

We're Lovin' It: The 19 Coolest McDonald's Restaurants

Upsize your next Big Mac attack with a side of scenery at these unbelievable McDonald's restaurants



From a plane to a train to a UFO, McDonald's has some impressive fast-food structures.

While most McDonald's restaurant designs are as formulaic as the [recipe for a Big Mac](#) ^[1], the [fast-food](#) ^[2] giant has more than a dozen cool spots around the world that add a side of ambiance to its meals.

With more than 35,000 restaurants in 119 countries, there are plenty of locations for The Daily Meal to choose from. Many of us have been guilty of stopping for a taste of home while touring the world. We're not alone. McDonald's serves approximately 70 million customers each day, so chances are, you might also be headed there soon. Why not add a side of scenery with your value meal?

More on McDonald's

- [10 Countries That Banned McDonald's](#) ^[3]
- [11 Things You Didn't Know About McDonald's](#) ^[4]
- [7 Unique McDonald's Happy Meals From Around the World](#) ^[5]
- [A Brief History of McDonald's 40-Year-Old Egg McMuffin](#) ^[6]
- [6 Ways to Spike a McDonald's Shamrock Shake](#) ^[7]

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From a plane to a train to a UFO, McDonald's has some impressive fast-food structures. But the restaurants weren't always so flashy. Founded in 1948 by brothers Dick and Mac

McDonald in San Bernardino, Calif., the first McDonald's was a self-service drive-in restaurant serving 15-cent hamburgers, potato chips, and soft drinks.

It wasn't long before franchised locations began opening up across the U.S.; the 500th restaurant opened in 1963 in Toledo, Ohio, and the first international locations opened in Canada and Puerto Rico in 1967.

MacDo, Maccas, Mickey D's...no matter what the locals call it, the majority of McDonald's restaurants are adorned with golden arches and maintain a similar image, but we have found the locations with the most novel designs.

[See last year's The World's Top 10 Coolest McDonald's.](#) ^[9]

While a few of our favorite McDonald's restaurants have closed like the **[McDonald's designed to look like a stern-wheel paddle boat on the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Mo.](#)** ^[10], **[the world's biggest McDonald's in London's Olympic Park](#)** ^[11] (built temporarily for the London Olympics in 2012 from 100-percent recyclable and sustainable materials) and **[Japan's Quarter Pounder](#)** ^[9] (a temporary marketing takeover to promote Quarter Pounders; the restaurant have all reverted back to regular McDonald's restaurants), there are plenty of memorable spots to enjoy the chain's famous French fries and shakes.

From cool ice cream from the cockpit of a decommissioned airliner in Taupo, New Zealand to a Happy Meal inside – where else? – a jumbo Happy Meal, we're sure you'll be lovin' these McDonald's restaurants as much as we do.

[Read on for more of the 19 Coolest McDonald's Restaurants.](#) ^[12]

*Lauren Mack is the New York City Travel Editor at The Daily Meal. Follow her on Twitter **[@lmack](#)*** ^[13].

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19. New York City

So black you could miss it on a dark night, the McDonald's on New York City's Canal Street is also one of the skinniest restaurants around, fitting right in with the rest of Chinatown's businesses and yet standing out due to its cast-iron exterior.

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18. Jurong Central Park, Singapore

The first McDonald's opened at Liat Towers in Singapore in 1979, and since then more than 120 McDonald's restaurants have opened on the island. **Singapore's first green McDonald's** (http://ketchup.com.sg/companyinfo_milestones.html) opened at Jurong Central Park in 2011. It received the inaugural Green Mark Award for Restaurants from Singapore's Building Construction Authority. With smooth edges, swaying palm trees, and breezy patio dining room, this is easily one of the most laid-back McDonald's restaurants in the world.

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17. Sochi, Russia

Near the Black Sea, this palatial McDonald's features a large terrace and a second floor balcony. This busy McDonald's was one of five built for the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014; **a move that helped grow McDonald's business in Russia** (<http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/SB-Blogs/On-The-Ground/2014/02/SochiSiteMcDonaldsRussia.aspx>) and allowed it to not only add restaurants to its Russian portfolio but menu items too, including smoothies, parfaits, and grilled chicken wraps.

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16. Bangkok, Thailand

The aesthetics are more bungalow than burger joint at this McDonald's in Thailand's capital, which boasts calming water fountains, teak flooring, and an airy veranda.

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15. Sedona, Ariz.

While nearly all 35,000 McDonald's locations around the world feature the company's signature golden arches, the "turquoise McDonald's" as locals have dubbed it, features turquoise arches. The city felt that the famous "golden arches" would be an eyesore and clash with the natural coloring of the area. McDonald's offered to swap out the yellow with turquoise to blend in with the local color palette.

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14. Ulsan, South Korea

We just couldn't stop staring at this McDonald's with its sweeping wing-like awning and kaleidoscope lighting. The combo McDonald's drive-thru and gas station is a welcome nighttime spectacle in southeast South Korea.

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13. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

The 10,000th McDonald's in Asia Pacific also happened to be Vietnam's first. It's all about the 24-hour drive-thru at Vietnam's first McDonald's — the first drive-thru restaurant in Vietnam. During opening day earlier this year, hundreds of fast-food fans pulled up in their scooters to order Big Macs, French fries, and McPork sandwiches.

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12. Savannah, Ga.

While its exterior may at first appear typical for the South, it's the inside that makes this one of the coolest McDonald's around. When it opened in 2005, this was the first 'green' McDonald's (which attained LEED certification) features large windows which reach 75% of the interior (reducing the need for electric lighting and heating), waterless urinals, and a cistern that harvests rainwater for irrigation. Outside, there is preferred parking for hybrid cars and bike racks.

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11. Paris, France

In a country brimming with Michelin star restaurants, “MacDo” as the locals call it is the largest fast-food chain in France. The fast-food giant has stepped up its game serving up French-inspired fare like the **McBaguette** (<http://www.mcdonalds.fr/produits/sandwichs/petit-mcbaguette>) and designed dining rooms that include comfy cushioned chairs and striking art gallery-like interiors.

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10. Barstow, Calif.

A popular stop for travelers on Interstate 15, the McDonald's here pays homage to the town's railroad heritage. When it first opened, the McDonald's consisted of three side-by-side railway cars. While the cars remain, the Barstow Station McDonald's has been redesigned with a more sleek and modern look.

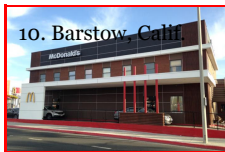
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9. Sydney, Australia

The Strand location on George Street looks more like a study in modern architecture than a fast-food joint. Design firm Juicy integrated printed graphic wall art, bold pops of orange, pink, white, and black, and cool lounge-like furniture. The glass and steel exterior is beautiful, reflecting the interior light.

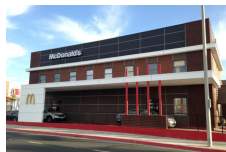
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8. Bray Town Hall, Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland

Around the back of this picturesque Irish building dating back to the 19th century, McDonald's has once again found a home in a historic building. The walk-up restaurant looks a tad out of place in such a pastoral setting, but with a location right inside the Town Hall, they've certainly figured out the most central location in the city!

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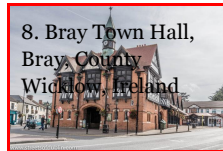
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7. New Hyde Park, N.Y.

A gorgeous Georgian mansion that dates back to 1795 houses one of the most beautiful McDonald's restaurants in the U.S. McDonald's originally purchased the house with the intent of tearing it down and building a standard restaurant, but the citizens of New Hyde Park managed to wrangle landmark status for the residence (whew!). This resulted in one of the most elegant restaurants in the McDonald's franchise, complete with a glassed-in veranda seating area and a grand staircase.

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6. Rome, Italy

This marble- and mosaic-filled restaurant is among the fanciest McDonald's locations we know of and has become a tourist attraction in its own right. Located in historic Piazza di Spagna next to the Spanish Steps, the restaurant, which has a large salad bar, created an uproar when it opened in 1986 but has since succeeded for the most part in blending in with the ancient city's architecture.

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5. Melbourne, Australia

The Art Deco McDonald's in Clifton Hill, Victoria was once an old hotel. Today, the neon lit, multi-story Macca's (the moniker folks Down Under have given the American chain) serves burgers, French fries, and shakes in a retro dining room.

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4. Roswell, N.M.

Roswell has had its fair share of strange UFO sightings since the first supposed alien crash landing in 1947, and this one might rank high on that list. Downtown Roswell's "Unofficial crash site" McDonald's location boasts a UFO-shaped exterior complete with florescent lights. The restaurant also features flying rockets with Ronald McDonalds in the Playroom. Might be time for a road trip out West!

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3. Porto, Portugal

The opulent McDonald's in the hillside city of Porto in northern Portugal is housed in the former Imperial Café, an historic coffee shop from the 1930s. It has become a popular tourist spot for visitors to admire the Art Deco stained glass windows, embellished facades, and ornate chandeliers.

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2. Dallas, Texas

They say everything's bigger in Texas, and for one McDonald's, that is decidedly true. Driving down Montfort Drive, you'll see the world's biggest Happy Meal. The inside of the restaurant features Austrian crystal chandeliers, Ralph Lauren wallpaper, granite floors, mahogany booths, and a playroom. Fancy digs for burgers and fries!

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1. Taupo, New Zealand

Taupo, New Zealand has the honor of being home to the only McDonald's location that includes a decommissioned plane as part of the restaurant. The former DC-3 passenger plane was built in 1943 and ferried passengers around the country for a New Zealand airline company called SPANZ during the 1950s and 1960s. After her passenger life, she carried large loads of manure. The plane's last flight was in October 1984, and she was brought by road haulage to Taupo by a local aircraft enthusiast and placed in her current position, originally as a feature attraction for a car dealership called the Aeroplane Car Company. McDonald's purchased the plane in 1990 when they built the McDonald's, which opened that November. While the restaurant is separate from the plane, diners can enjoy their meals inside the plane. Now that makes for one happy meal!

