

## HOTTEST DOGS

# 7 THE EATS

## SAMPLING SUMMER'S BEST

Back in 1993, Manolis Alpogianis, his brother and a friend piled into a Jeep and hit the road, eating hot dogs in cities across the U.S. The trip inspired Alpogianis to create America's Dog (locations at Navy Pier and the Buckingham Fountain Cafe), which serves 13 kinds of city-influenced hot dogs. Alpogianis, who eats approximately 100 hot dogs a year and a few years ago held the Guinness record for creating the world's longest hot dog (just over 16 feet), knows a thing or two about wieners. He says it's not just about the dog, but about what you associate with it: "fun, barbecues, parties, summer. It's a feel-good food."

» **HIS FAVORITE:** The Chicago dog. "It has everything: the sweet, crunch, spice and the mustard to give it zing."

» **BEST PLACE TO EAT IT:** By Buckingham Fountain. "When you're right there on a warm summer's night, next to the crown jewel of the city looking out on the lake, it's beautiful."

» **WASH IT DOWN WITH:** A good root beer or cream soda.

» **CHILDHOOD FAVORITES:** Fluky's (now U Lucky Dawg) (6821 N. Western Ave.) and Wolfy's (2734 W. Peterson Ave.).

On July 4, Alpogianis and his crew will be at the Taste of Chicago with the Guinness Book judges, hoping to make history again—this time with a 72-foot-long hot dog.

## MORE HOT DOG HAVENS

» **HOT DOUG'S:** You've got to love a place that bills itself as The Sausage Superstore and Encased Meat Emporium. Sure, you can order up a Chicago-style dog, but why not try the cognac-infused smoked pheasant sausage with Port-Dijon mustard cream and white-truffle cheese? At least 18 exotic choices. 3324 N. California Ave., 773-279-9550.

» **SUPERDAWG DRIVE-IN:** Few places are left where a car-hop takes your order and delivers your meal to your car. And, of course, you won't be able to get a "regular" hot dog here, only Superdawgs, which are bigger. The best part is that the hot dogs come packaged with the fries, just as they did in the 1950s. In that little box, the fries and steam mix all the flavors that will

take you back to the days before you cared what it would cost in Weight Watchers points. 6363 N. Milwaukee Ave., 773-763-0660.

» **WIENER CIRCLE:** The sign outside this late-night eatery advertises the char-burger, but Lakeview residents know that on balmy nights after the bars close, this is the place to grab a great Chicago dog. 2622 N. Clark St., 773-477-7444.

» **CHOO CHOO RESTAURANT:** For a unique dining experience—especially with the kids—you can grab your Chicago Red Hot off a train. For 55 years, hot dogs, chili dogs and franchisee dogs (hot dogs wrapped in American cheese and thick bacon) have been delivered to diners in baskets on the cars of an O-gage model train. 600 Lee St., Des Plaines, 847-391-9815.

Manolis Alpogianis at Navy Pier

