



Relish the Moment

THE GREAT AMERICAN HOT DOG IS THE PERFECT SUMMERTIME INDULGENCE.

BY JEFFREY SPEAR

Even as summer is winding down, hot dog season remains in full swing. Confirmed by the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, they report that Americans will consume nearly 7 billion hot dogs from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

As an iconic American food, there's no such thing as a bad hot dog. Of course, some of the dogs, and some of the places serving them, are considerably better than others. They merit special mention, not just because they specialize in making excellent hot dogs, but for the enthusiasm and creativity they bring to this American culinary staple.

In this regard, one of Jacksonville's most enduring and appreciated hot dog joints, opened in 1969 for both drive-up and on-premises dining, is **All American Hot Dogs**. While their menu includes a wide range of burgers, pitas, and platters, their best sellers are all-beef hot dogs (\$3.59) and all-beef footlong hot dogs (\$5.69). An important side note is, when the restaurant first opened, it was one of the first in Jacksonville to offer camel riders and cherry limeade.

You'll find another longstanding favorite, **Hot Dog Hut**, in Jacksonville Beach just blocks from the sand. Open since 2000, they've been

delighting guests with an assortment of 100% beef specialties including their ever-popular Chicago (poppy seed bun, mustard, onions, tomato, relish, pickle, sport pepper, celery salt) and Carolina (chili, cheese, onions, slaw) dogs. If you like 'em spicy, wrap your lips around their Arizona and Texas dogs. So, order a dog, grab a beer, and pull up a chair.

Slightly off the beaten path in Fernandina Beach, earning numerous awards including "Best of Florida" for the last three years, is **Hot Dog House**. With more than 25 all-beef hot dog varieties on their menu, it's hard to know where to start. Their most popular creations

are The Murray topped with palmetto cheese, pepper jelly, bacon, onion; The Moose with chili, onion, Kong pico (a wonderful corn salad), cheese, jalapeños; and The Piglet with pulled pork, slaw, onion, BBQ drizzle; each so heavily loaded that you'll need to eat them with a knife and fork. While their 1/4-pound jumbo dog (\$10) is impressive, the true enthusiast will want to tackle the 1/2-pound 'bigfoot' (\$18).

One of Jacksonville's most recent arrivals, **Lizzy with the Glizzys**, opened earlier this year with an unmistakable passion for hot dogs. Operating under a brightly colored tent in parking lots across downtown and westside locations, visitors can choose between their 1/4-pound jumbo dog (\$6), 1/4-pound wagyu beef dog (\$10) or footlong hot dog (\$10). Each dog is 100% beef, cooked to order, then topped with everything from bacon bits, chili, onion and shredded cheese to coleslaw, jalapeno, sautéed onions and peppers, and sauerkraut. Plus, the chili dog bowl, made without the bun, is an enjoyable alternative. FYI: if you didn't know, the word 'glizzy' is the latest slang for hot dogs.

Another operator serving noteworthy dogs, with locations in Jacksonville and St Johns, is **Epik**. While they're best known for creatively conceived, gourmet inspired burgers, their 'gleezy's,' using all-beef with brisket dogs, double-smoked, served on a brioche roll, are in a class of their own. Whether you get the basic Hot Dog (\$11) with Carolina sauce; the K-Dog (\$14)—made with cheese sauce, kim chi, scallions, gochu-

jang aioli, gochujaru seasoning; or the Top Dog (\$13)—with cheese sauce, pickles, tomatoes, onions, everything seasoning; these dogs are impressive.

While not exactly a hot dog stand or restaurant, a discussion of noteworthy hot dogs would not be complete without mentioning the 1/4-pound **Kirkland Signature** 100% beef hot dogs (\$1.50), available only at the food court inside Costco stores. Served plain with a predictable selection of condiments, they've been attracting a substantial following, including Julia Child (a big fan) for years. In 2025 alone, this big box retailer sold more hot dogs than all 30 Major League Baseball stadiums combined.

Speaking of baseball, there's nothing like the hot dogs served at Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp games at VyStar Ballpark. While there are beef Jumbo Franks (\$5.25) available throughout the park, make sure to check out the incomparable Daddy Mac (\$12), a foot-long dog loaded with mac & cheese and pulled pork, available exclusively from the **Craft Cave** just inside the 3rd base gate. There's also The Slugger (\$20), a massive, two-foot sausage that's a blend of both beef and pork, served at both the Dog House and Brat Cart concessions on either side of home plate. These dogs are ballpark legends headed for the hall of fame.

Whether you enjoy them served from a cart, food truck, food court, concession stand or full-service restaurant, and no matter what toppings you choose, now's the time to bite into some meaty goodness, hot off the grill. 🌮

DOGGONE GOOD!

- Hot dogs were first sold at baseball games in 1893.
- Hot dogs were among the first foods eaten on the moon. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and "Buzz" Aldrin said they were great space food.
- The world record for eating hot dogs is held by Joey Chestnut - 83 hot dogs and buns in 10 minutes.
- According to President Barack Obama, ketchup "is not acceptable (on a hot dog) past the age of eight."
- "Nobody, I mean nobody, puts ketchup on a hot dog." Clint Eastwood (as Dirty Harry, *Sudden Impact*)
- A truly balanced diet consists of a hot dog in each hand.
- For those who remember the *Patty Duke Show* (ABC, 1963-1966), you may relate: "Patty loves to rock and roll, a hot dog makes her lose control."
- "They say hot dogs can kill you. How do you know it's not the bun?" Jay Leno 🌮

