



NCAA Tournament Final Four power rankings

SPORTS, 1B

Clarion Ledger

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MS chefs miss James Beard Awards

None from state make 2026 finalists

Bonnie Bolden
Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Mississippi chefs have officially been shut out of the 2026 James Beard Awards. On March 31, the food and restaurant website Eater.com published

the finalists for 2026.

The James Beard Foundation has honored phenomenal and creative chefs and restaurants across the U.S. The nonprofit is named for Beard, a chef, cookbook author and TV personality. The organization honors exceptional talent in the kitchen and hospitality leading to a great guest experience.

The "Best Chef: South" had 20 semifinalists. The region covers Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Puerto Rico.

The Mississippi semifinalists were Hunter Evans, of Elvie's in Jackson, and Austin Sumrall, of White Pillars in Biloxi. The two were also semifinalists in 2025. This was Evans' fourth nomination and Sumrall's third.

Has there ever been a Mississippi James Beard Award winner?

Multiple Mississippi chefs and a restaurant have won James Beard Awards.
● 2019 Winner Best Chef: South:

Vishwesh Bhatt was at Snackbar in Oxford

● 2009 Winner Best Chef: South: John Currence of City Grocery in Oxford

● 2007 Winner - American Classic: Doe's Eat Place in Greenville

The state also has several nominees over the years.

*Contributing: Mary Boyte
Bonnie Bolden is the Deep South Connect reporter for Mississippi with USA TODAY Network. Email her at bbolden@gannett.com.*



Horn Island, a Mississippi Gulf Coast barrier island south of Ocean Springs, is part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. The wildlife and pristine beaches draw day visitors, campers, and boaters. The island, seen May 21, 2025, is a slice of wilderness for those who seek it. BARBARA GAUNTT/CLARION LEDGER

Visit this coastal gem

Mississippi's most popular attraction revealed

Bonnie Bolden Mississippi Clarion Ledger | USA TODAY NETWORK

Mississippi has a lot of fun tourist stops if you want to plan a trip close to home.

Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo. Clarksdale has The Devil's Crossroads, a legendary spot for blues musicians. Jackson has world-class museums. The coast has beautiful white sand beaches. And you can get great food across the state.

But what brings the most people here?

TUI Musement started measuring the most popular attractions in each state in 2021. It's based on Google Travel data. Here's the latest data.

Most popular attraction in Mississippi

Gulf Islands National Seashore was named the top attraction in Mississippi.

This chain of barrier islands runs along the coasts of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

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Fort Massachusetts on Ship Island off the Mississippi coastline has been designated as a site in the Underground Railroad network. Documents show that freedom seekers came to the island during the Civil War to enlist with the U.S. Navy to escape slavery. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Deputy, suspect die after shooting

Authorities: Gunfire exchange followed 'brief foot pursuit'

Pam Dankins
Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Authorities said a Jackson County deputy and a suspect were killed Wednesday, April 1, during a shooting on the Mississippi Coast.

Jackson County Sheriff John Ledbetter released a press release Thursday, April 2, stating deputies were dispatched around 11 p.m. Wednesday to a reported disturbance at the Reserve at Gulf Hills Apartments Homes located at 6721 Washington Avenue in Ocean Springs.

Bailey Martin, spokesperson for the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, said upon arrival, a deputy engaged in a "brief foot pursuit" with an individual.

Ledbetter said an "exchange of gunfire" then occurred that involved a female individual and deputy Mike Jimerson. Both the female and Jimerson received fatal injuries.

Authorities said the unidentified

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Authorities said Jackson County deputy Mike Jimerson and a female individual were killed during an April 1 shooting on the Mississippi Coast. PROVIDED BY JACKSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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