

January 2024

The Retail Opportunity of Stadiums

Dive into the location intelligence to understand the significant retail and dining opportunities in and around major stadiums – both during games and in the off-season.

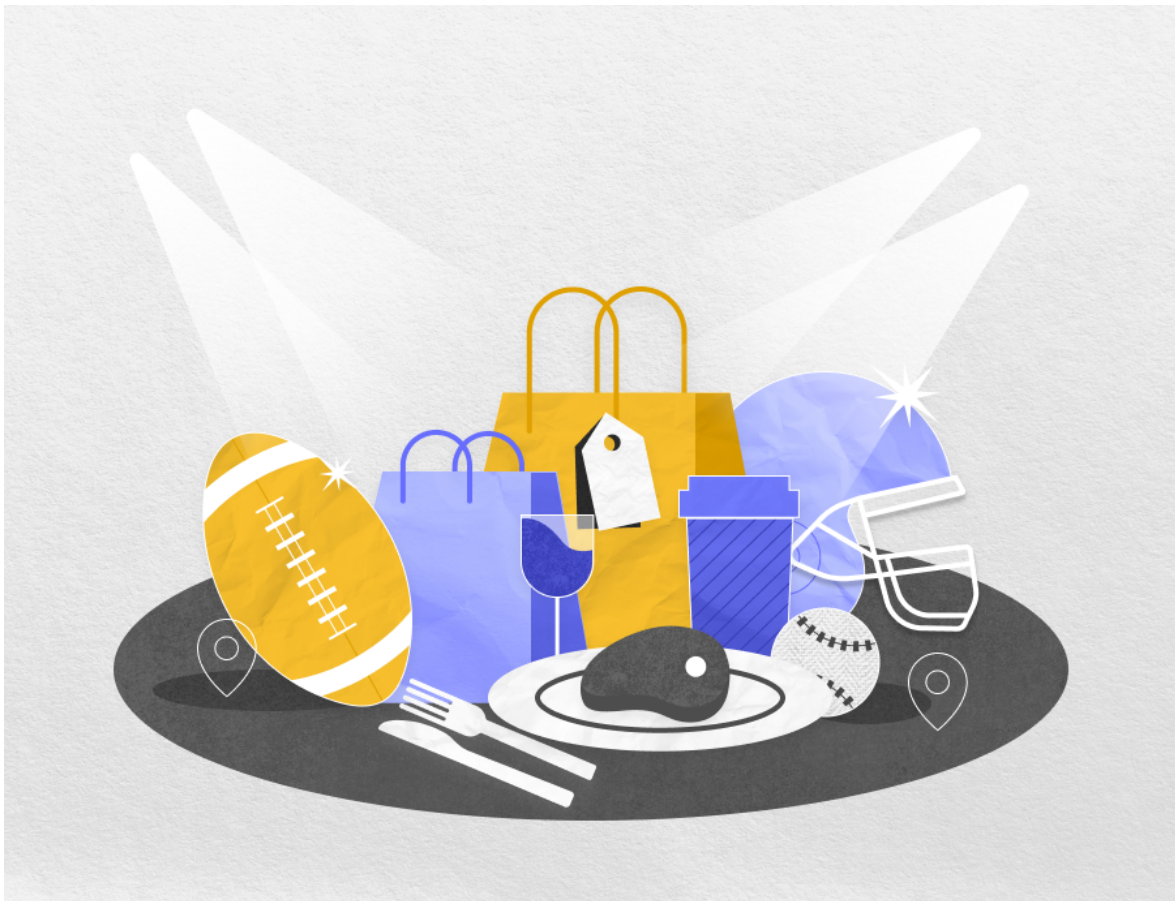


Table of Contents

Play Ball	2
Major League Visits	3
Different Visitation Patterns During the On- and Off-Season	3
Stealing Bases, Winning Retail	4
A Higher-Income Visitor Base	4
An Advertising Slam Dunk	5
Distinct Retail Choices by Team	5
Fan Tastes: Beyond the Bleachers	6
End Zone Eats	7
Different Events Drive Different Dining Patterns	8
Pitches to Plates	10
Final Buzzer	12
Key Takeaways	12

Play Ball

Sports leagues like the NBA, NFL, and MLB [boast billion-dollar revenues](#) – and the venues where these games unfold hold significant commercial potential in their own rights. Many stadiums host concerts and other shows in addition to regularly held sporting matches and can accommodate tens of thousands of spectators at once – creating massive retail, dining, and advertisement opportunities.

This white paper analyzes location intelligence metrics for some of the biggest stadiums across the country to reveal the commercial potential of these venues beyond simple ticketing revenue. Where do visitors of various stadiums like to shop? Do specific sporting and cultural events impact the nearby restaurant scene differently? How can stadium operators, local businesses, and advertisers tailor their offerings to a stadium's particular audience and make the most of the stadium and the space throughout the year?

We take a closer look below.

Major League Visits

The three major sports leagues – the National Basketball League (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the National Football League (NFL) – play at different points of the year, and the number of games each league holds during the season also varies.

MLB leads in game frequency, with each team playing [162 games](#) during the regular season, which runs approximately from April through September. Basketball season is also around six months – roughly from mid-October to mid-April – but each NBA team plays only [82 games](#) a season. And the NFL has both the shortest season – 18 weeks running from early September to early January (with the pre-season starting in [August](#)) – and the [fewest](#) number of matches per team. Understanding the monthly visitation patterns for the various types of stadiums can help advertisers, stadium operators, and other stakeholders ensure that they are leveraging the full potential of the venue throughout the year.

Different Visitation Patterns During the On- and Off-Season

Unsurprisingly, the sports arenas serving the different leagues see visit spikes during their leagues' respective season. But comparing visit numbers throughout the year to

the average monthly visit numbers for each category in 2023 reveals that the relative visit increases and decreases during the on- and off-season vary for each type of stadium.

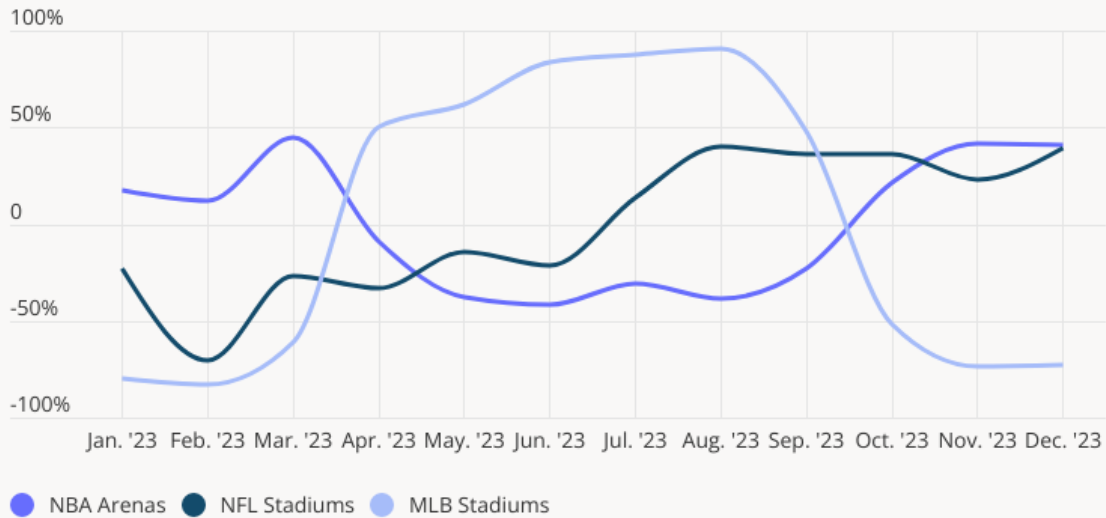
MLB stadiums display the steadiest visit strength during the on-season – perhaps due to MLB’s packed game schedule. MLB tickets also tend to be relatively [affordable](#) compared to tickets to pro [football](#) or [basketball](#) matches, which may also contribute to MLB’s consistently strong visit numbers throughout the season. During the MLB off-season, baseball fields – which tend to be uncovered – are relatively empty.

The seasonal visit spike to NBA arenas is less steady. The beginning and end of the season see strong peaks, and visits slow down slightly during the mid-season months of January and February. Visits then drop during the off-season spring and summer, but the off-season visit dip is not as low as it is for MLB fields – perhaps because the NBA arenas’ indoor nature make them suitable locations for concerts and other non-basketball events.

Meanwhile, NFL stadiums see the least dramatic drop in visits during the NFL off-season, as these venues’ enormous size also make them the ideal location for [concerts](#) and other cultural events that draw large crowds. These arenas’ strong almost year-round visitation numbers mean that sponsors and advertisers looking to expand beyond sports fans to reach a diverse audience may have the most success with these venues.

MLB Stadiums See the Biggest Visit Spikes During Game Season

Change in Visits Compared to Monthly 2023 Visit Average



Stealing Bases, Winning Retail

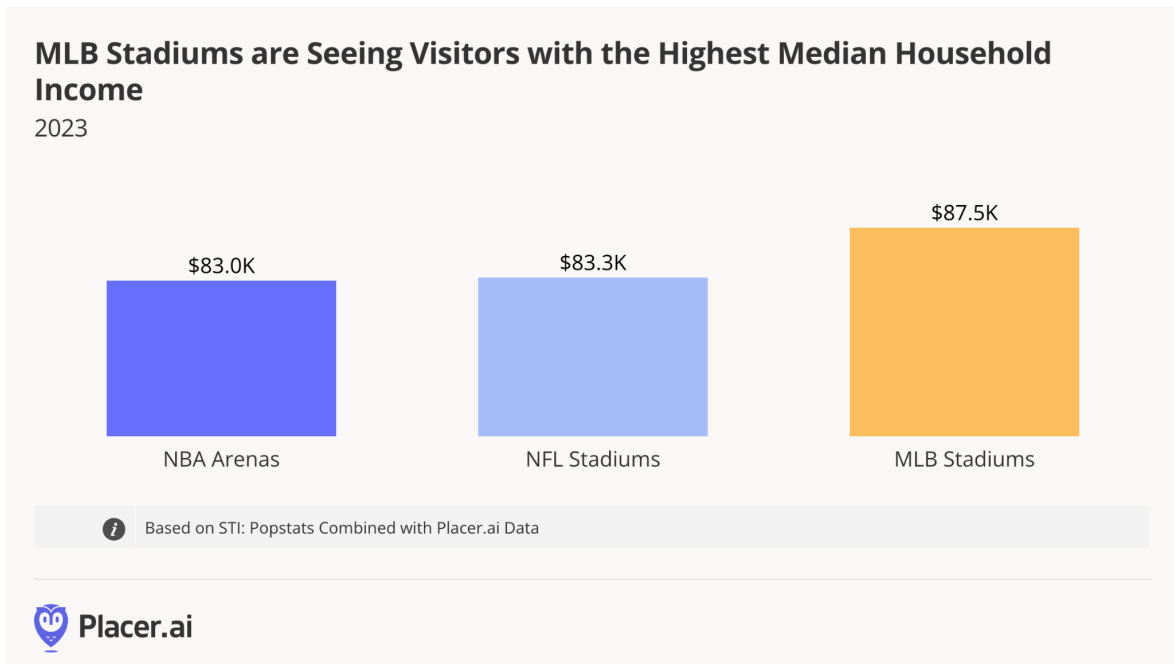
A Higher-Income Visitor Base

Although MLB offers the most [budget-friendly outing](#), combining [STI: Popstats](#) demographic metrics with [trade area](#) data reveals that MLB stadium visitors reside in higher-income areas when compared with visitors to NBA or NFL stadiums.

Baseball fans tend to be [older](#) than fans of the other sports, which could partially explain MLB stadium visitors' higher household income (HHI). The combination of lower ticket prices, higher median HHI among fans, and many games per season offers baseball stadiums significant opportunities to engage effectively with their fan bases.

But while NBA and NFL stadium attendees may not come from as high-income areas as do MLB stadium visitors, fans of live basketball and football still reside in trade areas with a higher HHI compared to the nationwide median. So by leveraging

stadium space, advertisers and other stakeholders can reach tens of thousands of relatively high-income consumers easily and effectively.



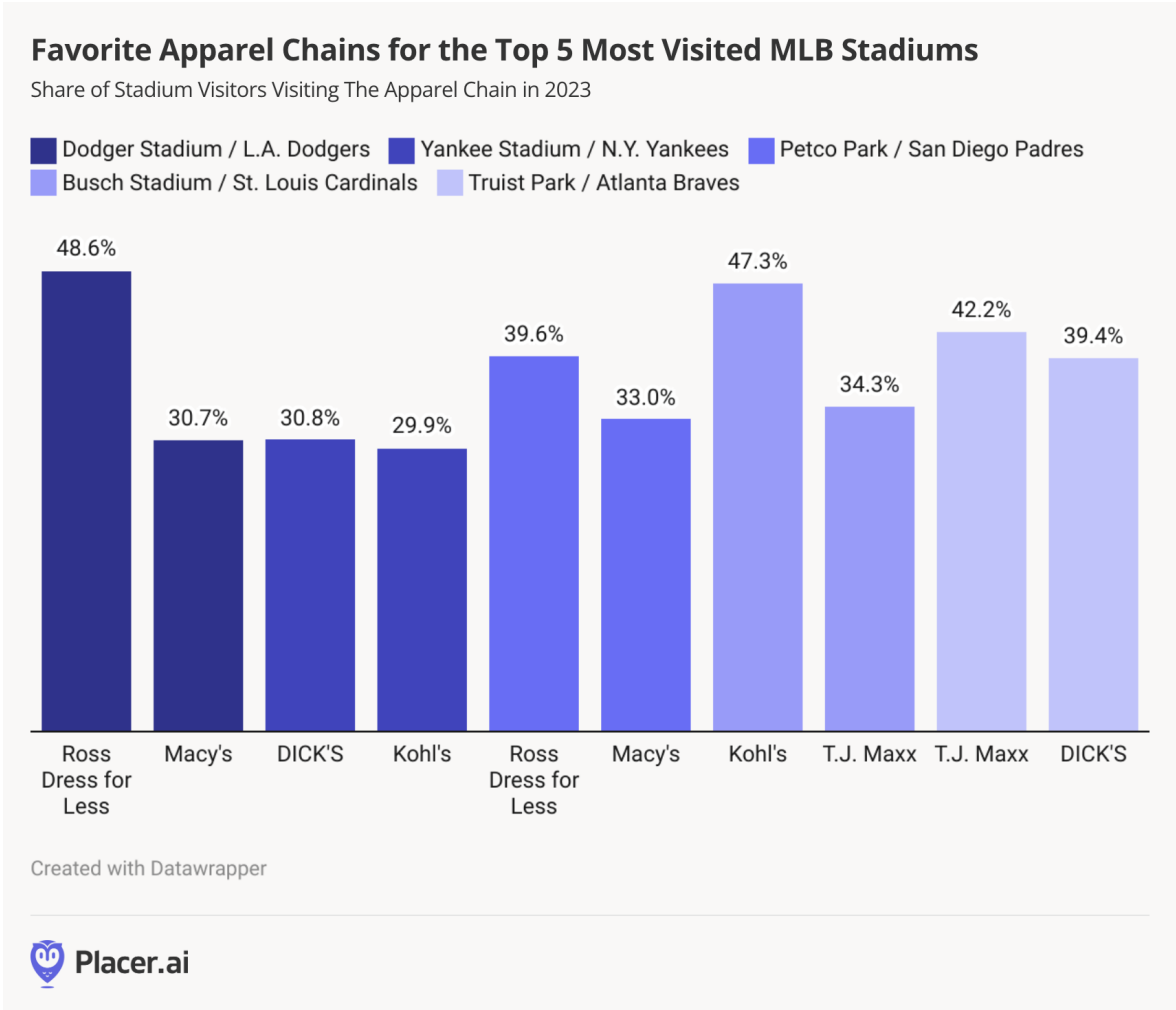
An Advertising Slam Dunk

Sports fans are known to be passionate, engaged, and willing to [spend money](#) on their team – but stadium visitors also shop for non-sports related goods and services. Retailers and advertisers can draw on location analytics to uncover the consumer preferences of stadium visitors and tailor campaigns, sponsorships, and collaborations accordingly.

Distinct Retail Choices by Team

Visitation data to the [top five](#) most visited MLB stadiums during 2023 showed differences between the apparel and sporting goods shopping preferences of the various stadiums' attendees. While 39.4% of visitors to Truist Park also visited DICK's in 2023, only 30.8% of Yankee Stadium visitors stopped by the sporting goods retailer in the same period. Similarly, while 29.9% of visitors to Yankee Stadium frequented Kohl's, that percentage jumped to 47.3% for Busch Stadium visitors.

Harnessing location intelligence to see the consumer preferences of a stadium’s visitor base can help retailers, stadium operators, and even team managers choose partnerships and merchandising agreements that will yield the most effective results.



Fan Tastes: Beyond the Bleachers

Sports and snacks go hand in hand – what would a baseball game be without a hot dog or peanuts? But while every stadium likely provides a similar core of traditional game day eats, each venue also offers a unique set of dining options, both on- and [off-premise](#). And by leveraging location analytics to gain visibility into stadium-goers dining habits, stadium operators and local food businesses can understand how to best serve each arena’s audience.

End Zone Eats

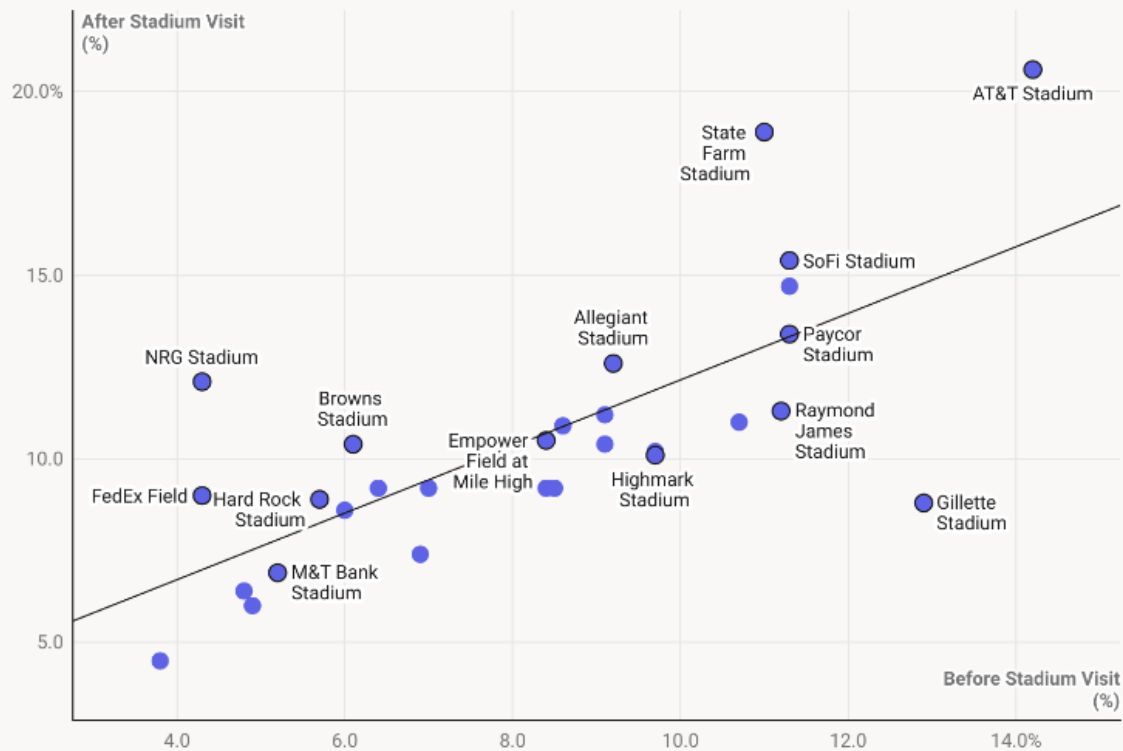
Mapping where stadium visitors dine before and after games can help stakeholders in the stadium industry reach more fans.

The chart below shows the share of visitors coming to a stadium from a dining venue (on the x-axis) or going to a dining venue after visiting the stadium (on the y-axis). The data reveals a correlation between pre-stadium dining and post-stadium dining – stadiums where many guests visit dining venues before the stadium also tend to have a large share of guests going to dining venues after the event. For example, the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, saw large shares of visitors grabbing a bite to eat on their journey to or from the stadium, while the M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Maryland saw low rates of pre- and post stadium dining engagement.

These trends present opportunities for both local businesses and stadium stakeholders. For example, venues with high dining engagement can explore partnerships with local restaurants, while those with lower rates can build out their in-house dining options for hungry sports fans.

Pre- and Post-Game Dining Trends Vary Significantly Across NFL Stadiums

Share of Prior and Post Visitors to Dining Venues Across NFL Stadiums | Based on 2023 Visits



Created with Datawrapper

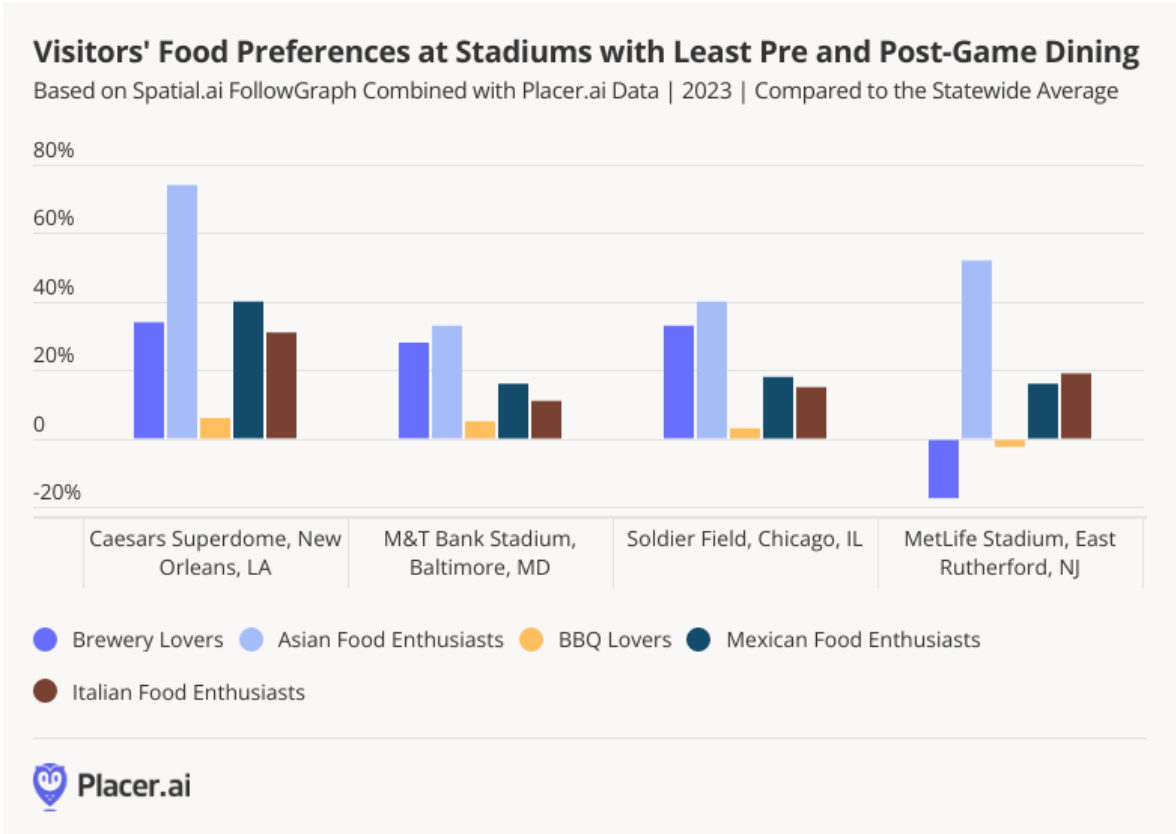


Different Events Drive Different Dining Patterns

Stadiums looking to enhance their food offerings – or local entrepreneurs thinking of opening a restaurant near a stadium – can also get inspired by stadium visitors' dining preferences. For example, psychographic data taken from the [Spatial.ai: FollowGraph](#) dataset reveals that visitors to MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey have a much stronger preference for Asian cuisine compared to New Jersey residents overall. With that knowledge, the stadium can enhance the visitor experience by expanding its Asian food offerings.



On the other hand, MetLife Stadium goers seem much less partial to Brewery fare than average New Jerseyans, so the stadium operators and restaurateurs may want to avoid offering too many Brewery-themed dining options. Stadium stakeholders can reserve the craft beers for Caesars Stadium, M&T Bank Stadium, and Soldier Field Stadiums, where visitors seem to enjoy artisanal brews more than the average resident in Louisiana, Maryland, and Illinois, respectively.



All of the stadiums analyzed exhibited unique visitor dining tastes, a reminder that no customer or fan base is alike. Aligning on- or off-site dining options with offerings that align with a given customer base’s preferences can improve overall visitor satisfaction and boost revenues.

Pitches to Plates

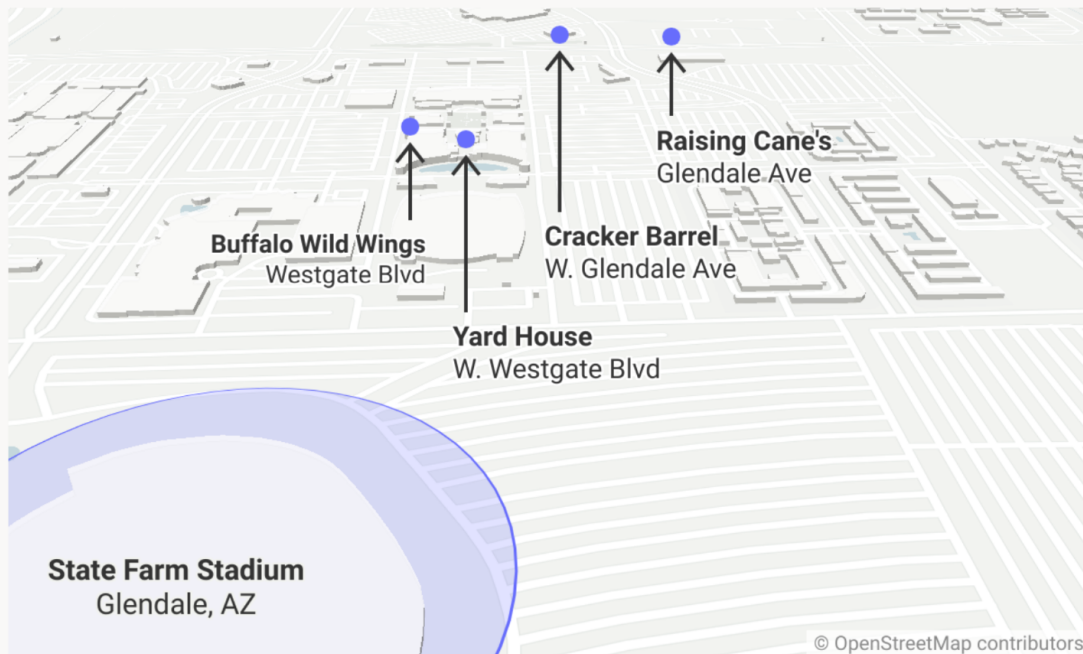
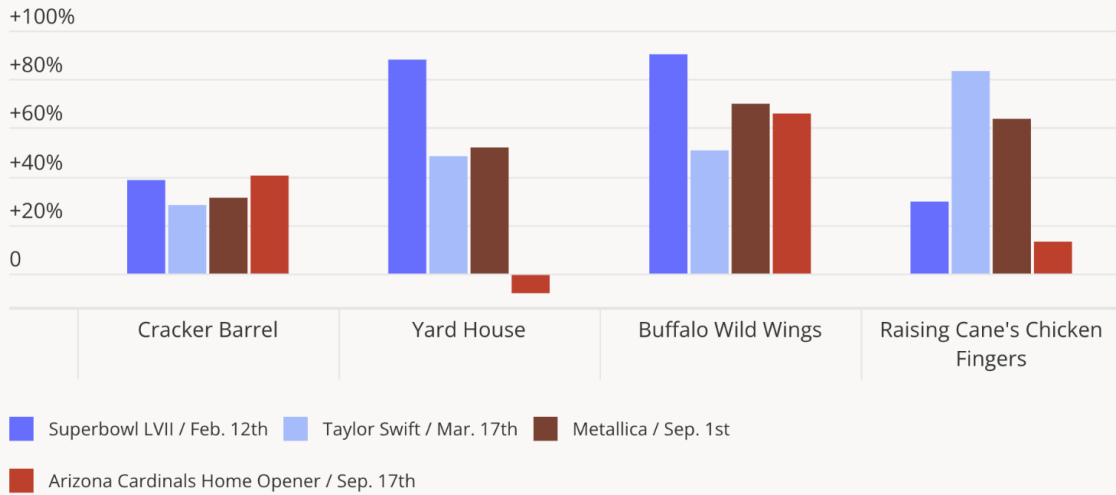
Zooming in to look at consumer behavior around individual events reveals further variability in dining preferences even among visitors to the same stadium, with different types of events driving distinct dining behaviors.

State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, is home to the Arizona Cardinals. The stadium hosted the [2023 Super Bowl](#), but the NFL stadium also acts as a concert venue for acts ranging from [Taylor Swift](#) to [Metallica](#). And location intelligence reveals that the dining preferences of stadium visitors vary based on the events held at the venue.

During the Super Bowl, sports bars such as Yard House and Buffalo Wild Wings saw the largest increase in visits compared to the chains' daily average. A month later, attendees at Taylor Swift's concert gave fried-chicken leader [Raising Cane's](#) a significant boost.

Different Dining Locations Around State Farm Stadium (Glendale, AZ) Attract Different Event Goers

Visits on the Day of the Event Compared to the Average Daily 2023 Visits



Created with Datawrapper

Local restaurants can leverage location analytics to see what types of events are popular with their visitor base and craft collaborations and advertising campaigns that resonate effectively with their patrons.

Final Buzzer

Sports stadiums and arenas are not just spaces for sports and music enthusiasts to gather; they also offer significant commercial opportunities for the surrounding communities. Stadium operators and local businesses can fine-tune their offerings by utilizing location analytics to better connect with their visitor bases and uncover new retail opportunities.

Key Takeaways

- 1. The stadiums serving the different major leagues see different visitation patterns throughout the year.** MLB stadiums experience the longest and most sustained increase in visits throughout its season and biggest drop in visits in its off-season. Football stadiums and basketball arenas – which tend to be relatively multipurpose – experience less of a drop-off in the off-season.
- 2. Stadium visitors tend to come from higher-income areas than the general population.** Although MLB stadiums draw the wealthiest visitors, NFL and NBA arenas also attract visitors from higher-income areas relative to the nationwide HHI average. Advertisers, retailers, and restaurant operators can reach tens of thousands of affluent consumers per event by focusing on stadium-goers.
- 3. Each stadium's visitor base seems to have distinct retail and dining preferences.** The out-of-stadium visitation patterns of different stadiums' guests reveal distinct retail and shopping preferences. Advertisers, retailers, and restaurateurs alike can draw on that data to meet their customers where they are and tailor their offerings – both on- and off-premise.
- 4. Different events impact the local dining scene differently.** Comparing the shopping and dining preferences of visitors between stadiums reveals only part of the picture. Each type of sports games and concerts attracts its own unique visitor base to the stadium, and businesses can use this data to learn about their customers' cultural and sporting preferences for advertising or partnership purposes.