Food. It’s supposed to be for nourishment, but if you don’t think the world thinks it’s more than that, stop fast forwarding through your DVD and watch commercials. Many are for candy, restaurants, food delivery, coffee shops, grocery stores.

Some people, yours truly for one, find eating different foods is a great way to learn about the culture of where I am. That can be in the state of Idaho or the country of India.

The last series of newsletters was an alphabet series on places to go. This series of newsletters will be about food. Basically, like some people I know who literally flew to San Francisco one weekend just to try a soup, this will be about planning your vacations around food.

Newsletter\_Food\_#1 is going to be about the foods in the southern part of the United States. We in the south are pretty passionate about food and culture, too. Nashville, TN is named one of the best foodie cities in America. Other southern cities in the top 10 are Miami, Orlando and Austin, Texas. I personally think Charleston, SC should be thrown in the top 10.

What’s the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of “southern food”? I polled some people from all over the world and the top 3 items were:

Fried chicken 39%

Biscuits & gravy 28%

Meat & 3 22%

Other items at a total of 11% were:

Grits, beans and cornbread, chicken and dumplings, fried green tomatoes, BBQ, smoked ribs and greens, peach cobbler, and banana pudding.

If you’re not drooling a little by now, then you have a problem. Or a full stomach.

If you google “10 top foodie cities in the south”, you’re going to see a lot of answers. Some articles say Atlanta is #1 (No offense to Atlanta, but having lived there, I can honestly say I’d be surprised if it was even in the top 10).

Miami was also on the list. I get that. Especially famous for Cuban sandwiches, the taste and flare of Cuban food is authentic! You’ll also find ceviche that’s superb and delicious Cuban coffee to sip on at cafes with open windows…you walk up, order your coffee, stand and drink it or on the go.

New Orleans was also on the list. Another one I totally get. If you like oysters, there you’ll certainly find them. The best tasting ones are charbroiled. Po-boy sandwiches are real there, not some hot dog bun with frozen fried shrimp stuck inside. And beignets…the most famous place for them is Café du Monde, but if you want some that are actually better and the line is half as long, let me know and I’ll give you that name.

Nashville is on the list (Nashville was on several lists for foodies) and there is a good reason for this. It’s where lots of up-and-coming chefs have made themselves known and there is a lot of variety of delicious foods here.

If you like a little history with your food, visit Antoine’s Restaurant in New Orleans, which was established in 1840. This is also where Oysters Rockefeller was invented.

While I’d normally avoid gas stations for food, not in Kansas City at Joe’s KC BBQ, where you can get some mouth-watering barbecue and yep, it’s in a gas station!

A little closer to my hometown, Demos’ Restaurants (located in Murfreesboro, Lebanon and Hendersonville) have won **over** 100 awards. Family-owned and operated, there is a 100% guarantee you’ll like this food that goes back several generations.

Near Texas A&M University, you’ll find Harvey Washbangers, half laundromat and half restaurant. Having a drink and a burger while you do laundry is the best way to do this awful chore.

Go to Memphis and eat at a restaurant that was once a beauty shop, and not just any beauty shop. This is where Priscilla Presley got her hair cut. You can even request seats under hair dryers and look at the original salon sinks while you sip on a mint julep.

In Arkansas, you can have lunch in a (grounded) Boeing 737 or a grounded river boat.

If eating inside grounded forms of transportation is your thing, grab a snack inside a double decker bus called Double D’s in Asheville, NC. I’ve had their coffee before, and their hours are odd, so it’s really just a place you stop at when you’re passing by.

If you asked me, though, Felicia if you could pick one city in the south for the best southern food, what would it be, I’d say Charleston, SC. The last time I was there, I stayed for 6 nights. I ate 3 meals a day and always at a different place. That’s 18 meals for all you non-mathematical folks. I didn’t eat a single meal that I found to be less than 4 out of 5. I also came back having gained a few pounds.

If you’re interested in a personal tour, either by flying or driving, where the focus will be on food, give me a shout at 615-417-9859 or info@imaginationtvl.com.

Next newsletter will be about food in the western United States!