



Let Them Eat Cake!

Duncan Hines' Birthday Gives Us a Reason to Share Our Roundup of the Best Cakes in MBPR's Client Destinations

There are so many reasons that the MBPR team loves representing Bowling Green, Kentucky, but at the top of the list is the fact that it's the hometown of Duncan Hines. You know his name from that boxed cake mix sitting in your pantry, but that's just part of his story. Here's a big wedge of American pop culture for you ... perhaps best served with a tall glass of cold milk.

Hines was a traveling salesman who could barely cook, but he became an accidental foodie simply because he needed to eat while on the road. As he traveled, he sought out the best and most affordable meals in each of the places he visited, then began sharing his reviews in Christmas card messages to his friends and colleagues. Eventually that evolved into a series of guidebooks through which Hines helped travelers make decisions about where they wanted to go and where they might want to dine and stay while they were there.

Put simply, Duncan Hines was one of America's first and most celebrated travel and food writers, and his thoughts about where to get the best cup of coffee or a tasty restaurant meal made him wildly popular. By the 1950s, he had lent his moniker to those cake mixes ... and now he's a household name.

In honor of Hines' birthdate – March 26 – the team at MBPR decided to pay homage to his penchant for sharing tips by creating our very own roundup of the best places in our client destinations to find – you guessed it – cake!

Bundt Cake from [The Cake Shop](#) at [Boyce's General Store](#) [Bowling Green, Kentucky](#)

Let's start close to where Duncan Hines himself did ... right near Bowling Green, Kentucky. Boyce's General Store is a foodie heaven, serving as the kitchen and retail shop for two phenomenal dessert bakers, The Pie Queen and The Cake Shop. Though the dynamic duo who bake the cakes create all sorts of flavors – the display case simply makes your mouth water – we're most intrigued by the bundt cakes. No matter which flavor you get, you can expect a cake that's moist and rich and covered in a cream cheese glaze. If you don't need to serve 10 to 12 of your closest friends, go for the mini sampler, which features one each of chocolate, apple spice, snickerdoodle and red velvet.

7-Layer Caramel Cake from [Caroline's Cakes](#) [Spartanburg, South Carolina](#)

For years, Caroline's Cakes has been sending its delicacies out through their successful mail-order service. Last year, though, the bakers finally opened a storefront along Beaumont Avenue in Spartanburg, meaning that visitors to this town along the northern border of South Carolina can finally walk into a shop for an immediate taste of one of the city's most delicious exports. The 7-Layer Caramel Cake features – surprise! – seven layers of moist yellow cake crowned by melt-in-your-mouth caramel icing. It's a Southern classic that has achieved ultimate success: making it to Oprah's list of favorite things! (It's on our list of favorite things, too, but we know that doesn't carry nearly as much prestige as Oprah's.)



Hummingbird Cake from [Lola's](#) [Historic downtown Covington, Louisiana Northshore](#)

When Hurricane Katrina blew through Louisiana in 2005, Keith and Nealy Frentz, who were both sous chefs at the world-famous Brennan's restaurant in New Orleans, found themselves out of work. They evacuated to Keith's hometown of Covington and opened their own restaurant just a year later. It's hard to decide on the very best meal at Lola's – we can confirm that everything on the menu is delicious – but one thing is certain: You must end that meal with a piece of hummingbird cake. Nealy uses her grandma's recipe to craft this moist banana cake that's filled with chunks of juicy pineapple and a dash of cinnamon. It's all topped off with a decadent cream cheese icing, ensuring that both the fruit and dairy food groups are beautifully represented. Hooray for Nealy's take on the food pyramid!



Lane Cake from [The Hummingbird Way Oyster Bar](#) [Mobile, Alabama](#)

Lane Cake was invented by Emma Rylander Lane more than 100 years ago as an entry in Alabama's state fair, with its recipe being officially published in a cookbook in 1898. It entered popular culture through multiple mentions in Harper Lee's 1960 novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and it ultimately bumped hummingbird cake (sorry, Nealy!) out of the way to become Alabama's official state dessert. The cake gets its incredible flavor from its rich icing, which is made with chopped pecans, golden raisins, coconut and Alabama whiskey and then spread between layers and layers of moist cake. Chef Jim Smith, proprietor of The Hummingbird Way Oyster Bar, one of Mobile's favorite restaurants, is the former executive chef for the State of Alabama ... so we can confirm he knows his way around the state's favorite dessert.

Italian Cream Cake from [Cajun Pecan House](#)

Cut Off, Louisiana, part of [Louisiana's Cajun Bayou](#)

The MBPR team is proud to represent an array of Southern destinations, and you'll see a running theme among them when it comes to their baked goods: moist cake, some sort of fruit or nut, cream cheese icing. Our favorite selection in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana, aka "Louisiana's Cajun Bayou," is the Italian Cream Cake from the charming Cajun Pecan House. The place lives up to its name and tosses pecans on and in pretty much everything. Lots of folks come here looking for a pecan pie or a praline – both of which are delicious – but the bakers also put plenty of their namesake nut into a yellow cake batter that's made extra-moist by the addition of coconut. Then they slather it in a rich cream cheese icing that's topped with additional coconut and – you guessed it – more pecans! It feels more Southern than Italian to us, but we are NOT complaining!



Caramel Cake from [Deep South Cake Company](#)

Orange Beach, Alabama

Your sweet tooth will get quite a workout at the Deep South Cake Company, which is home to a dazzling array of cakes and cupcakes. But the winner by a landslide – the bakery sells at least 1,400 of them between Thanksgiving and Christmas alone – is the legendary caramel cake. Shannon Rumley and her team put a lot of time and energy into this cake, which features a burnt sugar icing that Shannon's mother and grandmother taught her how to make when she was just a kid. Achieving the proper consistency for the icing requires constant stirring, so this cake truly is a labor of love. If you're not into caramel – or if you're loyal to Caroline's Cakes (see above) and feel guilty eating a caramel cake from anywhere else – don't fear: Shannon's second-best seller is a strawberry cake that cuts the sweet with a little zip from the berries.



Pink Champagne Cake from [Spark'd Creative Pastry](#)

The bake shop at the historic HOTEL DU PONT in [Wilmington, Delaware](#)

Speaking of strawberries, how about that classic romantic combo of berries and champagne? There's a lot to love about a stay in the historic HOTEL DU PONT in downtown Wilmington, but we think that being just a few paces away from the offerings at Spark'd, the hotel's bake shop, is one of the strongest motivators for booking a room here. The Pink Champagne Cake is the delightful merger of strawberry cake, strawberry jam and Champagne buttercream icing. With a little advance

notice, the hotel's pastry team is also happy to create a custom design to ensure that the cake you order is perfectly suited to its recipient.

**Gingerbread Cake from [Mrs. Johnnie's Gingerbread House](#)
[Lake Charles, Louisiana](#)**

A Louisiana bakery that proves that so-called seasonal cakes are amazing all year round is Mrs. Johnnie's Gingerbread House. Locals know – and visitors are finally discovering – that gingerbread is appropriate for every season, not just Christmastime. This low-key shop, which is easily mistaken for a neighborhood home, is hidden in plain sight. But those in the know (many of whom learned about the Gingerbread House thanks to a viral TikTok video last year) can tell you that this popular establishment offers a special cake that throws one heck of a Christmas party in your mouth. Leona Guillory Johnnie, the original owner of the bakery, spent 40 years perfecting the recipe. Today her son, Kevin Ames, continues her legacy, also serving traditional tea cakes and an array of pies.

Pinch Me Round from Jamaica

Look for the “Cake Man” on the beaches of Negril during a stay at [Sunset at the Palms](#)

It's not gingerbread, but some people swear that ginger is the magic ingredient in a dessert that our client resort in Jamaica turned us on to. It's called “gizzarda,” but it also goes by the nickname “Pinch Me Round.” Though it's technically more of a tart than a cake, the fact that a guy called the “Cake Man” sells gizzardas during his rounds on the beaches of Negril convinced us that the dessert warrants a spot on our list. Each islander has their own spin on this classic Jamaican dessert, which features a pinched pastry shell filled with plenty of sweet, grated coconut. Some bakers like to add a touch of ginger to give it a little kick. The dessert is said to have originated among Portuguese Jews who came to Jamaica to escape persecution, but over the years the Jamaicans have made the dessert truly their own. In fact, they say that the shape of the treat will remind you of the shining sun you'll see on your trip to the island.



Tricia's Jamaican Rum Cake from [Market Wego](#)

Westwego, Louisiana, in [Jefferson Parish](#)

If you can't get to Jamaica right now, you may be able to live vicariously with a visit to Market Wego, a proper Cajun market in southeastern Louisiana. Its owner, River Shay, says her grandmother, Tricia, simply loved visiting Jamaica. On each of her trips, Tricia liked to sample the island's rum cakes. Over the years, she took what she loved about each variation to create her very own recipe. Her cake truly pays homage to Duncan Hines, because Tricia swore by using only a Duncan Hines cake mix as the base ... and then adding an extra splash of rum at the end. Her recipe is still used to this day, and patrons order the cake at all hours – breakfast, lunch and dinner!

Flower Cupcakes from [Dollywood](#)

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Dolly Parton's theme park is known for its delicious meal offerings – around here, “park food” means way more than hot dogs and funnel cakes – but during Dollywood's annual Flower & Food Festival (this year held April 21 through June 11), the culinary team really steps up its game to make foods that are as attractive as they are tasty. One of our favorites is the collection of “flower cupcakes” available at Spotlight Bakery near the park's entrance. Each flower cupcake is a beautiful work of art that celebrates the natural beauty of the park, which is nestled in the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. And to bring it full circle, Parton recently collaborated with Duncan Hines' namesake company, resulting in her very own line of cake, muffin and biscuit mixes.



We hope you enjoyed reading about our cakes as much as we've enjoyed sampling them over the years. If you have questions about any of our client destinations or would like to plan a visit to one of these amazing places, don't hesitate to reach out!

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Yes! We have photos of most of these delicious cakes. Take a peek!

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/695r4yqcox589uc/AACWzUEOiUk4lqJLiYfG62S5a?dl=0>

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