

Article Spotlight

15 Chefs Reveal Their Fast-Food Guilty Pleasures

by Kelly Dobkin



Chefs, they're just like us! They read *US Weekly*, they watch *American Idol*, they shop for toilet paper and, yes, they also eat fast-food. (Hell, one of them even cooks for Chipotle.) We got some of the nation's best chefs to cop to their naughtiest fast-food fixes (or at least the ones they're willing to admit.) Check them out:

Wade Burch, Southwest NY, NYC, winner of *Chopped*: "When I lived in Texas I loved the double cheeseburger at Jack in the Box after a long night of drinking or Whataburger's double-meat double-cheese and onion rings. Here in New Jersey, I sneak to KFC for the original-recipe chicken once a month or so. I also can't pass a Popeye's chicken without getting red beans and rice."

Pippa Calland, Villetta, LA: "Quarter pounder and fries from McDonald's."

Cesare Casella, Salumeria Rosi Parmacotto, NYC: "My guilty pleasure is Chipotle. I always get the same thing – a burrito bowl with hot sauce, carnitas, extra guacamole, fajita vegetables and a side of chips so I can dip. I eat it with a Corona, because I like to keep it fresh and simple."

Shaun Hergatt, SHO Shaun Hergatt, NYC: "Crispy tacos from Chipotle. It's so simple and light that it doesn't even seem like fast food to me, but topping it with extra sour cream, melted cheese and salsa is probably what makes it guilty. I do try to stay away from fast food but every time I walk past Chipotle in the airport when I visit DC, I cannot resist."

Daniel Holzman, The Meatball Shop, NYC: "I love Chicken McNuggets with BBQ sauce from McDonald's but I only allow myself to eat them when I'm traveling. I am a huge fan of McDonald's BBQ sauce (I could drink it by the gallon), and the Chicken McNuggets are the best vessel for the sauce."

Marc Murphy, Landmarc and Ditch Plains, NYC and judge on *Chopped*: "When I drive out to the beach early in the morning with my kids in the summer, I stop at McDonald's and get the Sausage Egg McMuffin. I don't even have to leave the car! What can I say? I like 'em!"

David Myers, Comme Ça, LA/Vegas: "The La Isla Bonita truck in Venice is close to my home, and they have some of the best tacos in Los Angeles."

Candace Nelson, Sprinkles, LA/NYC: "Wendy's Frosty. It was a childhood staple for me and I still love it... a refreshing version of my favorite cold dessert, a chocolate malt!"

Jason Neroni, Osteria La Buca, LA: "Double Double Burger from In-N-Out, 'animal-style' and a Neopolitan shake too!"

Aimee Olexy, Talula's Garden, Philadelphia: "Pop-Tarts. All flavors, toasted with butter on top. I hate to admit it, but it's true. Pop-Tarts are a childhood favorite that returned as a craving when I was pregnant, and it just won't go away (blueberry! cinnamon!)."

Ken Oringer, Clio, Toro, Boston: "Frozen White Castle hamburgers from 7-Eleven are my guilty pleasure. They're just the ultimate night snack - I grew up eating White Castle burgers and just love them."

Michael Psilakis, Fishtag, Kefi, NYC: "Any kind of pizza. I love pizza. It's really one of the only foods that tastes better reheated the next day. Pizza comes in so many varieties – Chicago-style, brick-oven, thin-crust, Sicilian – and I appreciate them all. It should be one of the five food groups."

Douglas Rodriguez, Alma de Cuba, Philadelphia: "I love fried chicken, especially at room temperature, not hot. I sometimes buy a bucket and prepare homemade sides. I can finish a bucket by myself and KFC is my favorite."

Chris Santos, Beauty & Essex, The Stanton Social, NYC, and judge on *Chopped*: "I love Five Guys – but you have to go 'off-peak' to order the bacon double cheeseburger with mustard, mayo and ketchup. Cajun fries on the side, extra well-done. Yum. It's an amazing hangover remedy."

Sam Talbot, Imperial No. Nine, NYC, Top Chef: "I grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, so I'm a sucker for Southern-style pimento cheese on toasted white bread with pickles. I only allow myself to eat it a few times a year when I'm home. Also, it helps that there's no place in New York that makes it quite like my mama does!"