

# The Best Raleigh Restaurants with a Past

Here's what you'll find in downtown Raleigh, where **restaurants in historic buildings** are creating some big-time buzz. BY LISA MOWRY

**I**t's no problem if the floors are scuffed and the brick's a little weathered. In the last few years, restaurants in historic buildings have become popular destinations in Raleigh's once-quiet downtown area. When you combine

interesting architecture with good food, the result is a winning pairing of yesterday's charm and today's ingenuity. Here, we tout five of our favorites among Raleigh's triumphs—and the specialty cuisines you can enjoy when you go.



Sitti, in an old Raleigh hotel



The Raleigh Times Bar

## Sitti: Lebanese

The Lebanese word for grandmother, *sitti*, sets the tone for this restaurant. This place is designed for socializing, with a long, communal table and menu items made for sharing, such as a sampler with hommos, baba ghanouj, fattoush, chicken shawarma, kibbee mikli, and cheese rolls. Sitti's location—the old Heilig-Levine building, once a downtown hotel—is highlighted by an Art Deco bar as focal point.

137 South Wilmington Street, [sitti-raleigh.com](http://sitti-raleigh.com) or 919/239-4070

Fried pickles at The Raleigh Times Bar



## The Raleigh Times Bar: Pub Grub

This popular pub references the name of the former afternoon newspaper in Raleigh and occupies the 100-year-old building where the paper was produced. Old press clippings decorate the aged walls, making for lively conversation. Look for innovative takes on bar food, such as BBQ Pork Nachos, fried pickles, and Belgian waffles. But you can't go wrong with the venerable Raleigh Times Burger. 14 East Hargett Street; [raleightimesbar.com](http://raleightimesbar.com) or 919/833-0999



Pit master  
Ed Mitchell

## The Pit: Barbecue

A circa-1930s meatpacking warehouse now lures barbecue aficionados from all over for pit master Ed Mitchell's interpretations of Southern classics. Traditional chopped-pork barbecue (with a vinegar-based sauce, eastern North Carolina style) is paired with such up-to-date sides as fresh vegetables and sweet potato fries. There's even barbecued tofu for vegetarians.

328 West Davie Street; [thepit-raleigh.com](http://thepit-raleigh.com)  
or 919/890-4500

Old buildings  
glow with new  
purpose—and  
great food.



Barbecue  
at The Pit