

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

America's Best Small Food + Culture Town

RUNNER UP

McCook, Nebraska

McCook, Nebraska, has a population of just 7,500, but this small prairie town boasts a culinary and cultural scene that far outpunches its weight class. It's home to the only James Beard Award-winning eatery in the state, Sehnert's Bakery. In 2019, this homey



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SEHNERT'S BAKERY

spot was honored as an American Classic for its bierocks (a German-style, doughy hot pocket filled with kraut or cabbage). McCook's contemporary art scene is another highlight, with a newly finished, community-led downtown mural. But, perhaps the most striking offering in McCook is the 6th Floor Project, a purposeful gallery nestled on the top floor of the Keystone Business Center and offering a rare birds-eye view of town. This innovative effort seeks to elevate the art of under-appreciated creators from across the globe while reinvigorating rural Nebraska. On the festival front, the Buffalo Commons Storytelling and Music Festival just celebrated its 26th year of programming with a cowboy twist.

— Katy Spratte Joyce