

Top Ten Restaurants in Michigan

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Top Ten Restaurants in Michigan

All 10 are pinned on the map above. Each row also links straight to its own location in Google Maps.

The MICHELIN Guide has announced an American Great Lakes edition that will cover Michigan, with Detroit as its anchor city, but the first ceremony is not due until 2027 and nothing has been awarded yet. Until that selection publishes there is no Michigan star, no Michigan Bib Gourmand and no Michigan Selected entry, so this list leads with James Beard Foundation recognition and then with restaurants notable enough to carry their own Wikipedia article.

The ten

#	Restaurant	City	Distinction	Cuisine
1	Zingerman's Roadhouse	Ann Arbor	James Beard Best Chef: Great Lakes to Alex Young (2011)	American regional
2	Al Ameer	Dearborn	James Beard America's Classics (2016)	Lebanese
3	Zehnder's	Frankenmuth	James Beard America's Classics (2020)	German-American, family-style chicken
4	Warda Pâtisserie	Detroit	James Beard Outstanding Pastry Chef to Warda Bouguettaya (2022)	French pastry
5	Halo Burger	Flint	Wikipedia-notable; trading since 1923	Burgers
6	Cliff Bell's	Detroit	Wikipedia-notable; opened 1935	American, jazz supper club
7	Buddy's Pizza	Detroit	Wikipedia-notable; founded 1946	Detroit-style pizza
8	Olga's Kitchen	Livonia	Wikipedia-notable; founded 1970	Greek-American
9	Slows Bar BQ	Detroit	Wikipedia-notable; opened 2005	Barbecue
10	Selden Standard	Detroit	James Beard Outstanding Restaurant semifinalist (2024)	New American

Why these ten

The top two rungs of the ladder are empty for Michigan and will stay empty until the American Great Lakes selection publishes in 2027, so the list starts on the James Beard rung. Michigan's James Beard record is real but thin, and thinner still once closed restaurants are removed. Jimmy Schmidt won Best Chef: Midwest in 1993 at the Rattlesnake Club and Takashi Yagihashi won the same award in 2003 at Tribute; both restaurants are long gone. Hajime Sato won Best Chef: Great Lakes in 2024 at Sozai in Clawson and

closed the restaurant in April 2025 to return to the Pacific Northwest, which takes the state's most recent win off the board. Michigan won nothing at the 2026 ceremony: Bar Chenin in Detroit was the state's only finalist and the Best New Bar award went to Rhode Island.

That leaves four live James Beard entries, ordered oldest award first, and six places to fill from the fourth rung. Those six are ordered longest-running first, which is what the ladder asks for when it says to prefer long-running and widely documented institutions. Selden Standard is the youngest of them and sits last, though it is the only one of the six that also carries a dated James Beard distinction of its own.

Two entries stretch the word restaurant and are worth flagging rather than hiding. Warda Pâtisserie is a Detroit bakery and café, not a dining room, but Warda Bouguettaya's 2022 Outstanding Pastry Chef medal is a national James Beard win and outranks everything on the fourth rung. Olga's Kitchen is a Michigan chain rather than a single house. Both stay because the ladder is about documented distinction, not about format.

Sources

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