

10BEST: Small schools, big tailgating

You don't have to visit a big school to find great tailgating. Smaller campuses host some of the best parties, says **Joe Cahn**, who has been to about 1,000 tailgates since 1996 and runs Tailgating.com. He says that while big universities might have larger enrollment, smaller schools can win the day with hospitality and friendliness. "These are places that aren't on everyone's bucket list because they don't know about them." He shares some favorite spots with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY.

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY MUNCIE, IND.

Perhaps it's not surprising that David Letterman's alma mater knows how to throw a party, complete with beer pong, cornhole and other games. "It's a friendly atmosphere," Cahn says. "They don't get their due, but they're a good school with big hearts. The students are just happy to be there." *ballstatesports.com*

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY TALLAHASSEE

The social atmosphere is so warm at this historically black school that the gatherings often continue until kickoff and sometimes longer, Cahn says. "Fraternalities and sororities and church groups put together a great tailgate. There's probably more fried fish than I've seen anywhere, and it's delicious." Come halftime, the last celebrants leave the parking lot to make sure to catch the band's performance on the field. *famuathletics.com*

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY FARGO

Though tailgating on the Great Plains can get chilly, you'll find warm and welcoming fans at this NCAA Division I school, Cahn says: "They're pioneers and partiers." Games are a major Fargo social event, and while the city is not known for fancy dining, you'll see plenty of hearty food. "Every once in a while you'll find a bison burger, or elk or venison on the menu." *gobison.com*

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ANNAPOLIS, MD.

Talk about an alumni network. Not only do football games attract Academy graduates, but they also draw thousands of active-duty sailors, along with veterans and their families. "Anyone who served in the Navy feels part of it," Cahn says. "The midshipmen come out and tailgate with the different reunion classes set up around the outer ring of the stadium." You'll find similar scenes at Army and Air Force games. *navysports.com*

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DOMENIC CENTOFANTI, BSU PHOTO SERVICES

At Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., "a good school with big hearts," the tailgate scene is warm and welcoming.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Football in Louisiana isn't limited to powerhouse Louisiana State University. Instead, Cahn suggests heading an hour down the road to Lafayette. "You're in the heart of Cajun country. It's a wonderful sharing attitude. It's a smaller school than LSU, so the food may be more important than the game." *ragincajuns.com*

ST. OLAF COLLEGE NORTHFIELD, MINN.

This private liberal arts college has a strong academic tradition, but come Saturdays, it knows how to throw a party. Cahn says he loves how the school's fight song is a waltz, and Scandinavian specialties are often on the menu. "I don't know how many schools would have pickled herring at a tailgate," he says. *wp.stolaf.edu*



DOUG DUGAS

The University of Louisiana-Lafayette piles it on.

WOFFORD COLLEGE SPARTANBURG, S.C.

This tiny liberal arts school has one of the most family-friendly tailgating atmospheres Cahn has ever seen. "The children and families that come out there are incredible," he says. Perhaps that's why Cahn remembers plenty of sweets being around. "There's a lot of desserts and cookies and a lot of sandwiches and a lot of Krispy Kreme donuts."

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE NEWARK

It may be a small school in a small state, but the University of Delaware Blue Hens put on quite a show, Cahn says. "It exceeds expectations. We think of Delaware as being where corporations register for tax purposes, but it's a wonderful atmosphere, great parking, wonderful people and diverse food." *bluehens.com*

MARIST COLLEGE POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y.

This private Hudson River Valley liberal arts college gets a big tailgating boost from its neighbor, the Culinary Institute of America. Sometimes students will set up at Marist games, and the results are delicious, Cahn says. "I ate some pretty good stuff. Someone was doing a hamburger *au poivre*, with peppercorn sauce with a little brandy. You'll see that in a high-end restaurant." *marist.edu*

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY CALIFORNIA

Cahn says the large Latino enrollment at this Silicon Valley school adds some spice to tailgate dining. "You'll find great tailgating food: tacos, fajitas and salsas." But he says he could tell he was in California when he saw some fans sneaking in salads, not a traditional tailgate staple. *sjsu.edu*

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Go out of your gourd with pumpkin flavors

Ashley Day
USA TODAY

It's pumpkin's time to shine at the table, and added autumn spices go far beyond those infamous lattes. You'll find both in these indulgent dishes and drinks starring fall flavors. Celebrate the season with pumpkin pastries, soup, juice and cocktails at restaurants around the country.

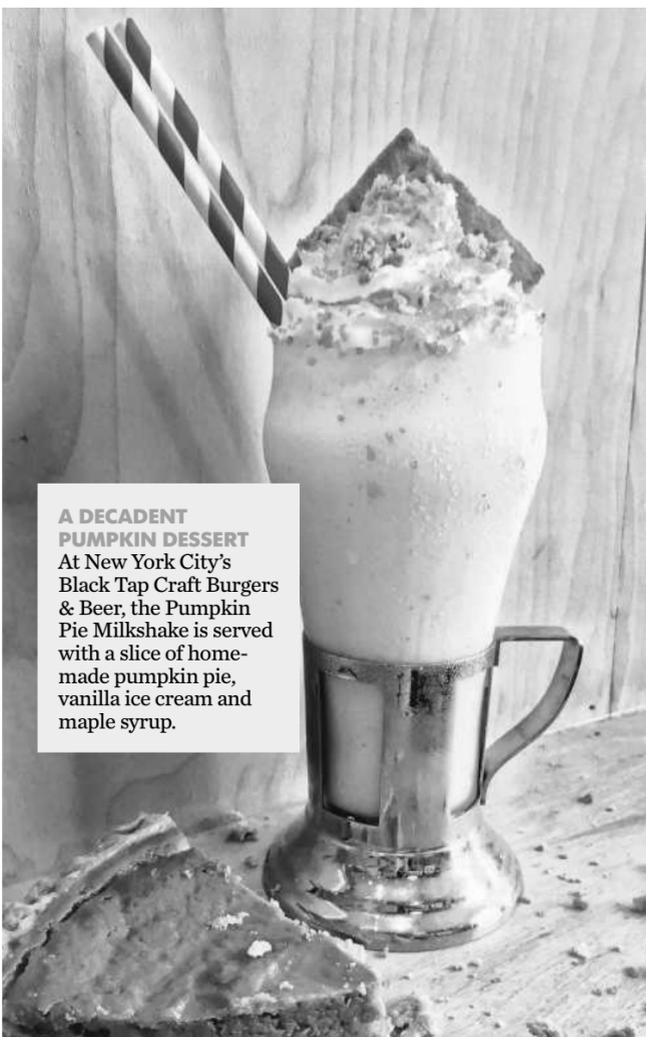
A HEALTHY PUMPKIN SMOOTHIE

In Boston, Jugos juice bar serves The Concord smoothie — with pumpkin, banana, ginger, date, turmeric, cinnamon, vanilla extract and cashew milk — every fall.



JUGOS

Boston's Jugos serves up a fall smoothie straight out of the pumpkin patch.



A DECADENT PUMPKIN DESSERT
At New York City's Black Tap Craft Burgers & Beer, the Pumpkin Pie Milkshake is served with a slice of homemade pumpkin pie, vanilla ice cream and maple syrup.

BLACK TAP CRAFT BURGERS & BEER

Black Tap's Pumpkin Pie Milkshake is a sweet autumn treat.



GREG POWERS

D.C.'s Del Campo has a pumpkin beverage for the adult crowd.



RESTAURANT GUY SAVOY

Guy Savoy's Pumpkin Soup goes all the way.

A PUMPKIN SOUP PRESENTATION

In Las Vegas, Restaurant Guy Savoy at Caesars Palace serves Pumpkin Soup with poached egg and white truffles from a pumpkin each year.

A SWEET PUMPKIN TREAT

Seattle's Rodeo Donut offers the Pumpkin Cream Cheese Cardamom Brioche Donut topped with candied pepitas (pumpkin seeds) at both of its locations through December.

A CLASSY PUMPKIN COCKTAIL

D.C.'s Del Campo offers a Smoked Pumpkin Old Fashioned made with Bulleit bourbon and house-made pumpkin cordial and garnished with a grilled pumpkin. It is smoked tableside with burned cinnamon.

AN OVER-THE-TOP PUMPKIN OVATION

New Orleans' Sucre Sweet Boutiques boast a Pumpkin Spice and All Things Nice sundae with spiced pumpkin gelato, spice cake and milk chocolate caramel at all three locations.