

Going to a baseball game in the U.S. isn't just for people who love the game. It's a fun activity for the whole family. American teams play baseball from April until October when the weather in the States is usually nice. So people like to go to the ballpark to enjoy a nice evening with a crowd and root for their city's team. And one of the things they like to do while they're watching the game is to eat.



Traditional ballpark food is generally not very healthy—hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn, pretzels, soft drinks, and beer are some of the things you see at every park. To make it easier for fans, vendors walk around the seats in the stadium selling these snacks and drinks, but there are also counters around the stadium that sell food and beverages.



Lately, though, ballparks have started to sell better food. There are 30 professional baseball teams in 27 different cities, and ballparks in every city now have restaurants that sell food that is typical of that city or part of the country. You can get barbecued ribs, fish sandwiches, pizza, nachos, and lots of other special treats at parks in the U.S.



So if you travel to the States, don't be afraid to go to a baseball game because you don't understand the sport—a trip to the park is fun even if you aren't a fan.



At baseball games in the U.S., it's a tradition to sing the national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, before the game starts. Everyone stands and lots of folks put their right hand over their heart when they do this. So make sure your hands and mouth aren't full of food and join in.



Another patriotic song, *America the Beautiful*, is so popular that it's like a second national anthem, and people often sing this song before baseball games instead of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Lots of Americans say they prefer it because it's easier to sing, easier to understand, and has a prettier melody.

America the Beautiful was composed by Samuel Ward, and Katherine Lee Bates wrote the lyrics in 1893.

A complete version of the lyrics is given below. Like the version of the song you can listen to on the [CCAA Website], Americans usually only sing the first and fourth stanzas or just the first stanza.

*O beautiful for spacious skies
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good, with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea*

*O beautiful for Pilgrims' feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw
Confirm thy soul, in self-control
Thy liberty in law*

*O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success, be nobleness
And every gain divine*

*O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good, with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea*