 10-inch cake pan and bake for 30-35 minutes. Let cool.
- SERVE** the cake with vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce and pecans.