



A TRAIL OF FLAVORS

US-68 in Ohio isn't flashy. One end tucks into Appalachia along the Ohio River, where a young family runs a great winery. The other end, 180 miles north, stops in Findlay, where a novelty ice cream shop happily coexists with a bistro known for its daily-changing menu. Along the way, travelers amble through county seats and discover some of the state's best farm markets, bakeries, potato chips, freshwater fish, cheeses and more. Want in on the fun? Just pack a cooler and follow our map.

Chef Margaret Kinner at The Winds Cafe in Yellow Springs. (Below, from left) The Meranda-Nixon Winery awaits in Ripley. Lake Erie walleye at Revolver in Findlay. Rainbow trout at Freshwater Farms of Ohio in Urbana. Peaches tempt at roadside markets.



No matter how many times it's happened, the scene is nearly always the same. Visitors step into the petting zoo at Freshwater Farms of Ohio in Urbana, then stare at a tank full of sturgeon. The sight is a little strange, especially more than 100 miles from a Great Lake. Who pets *fish*? The sturgeon seem downright friendly, twisting and lifting their heads out of the water like lonely puppies begging for attention. But this stop along US-68 makes sense for cooks eager to buy trout from the market, and it's one of dozens of places on this 180-mile journey where foodies celebrate locally grown, raised and baked treasures.

US-68 jogs through western Ohio from county seat to county seat, a convenient country road connecting interesting natural and historical attractions that are worth a visit between your food stops. You'll see the Piatt Castles, Cedar Bog Nature Preserve, Grant's Boyhood Home and the Rankin House, where a brave family sheltered escaping slaves crossing the Ohio River from Kentucky.

At the route's northern end, Findlay wears its patriotism on its sidewalks and calls itself "Flag City, U.S.A." The Ohio River marks the journey's southern point. To do it all, you'll need three days. But we don't mind if you just take an afternoon jaunt to sate a hankering for one or two flavors. Destination-worthy dry-rub barbecue, Bismarck doughnuts, fish fillets, killer granola and more await.



(Above) The Ohio River near Ripley anchors the south end of our journey along US-68. (Below, from left) Near the route's north end, Findlay proudly touts its reputation as Flag City, U.S.A. Kelly Young shares homemade ice cream at Young's Jersey Dairy in Yellow Springs.





(Below, from left) A chalkboard trumpets the daily specials at Emporium Wines and Underdog Cafe in Yellow Springs. Small Austrian-inspired sponge cake filled with Riesling-flavor whipped cream is a popular dessert at The Winds Cafe and Bakery in Yellow Springs.





1 Dietsch Brothers

Opened in 1937, this Findlay soda fountain and candy shop reminds us of a time when every town had its own homegrown sweet stop (419/422-4486; dietschs.com).

2 Revolver Local farms provide ingredients for the Midwest-inspired meals at this Findlay spot; recent options included pork cheek ravioli (419/424-4020; revolverrestaurant.net).

3 Jim's Hot Dogs and More Whether you order a traditional frank or a Findlay-style dog topped with banana peppers, you'll be glad you stopped at this new spot (419/425-5719; celebrationinabun.com).

4 Michael Angelo's Pizza In Kenton, hand-tossed crusts bake to crispy perfection on

natural soapstone. Try the house specialty, a BLT pizza (419/673-7101; michael-angelos.com).

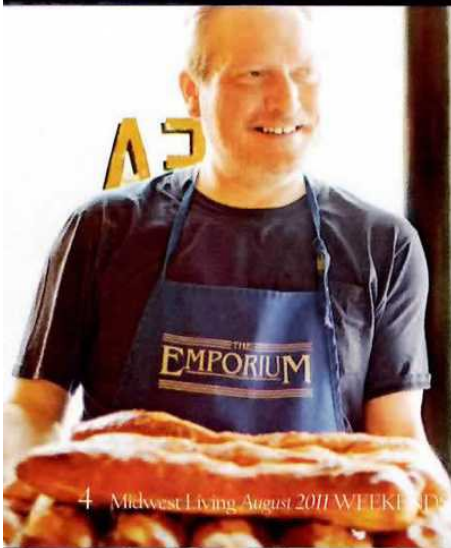
5 Country Variety Store and Country Baked Goods You'll find Bibles, birdseed, country hams, chicken coops and extra-tall angel-food cakes at this Amish shop just north of Bellefontaine (937/468-7733).

6 Blue Jacket Dairy Just west of Bellefontaine on County-11, a tiny retail store teems with amazing artisanal cheeses served in bistros (937/292-7327; bluejacketdairy.com).

7 The Swiss Haus Bakery and Cafe Strawberry-filled roulade, Black Forest cake and a lemony butter cookie called *mailanderli* share the owner's Swiss childhood memories with visitors in Bellefontaine (937/292-8001; swiss-haus.com).

8 Marie's Candies A transformed 1926 train depot in West Liberty houses superb home-made peppermint chews and caramel-pecan Tur'kins (866/465-5781; mariescandies.com).

(Below, from left) Daryl Stanforth bakes fresh bread at Emporium Wines and Underdog Cafe in Yellow Springs. Tree-fresh apples abound at farm stands and markets along the route. Costumed interpreters tell the story of the Underground Railroad at the Rankin House in Ripley.



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Midcentury modern defines Revolver's decor in Findlay.

- 9 Freshwater Farms of Ohio** Stop in this Urbana market for trout—fresh, smoked and patties (800/634-7434; fwfarms.com).
- 10 High Street Manor B&B** Elegant. Gracious. Quiet. Tasteful. We found all of that, plus hearty homemade breakfasts. In Urbana. From \$120 (937/508-4004; highstreetmanor.com).
- 11 Mumford's Potato Chips and Deli** Crispy, kettle-cooked Mumford's chips have drawn munchie lovers to Urbana since 1932 (937/653-3491).
- 12 Catfish Jones** Yes, the fish is from Mississippi. But this laid-back spot in one of Urbana's historic buildings serves a mean meal and killer sweet-potato fries (937/484-4040; catfishjones.com).
- 13 Simon Kenton Inn and Publik House** Coddled eggs sate guests in this 200-year-old Federal-style B&B in

- Springfield (from \$99), and the cozy Publik House offers sandwiches and entrees (937/399-9950; simonkentoninn.com).
- 14 Schuler's Bakery** The 74-year-old bakery's chocolate-cream-filled doughnuts are practically the official food of Springfield (and worth the detour onto Derr Road) (937/390-0744).
- 15 Young's Jersey Dairy** Pretty brown jerseys greet families eager for homemade ice cream and home-style meals (chicken and dumplings!) in Yellow Springs (937/325-0629; youngsdairy.com).
- 16 Peifer Orchards** Ohio's official apple, the Melrose, is one of 20 varieties grown here in Yellow Springs, along with peaches and pears (937/767-2208; peiferorchards.com).
- 17 The Winds Cafe and Bakery** An exceptional bakery, a serious wine

- cellar and internationally inspired foods made with Ohio ingredients make this a destination in Yellow Springs. It's fine to wear jeans to this casual spot with its mismatched chairs. All eyes are on the beautiful food (937/767-1144; windscafe.com).
- 18 Emporium Wines and the Underdog Cafe** A coffee bar divides an international selection of wines from an eating area accented by a big slouchy sofa. As eclectic as Yellow Springs itself, the arrangement offers a coffee shop/restaurant/bakery/art gallery/Scrabble spot that uses its own vanilla to flavor raspberry/chocolate-chip muffins (937/767-7077; emporiumwines.com).
- 19 Beaugard's Southern Bar B Que** The smoker rests outside this little strip-mall restaurant in Wilmington; the slow-cooked spareribs are fall-off-the-bone perfect (937/655-8100; beaugardsbq.com).
- 20 The Home Place** The blackberry jam, molasses cookies and "Tried and True Granola" lure visitors to this Amish furniture store with an in-house bakery near Georgetown (937/378-3400; thehomeplacefurniture.com).
- 21 Meranda-Nixon Winery** Turn off US-68 onto Laycock Road in Ripley, where a former tobacco farm has blossomed into a scenic estate winery north of the Ohio River. Plan to come on a Saturday to grill your own steak dinner; enjoy it with a glass of Catawba, a blush wine that flourished here before the Civil War (937/392-4654; meranda-nixonwinery.com). ■