



10 great places to drink in the Super Bowl action



In West Hollywood, Calif.: Travelers and now sports fans have been getting their kicks at Route 66's Barney's Beanery since 1920.
By Tamara Jaeger, Barney's Beanery

A couple of TVs, beer on tap and microwaved munchies used to define a "sports bar." Not anymore. Today's premier sports bars not only have multiple high-definition screens for watching the action, they also offer premium brews, boutique wines and a killer menu. Tanya Steel, editor in chief of epicurious.com, talks with Tim Smight for USA TODAY about places to watch Sunday's Super Bowl between the New England Patriots and the New York Giants.

Spitfire

Seattle

With 22 LCD TVs and two large-screen projectors, Spitfire attracts ardent sports fans every day of the week. "This airy, loft-like establishment also brings them in because of its authentic and full-flavored Mexican fare," Steel says. "Fish tacos, chorizo-and-cheese-stuffed mushrooms and roasted pork tamales are just a few of the offerings — complemented by 18 types of margaritas." 206-441-7966; spitfireseattle.com

Barney's Beanery

West Hollywood, Calif.

When Barney's Beanery opened in 1920 on historic Route 66 (one of three now in metro Los Angeles), travelers could trade in their license plates for a free beer. In the 1960s, the place was a hangout for rock icons such as Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix. "Today, patrons come not just to soak in the atmosphere and history, but to catch games on the 40 TVs," Steel says. "With over 130 beers and hundreds of items on its menu, Barney's has become one of L.A.'s top spots for sports fanatics." 323-654-2287; barneysbeanery.com

The Bulldog Northeast

Minneapolis

The Bulldog Northeast doesn't look like your standard sports bar. It has light brick walls, floor-to-ceiling windows, and a very whimsical modern bar. But sports-viewing is at its core, with flat screens visible from every seat. "Patrons also come for the Bulldog's creative take on traditional sports bar fare," Steel says. "The menu boasts a dozen 'designer burgers' — including a togarashi burger with Japanese coleslaw and wasabi mayo." 612-378-2855; thebulldogmpls.com



Frankie's Sports Bar and Grill

Dallas

Located deep in the heart of Dallas, Frankie's is nirvana for Texas sports fans. Patrons can view games on any of 26 high-definition plasma TVs, including two 10-foot-wide projection screens. "Frankie's offers a classic sports bar menu — but it's a menu on steroids," Steel says. "The nachos, for example, are topped with big strips of steak." 214-999-8932; frankiesbar.com

Thomas Street Tavern

Charlotte

Open 365 days a year, this popular family-owned, neighborhood tavern features an outdoor patio in front and a beer garden in back. "Both are pet-friendly, so you can bring your pooch and still check out the game," Steel says. "The menu tends toward the natural and organic, with most ingredients bought from local farmers markets and bakeries. There are 60 different bottled beers to complement the excellent cuisine." 704-376-1622; thomas-street-tavern.com

The Waterfront Café

Boston

Located in Boston's historic North End district, the Waterfront Café bills itself as an "Italian Pub" — and is apt to be crowded with rabid Patriots fans on Sunday. The menu is extensive, with homemade ravioli and pastas predominating, Steel says. "But they're also known for their seafood and juicy black-Angus burgers." An extensive wine list includes labels from all the regions of Italy. "If you tire of watching sports on the 15 televisions, there's also a great view of Boston harbor." 617-523-0613; waterfront-cafe.com

Jake Melnick's Corner Tap

Chicago

The motto splashed across the wall at Jake Melnick's says it all: "Why go home? You're here." This homey Chicago establishment offers 80 beers and a selection of authentic regional hot dogs to choose from. "You can also attempt the 8-pound monster burger," Steel says, "or the savory 17-Hour Slow Smoked Barbecue Beef Brisket Sandwich." There are also 17 flat-screen TVs strategically placed for sports fans. 312-266-0400; levyrestaurants.com

The Blue Seats

New York

Watch out for Giants fans. Tucked away in the heart of New York's Lower East Side, The Blue Seats is a sports bar with edge and attitude, Steel says. "It has more flat-screen televisions (62 at last count) than beers, martinis served 10 different ways, and a menu that includes items like bacon-wrapped scallops and a grilled vegetable-and-goat-cheese quesadilla." 212-614-1494; theblueseatsnyc.com

Average Joe's Sports Pub and Grub

Indianapolis

This popular Indianapolis hangout has dedicated itself to what it calls "the weekend warrior — the average beer-drinking, hot-dog-eating sports fanatic." These same amateur sportsmen and women — whose photos cover the walls — can watch the pros on the pub's 14 TVs (including two in the bathrooms). "Joe's offers chicken wings served 13 different ways, with a slate of premium beers to wash them down with," Steel says. 317-253-5844; averagejoes.com/averagejoes.html

Dino's Sports Lounge

Latrobe, Pa.

"Pittsburgh sports fans drive out to this beloved Latrobe bar for the atmosphere, and to chow down on Dino's most popular fare — the Wings of Joy," Steel says. Sports memorabilia adorns the walls, much of it dedicated to the Steelers, who train in Latrobe, about 35 miles or so from downtown Pittsburgh. "One side of Dino's is a family-friendly restaurant, and the other side a traditional sports bar," Steel says. "No matter which one you choose, you're sure to have a great seat for the game." 724-539-2566