

## America's Best Happy Hours

Drink in the happy hour deals from Chicago to New Orleans.

From [March 2011](#) By [Joshua Pramis](#)

It's a long workday, filled with meeting after meeting, and you even eat your lunch *al desco*. When it finally ends, all you want is to kick back, relax, and forget your to-do lists.

You're in luck: it's now officially happy hour, corporate America's cure for the long workday.

It was the U.S. Navy that coined the term "happy hour," referring to free time when performances (and imbibing) took place. But the act of drinking early in the day really took shape during Prohibition. Since it was illegal for restaurants to serve booze, the logical solution was to throw a few back before dinner.

And aren't we glad for it?

Today, happy hour is so common that most people pick their after-work destination based on the deals they can score. What better way to unwind after clocking out than by gathering for some low-cost cocktails? But this isn't the Prohibition Era anymore, and we like to play on the safe side, so we found places that also serve up great food, giving working stiffs—or travelers—the option of soaking up some of the half-priced libations.

It's no secret that drinking establishments have made a tradition of leaving peanuts and pretzel snacks on the bar. The saltiness keeps folks thirsty and coming back for more (and costlier) pours. But at [San Francisco's](#) Lafitte, a pier-top restaurant overlooking the Bay, that salt comes in a much greasier, tastier form: "flights" of bacon. To boot, the specialty beers will cost you only \$3.

[Washington, D.C.](#)'s Agora, a chic-yet-inviting spot in Dupont Circle, not only has a traditional early-evening happy hour, but it invites folks to return for a late-night rally. That's right, a *second* happy hour. You'd better take advantage of the \$4 plates of flatbread and Greek/Turkish spreads to help keep the alcohol in check.

While bargains abound at most happy hours, [New Orleans'](#) Café Adelaide reigns supreme, with its lunchtime martini special. The cost? A mere quarter per tipples. Order a po'boy or you might be calling it an early night...er, afternoon.

So ditch the office and grab your *drinking* caps. These watering holes will quench your thirst and fill your stomachs—without breaking the bank.

### Lafitte, San Francisco

**Happy Hour:** Daily, 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

While drink specials here are great (Cuba Libres for \$6, anyone?), what really has our mouths watering is the food. For just \$10, you can enjoy a "flight" of bacon—Zoey's Apple Smoke, Hobb's Thick Cut, Golden Gate Meat Artisanal, and Fatted Calf Smoked. Wash all that salt down

