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## America's Greenest Restaurants of 2013

We look at the country's best, most eco-friendly eateries



Uncommon Ground

Uncommon Ground in Chicago boasts the country's only organic restaurant rooftop farm.

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Earth Day comes but once a year — on April 22 to be exact — and it's a time to reflect back on some of the country's best restaurants that have made every effort to go green. These places are striving to better our world through their cuisine and perhaps more importantly, how they create, serve, and dispose of that food.

While "going green" has been a trend throughout the restaurant industry as a whole over the last decade,

actually putting that into practice may often prove to be difficult and time-consuming. However, there are many restaurants throughout the U.S. that are taking significant steps to become more eco-friendly.

### **[Click Here for the America's Greenest Restaurants of 2013 Slideshow](#)**

At the forefront of this movement is the **[Green Restaurant Association](#)** (GRA), which works with restaurants on environmental assessment and consulting, certification, and green public relations and marketing. The GRA has created a rating system for restaurants (with four stars being the best) that takes into account water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable furnishings and building materials, sustainable food, energy, disposables, and chemical and pollution reduction. The system will award two stars to certified restaurants that earn a minimum of 100 points. Restaurants need 175 points for three stars, and 300 for the highest rating of four stars.

The GRA also has an entire database that lists certified restaurants along with their ratings. For example, wrap chain **[Boloco](#)** scores a two, as does **[Bouchon](#)** in Napa Valley. Three-star restaurants include Mario Batali's **[New York](#)**  flagship **[Babbo](#)**, as well as **[Michael Jordan's Steak House](#)** in Chicago.

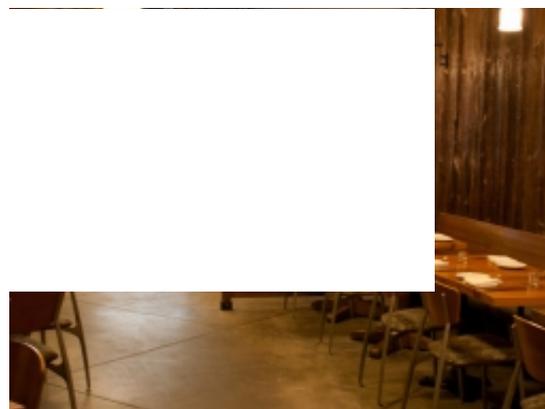
This year, Chicago-based **[Uncommon Ground](#)** usurped the reigning greenest restaurant in America, **[The Grey Plume](#)** in Omaha, Neb. Uncommon Ground took green to a whole new level with its launch of an organic rooftop garden.

To receive a top four-star rating isn't an easy feat by any standard, but Michael Oshman, CEO and founder of GRA, believes many restaurants are now responding to the desire to go green. He noted there has been an uptick in the number of universities, like Northeastern University, Boston University, and Harvard University, who are focusing on green dining throughout the campuses and residence halls. "Some of the best schools in the country are now putting their sustainability commitments into practice," he told us.

The GRA also entered into a partnership with the city of Asheville, N.C., to create a green dining destination. **[Dine Green Asheville](#)** provides consumers with a plethora of eco-friendly dining options in one locale. Oshman also told us that the GRA is currently working with the Meadowlands **[Sports](#)**  Complex in New Jersey, soon to be home of the next Super Bowl, to launch a suite of eco-friendly restaurants as well.

The GRA's list of the greenest restaurants was formulated by their star ranking system, but to compile our list (**[click here for last year's](#)**), we decided to dig a little deeper and find the best restaurants across the country that also boast top green certification. The Daily Meal's list is comprised of three- and four-starred GRA restaurants throughout the U.S. that feature superb cuisine in addition to unique approaches to bettering the growing green restaurant community.

Read on for our list of the best green restaurants across America.



**[Slideshow: America's Greenest Restaurants of 2013 Slideshow](#)**