

# Fruit routes

Whether you're an apple addict, blueberry buff, pear partisan or strawberry savant, we've got a trip with your name on it. Meet four jaunts so juicy, you may want to pack a bib. BY KIMBERLEY LOVATO



## STRAWBERRIES Ventura County, CA

May-June-July

The U.S. gets nearly 90 percent of its strawberries from California, and one of the most gorgeous growing regions sits about an hour northwest of L.A. While there's plenty of eye candy here, from the surfers studding the waves to the pink-at-sunset 1872 pier, the sweetest find is the abundant heart-shaped fruit.

### STOPS

#### 1. Boccali's

3277 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai, CA  
[boccalis.com](http://boccalis.com)

Though an unorthodox dessert choice at an Italian restaurant, the strawberry shortcake here is legend, and may ruin you for others.

#### 2. Busy Bee Cafe

478 E. Main St.,  
Ventura, CA  
[busybeecafe.biz](http://busybeecafe.biz)

The old-fashioned strawberry ice cream soda at this fun retro diner is made with local strawberries and topped with artisanal strawberry ice cream.

#### 3. Beach House Fish

668 Harbor Blvd.,  
Ventura, CA  
[beachhousefish.com](http://beachhousefish.com)

Walk the 143-year-old Ventura Pier, then quench your thirst on the spot with the Beach House's California Sway:

a cocktail made with local vodka distilled from strawberries.

#### 4. McGrath Family Farm

1012 W. Ventura Blvd.,  
Camarillo, CA  
[mcgrathfamilyfarm.com](http://mcgrathfamilyfarm.com)

For four generations, the McGraths have tended these organic fields, where you can now pick your own berries—then score strawberry-jalapeño jam at the market.

#### 5. California Strawberry Festival

3250 S. Rose Ave.,  
Oxnard, CA  
[strawberry-fest.org](http://strawberry-fest.org)

Hurry and you may still be able to make the annual Strawberry Festival, May 16–17. If you've never tried strawberry nachos, kebabs or funnel cake, now's your chance to right that wrong.

### WHERE TO STAY

Built in 1874 as a schoolhouse, the Lavender Inn B&B is home to the Ojai Culinary School, where this season's courses include the 2.5-hour Farm Fresh Strawberries—Sweet & Savory class. (from \$150 per night, [lavenderinn.com](http://lavenderinn.com))



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JIM DATZ



## BLUEBERRIES Northern GA

May-June-July

The Peach State may have to consider a name change: Georgia is in the midst of a blueberry boom, with 96 million pounds produced last year. Throw in the famously lush landscape (think dogwoods, magnolias, oaks and pines), and you've got one scenic and scrumptious drive.

### STOPS

#### 1. 5&10

1073 S. Milledge Ave.,  
Athens, GA

[fiveandten.com](http://fiveandten.com)

When they're in season, blueberries make their way into many a dish at the flagship restaurant of *Top Chef* judge Hugh Acheson. One fave? The fava bean salad with pickled blueberries, smoked pecans, raw-milk ricotta, preserved lemon and petite herbs.

#### 2. Orpheus Brewing

1440 Dutch Valley Pl. NE,  
Atlanta, GA

[orpheusbrewing.com](http://orpheusbrewing.com)

Looking out onto the Atlanta BeltLine (the famed rail track and pedestrian trail project around the city center), Orpheus serves up several brews per tasting tour. Don't miss the *Wandering Blues*—a sublime ale made with cold-pressed local blueberries.

#### 3. King of Pops

337 Elizabeth St. NE,  
Atlanta, GA

[kingofpops.net](http://kingofpops.net)

Don't blow this popsicle stand! It's another hot spot that sits just off the BeltLine, but in

this case, the blueberry bliss comes in the form of locally sourced, handmade pops. The blueberry lemonade on a stick alone is worth the visit.

#### 4. Morelli's Ice Cream

749 Moreland Ave. SE,  
Atlanta, GA

[morellisicecream.com](http://morellisicecream.com)

At this Atlanta favorite, which has made pretty much every list of the country's best ice cream shops, you'll scream for the Blueberry Corncake ice cream. This magic mash-up combines sweet and tart Georgia blueberries with killer cake that began life as local farmers'-market corn.

#### 5. Southern Belle Farm

1658 Turner Church Rd.,  
McDonough, GA

[southernbellefarm.com](http://southernbellefarm.com)

A family-run operation that's been on this land for seven generations, Southern Belle offers not only U-pick blueberries, but great extras for anyone who happens to have kids in tow: farm animals, jumping pillow, hayrides, pedal carts...the works.

### WHERE TO STAY

Twenty-five minutes southwest of the Atlanta airport, the rural retreat that is the Inn at Serenbe offers edible landscaping: You're encouraged to nosh on the blueberries as you stroll the grounds. (from \$210 per night, [serenbeinn.com](http://serenbeinn.com))







## PEARS Northwestern OR

August-September-October

Driving toward (and through) the Hood River Valley, you won't know whether to look down at the Columbia River's whitecaps, up at the peaks of Mounts Hood and Adams or out at all the orchards. But once you taste the state's top crop—Oregon harvests a billion or so pears a year—you'll be able to focus on little else.



### STOPS

#### 1. Clear Creek Distillery

2389 NW Wilson St.,  
Portland, OR  
[clearcreekdistillery.com](http://clearcreekdistillery.com)  
Introduce Oregon Bartletts to European stills and you get gold—as in multiple gold medals at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition for Clear Creek's Pear Brandy. Also known as eau-de-vie de poire, it's the guiding spirit, as it were, of this distillery, whose owner fell for pear brandy in Europe and decided he could make an even better version with fruit from his home turf.

#### 2. Solstice Wood Fire Cafe & Bar

501 Portway Ave.,  
Hood River, OR  
[solsticewoodfirecafe.com](http://solsticewoodfirecafe.com)  
Order the Siragusa Pear Wood Fire Pizza at this mom-and-pop shop, and you'll be hard-pressed to say which is more beautiful: the river view out your window or the array of Starkrimson pears (or Boscs or d'Anjous, depending on the month), caramelized onions, blue cheese, Pecorino Romano and fresh herbs on your table.

#### 3. Apple Valley Country Store

2363 Tucker Rd.,  
Hood River, OR  
[applevalleystore.com](http://applevalleystore.com)  
The sign at this old timey shop says "Apple Valley," and indeed, apples were the foremost fruit in the area—until a 1919 freeze wiped a lot of the trees out and prompted a pear-planting spree. Now, many say it's the pear pies that take the cake at the Country Store, though worthy rivals include the vanilla pear jam and the shakes made with whatever juicy local fruit is in season.

#### 4. Kiyokawa Family Orchards

8129 Clear Creek Rd.,  
Parkdale, OR  
[kiyokawafamilyorchards.com](http://kiyokawafamilyorchards.com)  
At the farm that Randy Kiyokawa tends as his father did in the '50s, you can buy 12 kinds of Asian pears, from light and crisp varieties to rich and rummy ones, plus the greatest hits of Western pears.

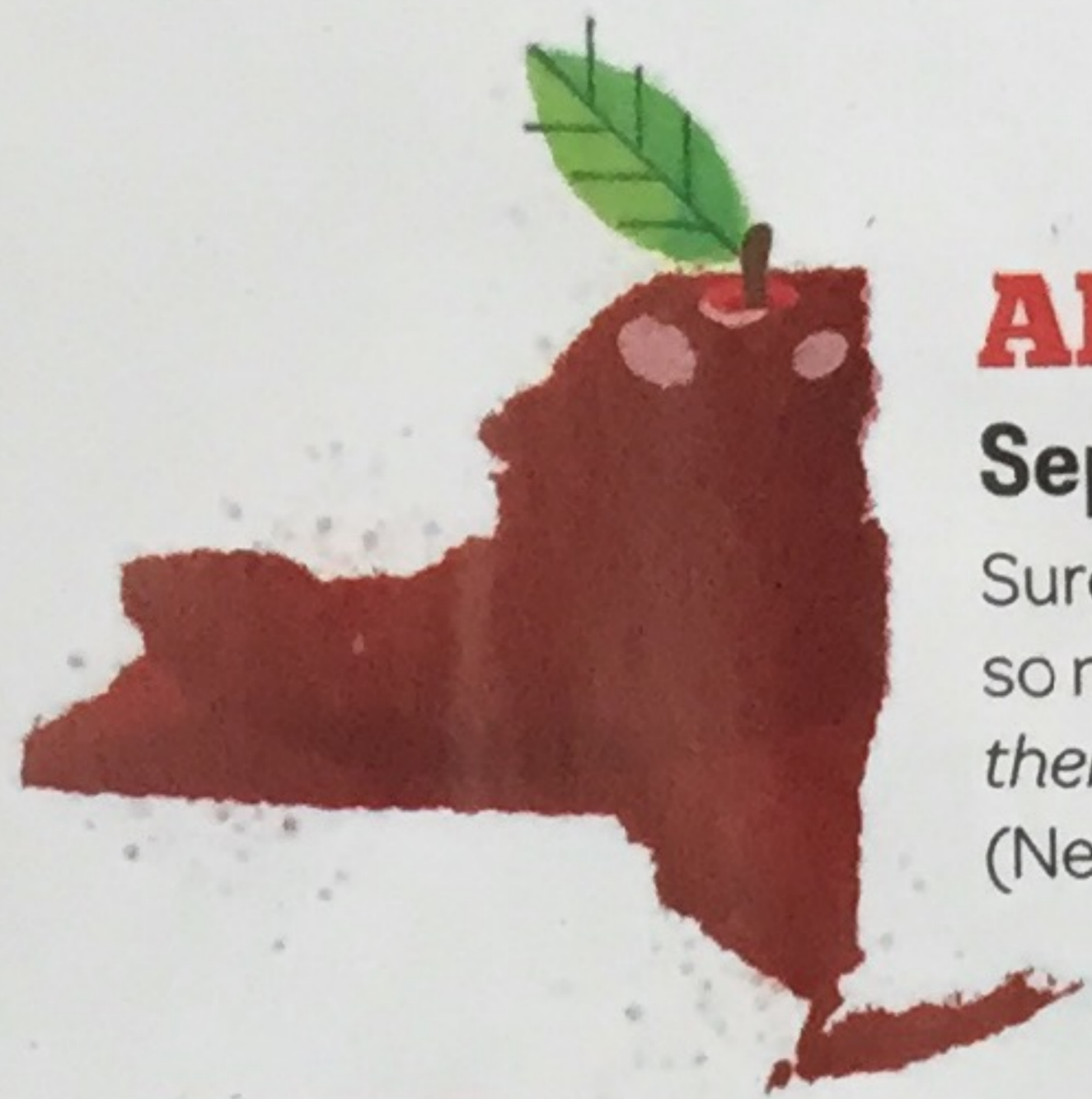
#### 5. The Gorge White House

2265 Highway 35,  
Hood River, OR  
[thegorgewhitehouse.com](http://thegorgewhitehouse.com)  
Unsurprisingly, this 107-year-old Dutch Colonial is both white and set near a gorge, but what the name doesn't prep you for are the mountain views that come standard with the estate's award-winning Heritage Bosc Pear Wine and pear-bacon quesadilla.

### WHERE TO STAY

A cozy lodge among acres of pear trees, **Sakura Ridge** has the perfect porch for chilling on rocking chairs and taking in views of Mount Hood. (from \$170 per night, [sakuraridge.com](http://sakuraridge.com))





## APPLES Hudson Valley, NY

September-October

Sure, New York City is the Big Apple, but head an hour or so north to the hilly Hudson Valley—and tell us how you like *them* apples...all six million bushels and countless flavors (New York claims more varieties than any state).

### STOPS

#### 1. Hurds Family Farm

2187 Route 32, Modena, NY [hurdsfamilyfarm.com](http://hurdsfamilyfarm.com)  
Once you've picked your own apples here—and there are 23 varieties to choose from among the farm's 100,000+ apple trees—hit up the store for apple butter, apple jam and for good measure, applesauce.

#### 2. Apple Pie Bakery Café

1946 Campus Dr., Hyde Park, NY [applepiebakerycafe.com](http://applepiebakerycafe.com)  
This place comes by its name honestly: Right on the grounds of the Culinary Institute of America, the cafe is apple pie paradise, not only because of the heavenly local fruit, but because of the Dutch streusel topping that defies you not to order a second slice.

#### 3. Meadowbrook Farm

29 Old Myers Corners Rd., Wappingers Falls, NY [meadowbrookfarmmarket.com](http://meadowbrookfarmmarket.com)  
This no-frills pit stop is brimming with homegrown produce, but before you browse, first proceed to the moist

and cakelike house doughnuts. Made every morning with farm-pressed apple cider, the treats themselves aren't optional (truly, you can't leave without trying 'em!), though the toppings are: cinnamon-sugar or powdered sugar?

#### 4. Thompson's Cider Mill

335 Blinn Rd., Croton-on-Hudson, NY [thompsonscidermill.com](http://thompsonscidermill.com)  
However amazing the doughnuts you just tried were, sometimes you want your cider straight up. To watch it being pressed fresh in a barn, hit Thompson's where the owner turns up to 30 varieties into seriously guzzle-worthy stuff.

#### 5. RiverMarket Bar & Kitchen

127 W. Main St., Tarrytown, NY [rivermarketbarandkitchen.com](http://rivermarketbarandkitchen.com)  
From the starters to dessert, apples turn up all over the menu here. Try the oysters with Thompson's Cider Mill sorbet or lamb loin served with an apple-and-goat-cheese crepe.

### WHERE TO STAY

At the historic Crabtree's Kittle House Restaurant & Inn, you'll find baskets of up to eight Hudson Valley apple varieties for the taking at reception—to say nothing of the apple-inspired dishes in the restaurant. (from \$167 per night, [kittlehouse.com](http://kittlehouse.com))



PHOTOS BY (1) CHARLES HURD, (2) ANNE RETTIG/THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, (3) MELISSA TYLER, (4) LAUREN SEEBACHER, (5) RANA FAURE.