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Chef Eric Ripert Says You Can ‘Taste’ the History in This Southern City—and Its Seafood Is ‘Incredible’

Acclaimed chef Eric Ripert shares what makes the Holy City’s food scene unique ahead of the Food & Wine Classic in Charleston.

By [Rachel Chang](#) | Published on September 16, 2026



Though he was born in Antibes, France, chef [Eric Ripert has been a tried-and-true New Yorker](#) for well over three decades, having helmed Midtown’s acclaimed [Le Bernardin](#) since 1994. But his success in maintaining the [three-Michelin-star restaurant](#) has also sent the culinary star around the world, including to Charleston, where he’ll return this fall for the [Food & Wine Classic](#).

“Charleston has a very rich culinary identity, shaped by so many cultures and traditions over generations,” the 61-year-old restaurateur told *Travel + Leisure* about South Carolina’s biggest city. While Southern food may have a distinct persona of its own, he mused about how the destination’s cuisine is a collection of diverse flavors. “You feel the influence of the Lowcountry, the South, African, the Caribbean, Native American, and European traditions, all coming together in a very unique way.”

The Holy City is chock-full of dining options, not just spanning a wide range of cuisines, but also brimming with creativity. That includes Southern favorites like [Miller’s All Day](#) and [Callie’s Hot Little Biscuit](#), mainstays like [Hank’s Seafood Restaurant](#), and modern favorites ranging from the Italian-inspired [Frannie and the Fox](#) and Mediterranean bistro [Bar 167](#) to the Chinese American spot [Jackrabbit Filly](#).

With that stamp of approval, Ripert is excited to be part of the third annual Food & Wine Classic in Charleston, which will be held from Nov. 13 to 15, hosted by *Food & Wine*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Southern Living*. The program includes four Grand Tastings at the Charleston Visitor Center (375 Meeting Street) with more than 100 brands and restaurants, as well as demonstrations, panels, and seminars led by over 40 chefs and experts.

Ripert will be part of the first day's festivities as CNBC's Scott Wapner moderates a [fireside chat with him](#) on Friday, Nov. 13, at 3 p.m. at the Gaillard Center. During the session, the acclaimed chef will talk about his cookbook of plant-based recipes, [*Mindful Cooking: Simple Recipes for Nurturing the Body and Soul*](#), out Oct. 6.

His ninth book delves into his time spent practicing meditation in Tibetan and Korean monasteries. He bridges those traditions with everyday rituals, as simple as pausing and setting intentions before starting to cook. He'll share stories from throughout his decades-long career, as well as discuss how both food and cooking can bring joy, well-being, and gratitude to everyone's lives.

Ripert's session is just one of many opportunities to get an insider taste of the culinary world, with others on the lineup including Andrew Zimmern, Carla Hall, Dan Richer, Kwame Onwuachi, Martin Yan, Nancy Silverton, and Tyler Florence.

Passes to the festival are currently on sale and include access to all four tastings, as well as your choice of five cooking demonstrations and seminars (pre-registration is required). Passes can be purchased on the [Food & Wine Classic in Charleston website](#).