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# bon appetit

MAY 2008

THE  
TRAVEL  
ISSUE

world's  
best recipes



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## THE TRAVEL ISSUE

THIS MONTH, WE GLOBE-TROT FAR AND WIDE TO FIND THE BEST PLACES TO EAT, DRINK, AND COOK. FROM PARISIAN BISTROS TO MALAYSIAN STREET VENDORS, FROM IRISH FARMS TO MOROCCAN MARKETS, OUR FINDINGS ARE TASTY, AUTHENTIC, AND OUT OF THIS WORLD. **P.142**

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*Produced by Karin Fittante*

*Text by Nina Elder*

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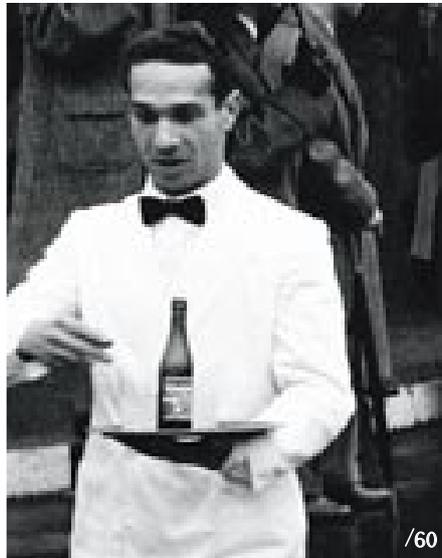
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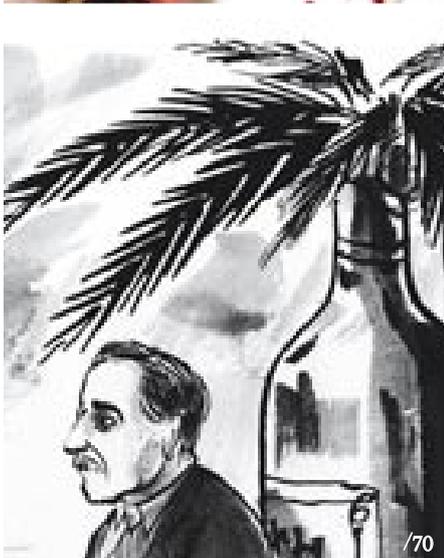
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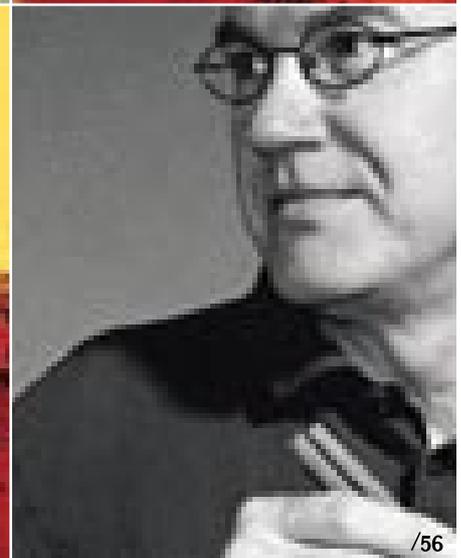
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**Steven Raichlen/**

Writer, television host, and cooking teacher Raichlen jokes that he recently added a new title to his résumé: barbecue ambassador. To research his forthcoming book, *Planet Barbecue*, the Miami-based author visited more than 50 countries. “Here you have the world’s oldest and most universal cooking method—cooking meat with fire—but in a way, you’ve also got the most idiosyncratic, because it’s done so differently in every part of the world,” says Raichlen, who has won five James Beard Awards and written 28 books. **YUCATAN HEAT**, page 182

**Annabel Langbein/**

As one of New Zealand’s most well known food celebrities, Langbein doesn’t seem like the kind of person who once hunted possum, trapped lobster, and jumped out of a helicopter to catch deer that were damaging New Zealand’s forests. But the award-winning cookbook author had an affinity for adventure when she was growing up. Over time, her devotion to nature turned into an interest in cooking. “I moved out of the wild and into the garden and kitchen,” says Langbein, who, with her family, splits her time between Auckland and their farm in Central Otago, New Zealand. **AT THE MARKET: COCONUT**, page 106

**Molly Wizenberg/**

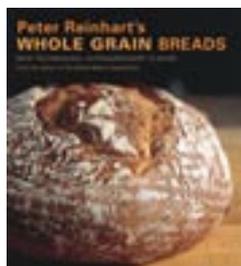
More than 4,000 people a day visit Wizenberg’s food blog, [orangette.blogspot.com](http://orangette.blogspot.com). With her witty writing style and approachable recipes, the 29-year-old Seattle resident has garnered a large following, national media attention, and a book deal. “I love a good deep-fried something, but I also love my fitted jeans,” she quips on the site. Wizenberg’s monthly column debuted in our February issue. “I grew up with *Bon Appétit* on my parents’ coffee table,” she says. “It’s a special pleasure to see my name inside its pages. I started my blog for the simplest of reasons—a love of food and writing—and I had no idea it would carry me so far.” **COOKING LIFE**, page 122

**Craig Cutler and Joel Holland/**

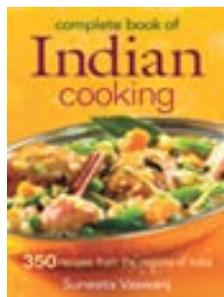
New York-based photographer Cutler and illustrator Holland collaborated for the first time in our story about Parisian bistros, and the result is a wonderful combination of their skills. “Bistro tables have been photographed to death, so I kept thinking, ‘How can we have a fresh approach?’” says Cutler, who, inspired by Toulouse-Lautrec, asked Holland to draw on the tables before Cutler took pictures. Holland, who is accustomed to illustrating book covers, loved the opportunity to work with food. “One of my hobbies is making pizza—the dough, the sauce, everything from scratch,” he says. **THE NEW PARIS BISTRO**, page 154

**Clotilde Dusoulier/**

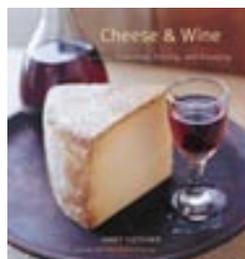
“I’m interested in giving people an idea of what it’s really like to live in Paris, beyond the clichés, outdated postcards, and preconceived ideas,” says Dusoulier. From her apartment in the city’s Montmartre neighborhood, Dusoulier writes her recipe-rich, wildly popular food blog, *Chocolate & Zucchini*. In the four years since she started it, the 28-year-old has discovered a new crop of casual restaurants, chic food shops, and funky cafés, which she shares in this issue. **RIGHT BANK RIGHT NOW**, page 144



**Peter Reinhart/**  
 “There is a lot of drama going on inside bread dough,” writes the author about the science behind breadmaking. In *Peter Reinhart’s Whole Grain Breads*, the baking instructor offers in-depth techniques so you don’t have to be a chemist to master healthful recipes for whole wheat cinnamon buns or multigrain hearth bread.



**Suneeta Vaswani/**  
 India is widely recognized for having wonderful food, but some might not know about each region’s distinct flavors and traditional dishes. Author and cooking teacher Vaswani’s *Complete Book of Indian Cooking* delves into the different spices, techniques, and stories behind each region with 350 fabulous recipes.



**Janet Fletcher and Victoria Pearson/**  
 Rather than overwhelm readers with a wine and cheese pairing tome, Fletcher’s concise guide selects and harmonizes these dinner-party staples. The *San Francisco Chronicle* food writer’s selections combined with Pearson’s photos make *Cheese & Wine* an excellent resource for both the connoisseur and the neophyte.



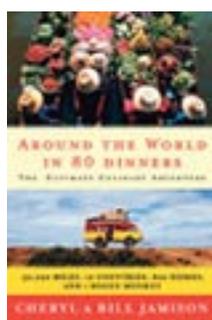
**David Wondrich/**  
 In *Imbibe!*, Wondrich sets out to revive some long-forgotten cocktail recipes that he culled from turn-of-the-century bartenders’ guides. The result is a fascinating portrait of the evolution of the American cocktail, and the men and women responsible for popularizing its many incarnations.



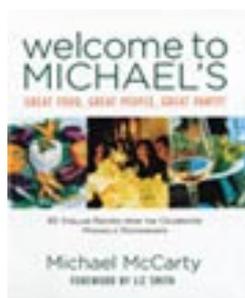
**Martha Rose Shulman/**  
 To research and develop the more than 500 vegetarian dishes in *Mediterranean Harvest*, the author ate her way through countries like Greece, France, Croatia, and Tunisia. Her resulting knowledge of their culinary traditions adds richness to recipes such as Chick Pea Breakfast Soup and Balkan-Style Moussaka.



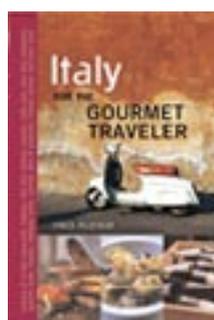
**Amelia Saltsman/**  
 Shopping at a farmers’ market has the potential to be a rewarding experience, but it can also be an intimidating one. With its emphasis on seasonality and selection tips, *The Santa Monica Farmers’ Market Cookbook* makes an excellent Saturday morning shopping companion.



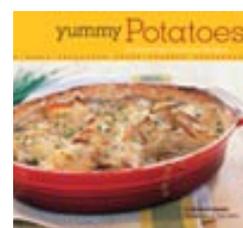
**Cheryl and Bill Jamison/**  
 To celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary, the authors cashed in years of frequent-flyer miles and took a three-month culinary tour of the world. From classic dishes in Provence to a safari cookout in South Africa, *Around the World in 80 Dinners* tells the story of their tasty discoveries.



**Michael McCarty/**  
 Media moguls, socialites, bigwig bankers, and politicians—they’ve all dropped in for a power lunch at Michael’s in either Santa Monica, California, or Manhattan. The oft-ordered Cobb salad plus 84 other classic dishes are revealed in McCarty’s book *Welcome to Michael’s*.



**Fred Plotkin/**  
 This latest revised edition of *Italy for the Gourmet Traveler* is an invaluable guide to the country’s gastronomic treasures. The author loads up on authentic food experiences—markets, olive oil producers, cooking schools, and superlative restaurants—throughout every region of Italy.



**Marlena Spieler/**  
 The United Nations declared 2008 the International Year of the Potato, and what better way to celebrate than with this 65-recipe homage to spuds? *Yummy Potatoes* has all the classics, from hash browns to gratins, plus fresh recipes like Persian Saffron-Dill Pilaf with a Crisp Potato Crust. /■

# change of view /

RIGHT AROUND THE TIME THIS SPECIAL TRAVEL ISSUE GOES TO press, I'll be off for a week's Spring Break vacation. We're going to London, a city that I have loved forever and one that Paul and I have been to many times. This is the first time, however, that we'll have along with us my twin twelve-year-old nephews (also my sister, brother-in-law, and my mom).

The boys—Noah and Jared—have traveled a lot in their young lives, and many times they have been with us: To Paris twice (for the first time when they were five), New York several times, Hawaii, Florence, and on and on. And each time they're with us, I discover through their eyes places that I thought I knew well. Sharing it all with my nephews brings an entirely new point of view. So traveling with them later this month means fewer forays onto the luxury floors at Selfridges and the boutiques of Soho, Knightsbridge, and Sloane Square, but definite plans for the Jack the Ripper walking tour, The London Dungeon, and the nightly closing ceremony at the Tower of London, which I'm hoping will be suitably shrouded in fog and gloom.

Truth be told, I'm just as excited to do these things as the boys are. In fact, most of them were my idea. Because I have come to realize that traveling with kids gives those of us who are grown up a great excuse to book all the crazy things we secretly want to do. Yes, now I can seek out 221B Baker Street using the boys as an excuse, or take them to the intersection on Abbey Road made famous on a Beatles album cover (once a Beatlemaniac, always a Beatlemaniac, just ask my friends—and my staff) and walk them by the flat in Lancaster Gate that I lived in when I was just out of college and in search of my first job. (Long story short: Since I didn't have a job already lined up, I could stay in England only three months; I spent a month in Paris after that, and ended up back in L.A. in an entry-level position at a certain very popular food magazine.)

Luckily also, the boys are great eaters (well trained by me, sometimes to their mother's dismay and the suffering of their father's wallet). Noah has become quite the budding restaurant expert, and Jared would just as soon eat *uni*, escargots, or crispy roast duck as he would a cheeseburger and fries. Both of them like to cook, and they're avid fans of *Iron Chef America*, Giada, Cat Cora, and Lee Hefter of Spago. And since London seems to be the most expensive city on the planet for tourists right now, I've been doing a lot of research with regard to eating well without necessarily breaking the bank. I've made only two reservations: For a special Easter lunch at the magnificent, traditional Ritz hotel, and a grand finale dinner at chef Fergus Henderson's fabulous St. John. In between, we'll probably go to places like Tom's Kitchen, Bumpkin in Notting Hill, Acorn House, The Wolseley, and the Great Queen Street gastropub (see page 54). For lunch, I see in our future maybe a stop or two at Pret A Manger (the spots that give fast

food a *good* name), the food hall at Harvey Nichols (that conveyor-belt sushi is a real trip), or Harrods for a takeaway picnic. Paul and I have already been to the new-ish Ladurée on Piccadilly, and since it's one of this little group's fave spots in Paris, we'll probably stop in there a few mornings. And then one morning I'll want to splurge and treat everyone to a proper English breakfast at The Dorchester, where the scrambled eggs are just the best.

Funny, I just realized that I've spent one sentence talking about what we're going to *do* and a long paragraph talking about where we're going to *eat*. I guess that makes me a typical *Bon Appétit* traveler. And in the end, that's really a lot of the reason that we do these special issues in the first place. We know why you travel: You're hungry—hungry to experience a different culture to be sure, but mostly, to experience the food. There are plenty of places I haven't been to that I want to see—and taste—like, say, Kuala Lumpur, Marrakech, the Yucatán. Well, they're all in this issue. I've been to several places in Ireland, but never to County Cork (page 164). I went to Orvieto last year (although not to a rooftop dinner at the palazzo on page 192), and I never get tired of Paris (but I have a lot of new info for the next trip, thanks to our story on page 144 and the bistro menu on page 154). Because of an issue like this one, I don't have to wait. And after the reading can come an immediate tasting: Our test-kitchen-vetted recipes make it possible to serve up these locales right now. What a fun idea for a party.

Next on my personal travel wish list are places as varied as Amsterdam and Beijing, Goa and the South African wine country, Istanbul and Barcelona. Plus Greece, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, and the Scottish Highlands. I'd love to go back to Bordeaux, Seville, Geneva, Sicily, and the island of Salina. I've barely scratched the surface in Costa Rica, and I'm ready for Montréal and Vancouver again anytime. And one of these days, I'd love to drive across the U.S., and return to New Orleans and Niagara Falls, and see Mt. Rushmore, and, and...

I just hope Noah and Jared are up for it all.

**BARBARA FAIRCHILD**  
Editor-in-Chief





“WHILE SURFING IN HAWAII, I MET RODMAN MACHADO, THE CHEF AT **PALM TERRACE**, A RESTAURANT IN OAHU'S TURTLE BAY RESORT. HE TOOK US BACK TO THE RESTAURANT AND MADE AN AMAZING FRESH SEAFOOD CHOWDER. CAN I GET THE RECIPE?

—Kevin Hite • Los Angeles, CA

### **hawaiian seafood chowder**

6 SERVINGS / Coconut milk and mahi-mahi give this chowder a South Pacific twist.

- 4 slices thick-cut bacon (about 4½ ounces), chopped
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
- 1½ cups chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup all purpose flour
- 2 8-ounce bottles clam juice
- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 bay leaves
- 1½ pounds mahi-mahi, cut into 1½-inch cubes
- 8 ounces crabmeat
- 12 Manila clams, scrubbed
- 12 mussels, scrubbed, debearded
- 2 cups (packed) fresh baby spinach leaves
- 1 14-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk\*

Cook bacon in heavy large pot over medium heat, stirring often, until crisp. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. Add butter to pot; stir until melted. Add onion, celery, thyme, and garlic; sauté until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add flour and stir 1 minute. Gradually add clam juice and milk, stirring constantly. Add bay leaves. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until thickened, about 20 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool slightly. Cover soup and bacon separately and chill. Bring soup to simmer before continuing.

Add mahi-mahi, crabmeat, clams, and mussels to simmering soup. Simmer until clams and mussels open (discard any that do not open) and until fish is cooked through, about 6 minutes. Add spinach; stir until wilted, about 1 minute. Stir in coconut milk and bacon. Divide chowder among bowls and serve.

\* / Sold at many supermarkets and at Indian, Southeast Asian, and Latin markets.

### **COVER RECIPE**

When my husband and I were in Paris, we ate at **LE BISTROT PAUL BERT**. We had the best *steak frites* there—the fries were perfect.

—Valerie Ronson • Hartford, CT

### **steak frites**

2 SERVINGS / Sarawak are considered the highest-quality white peppercorns.

- 2 12-ounce russet potatoes, peeled, cut lengthwise into ½x1½-inch sticks
- Vegetable oil (for frying)
- 2 8-ounce beef tenderloin steaks (each about 1¼ to 1½ inches thick)
- 2 teaspoons coarsely cracked white peppercorns (preferably Sarawak)
- 1½ teaspoons butter
- 1½ teaspoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Cognac
- 6 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup beef broth
- Fleur de sel or coarse kosher salt

Wrap potatoes in paper towels; pat dry. Pour enough vegetable oil into heavy large pot to reach depth of 1½ inches. Attach deep-fry thermometer to pot and heat oil to 260°F to 270°F. Working in about 4 batches, cook potatoes until tender but not brown, 3 to 4 minutes per batch. Using slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to paper towels to drain. Reserve pot with oil. Cool potatoes completely. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 4 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Sprinkle steaks with salt. Press ½ teaspoon white pepper onto each side of each steak. Melt butter with oil in heavy medium skillet (do not use nonstick) over high heat. Add steaks and cook until deep brown and crusty and cooked to desired doneness, about 5 minutes per side for rare. Transfer steaks to plates. Add Cognac to skillet and cook until liquid evaporates, about 1 minute. Add cream and beef broth. Boil until mixture is thick and reduced to ½ cup, scraping up browned bits, 3 to 4 minutes. Season sauce to taste with salt. Spoon sauce over steaks.

Meanwhile, reheat oil in pot to 365°F to 375°F. Add precooked potatoes and cook until browned and crisp, stirring often, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Sprinkle fries with fleur de sel and pepper. Divide fries between plates and serve. />

I recently ate at **MILLIE'S DINER** in Richmond, Virginia, and had a strawberry shortcake I still dream about. I'm not usually a dessert person, but I really loved this one.

—Stephanie Franger • Charlottesville, VA

### strawberry shortcakes

8 SERVINGS / These are made with wedges of a moist, rich cake and served with a sauce that blends cooked and fresh strawberries.

#### CAKE

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1½ cups cake flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ 8-ounce package cream cheese, room temperature
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

#### SAUCE

- 2 pounds strawberries, hulled, divided
- ¼ cup water
- 3 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1½ cups chilled whipping cream
- 1½ tablespoons powdered sugar plus additional for sprinkling
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract

**CAKE/** Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray 9-inch-diameter cake pan with 2-inch-high sides with nonstick spray. Sprinkle bottom and sides of pan with sugar; tap out any excess sugar. Whisk flour and baking powder in medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat 1 cup sugar, cream cheese, and butter in large bowl to blend. Beat milk, eggs, and vanilla in another medium bowl to blend. Beat milk mixture into cream cheese mixture. Add dry ingredients; beat until smooth. Transfer batter to prepared pan. Sprinkle remaining 1 tablespoon sugar over top of batter.

Bake cake until golden brown on top and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 40 minutes. Cool in pan on rack. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 8 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.

**SAUCE/** Place half of strawberries (about 3 cups) in processor. Using on/off turns, process until coarsely chopped. Transfer to medium saucepan; reserve processor.

Add ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons sugar, and lemon juice to chopped berries. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until strawberries are very tender, about 4 minutes. Return strawberry mixture to processor and puree until smooth. Strain sauce through fine mesh strainer into medium bowl. Cover and chill until cold, about 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 8 hours ahead. Keep chilled.

Quarter remaining strawberries. Toss with remaining 1 tablespoon sugar in another medium bowl. Let stand at room temperature until sugar dissolves and juices form, tossing occasionally, about 30 minutes. Add strawberry sauce. Cover and chill.

Whip chilled whipping cream, ½ tablespoons powdered sugar, and vanilla in large bowl until peaks form.

Cut cake into 8 wedges. Split each wedge horizontally in half. Place bottom of each wedge on plate. Spoon strawberry mixture over, then top with dollop of whipped cream. Place top of cake over cream. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve.

When I was in San Francisco last month, I had a delicious chicken sandwich with paprika aioli sauce at **AMERICANO**. Can you request the recipe?

—Steve Lange • Portland, OR

### chicken breast sandwiches with caramelized onions, watercress, and paprika aioli

MAKES 6

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon hot smoked Spanish paprika\*
- 1 garlic clove, pressed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil plus more for brushing on rolls
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 pounds onions, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise (about 7 cups)
- 3 8-ounce skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut crosswise in half
- 6 sourdough sandwich rolls or twelve ½-inch-thick slices sourdough bread
- 3 cups (lightly packed) watercress or arugula

Whisk first 4 ingredients in small bowl. Gradually whisk in 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Season with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Aioli can be made 2 days ahead. Cover prepared aioli and chill.

Heat vegetable oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, sprinkle with salt, and cook until beginning to brown, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and continue to cook until onions are soft and deep golden brown, stirring often, about 20 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Caramelized onions can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Place chicken breasts between 2 sheets of plastic wrap. Pound with mallet to ½-inch thickness. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill chicken until cooked through, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to work surface. Brush cut side of rolls with extra-virgin olive oil. Grill rolls, cut side down, until grill marks appear, about 1 minute. Spread rolls with some of aioli. Assemble sandwiches, dividing chicken, caramelized onions, and watercress among rolls. Serve warm.

\* / Sometimes labeled Pimentón Picante or Pimentón de La Vera Picante; available at specialty foods stores and from tienda.com.

I'm a vegetarian, so I often order portobello mushroom dishes when I eat out. One of the best I've found here in town is the satay at **VONG'S THAI KITCHEN**. If the chef would give up the recipe, I could make the skewers at home.

—Matthew Dart • Chicago, IL

### portobello mushroom satay

8 APPETIZER SERVINGS / On the grill, this meaty mushroom absorbs the marinade without losing its own flavor. Serve the fragrant dipping sauce on the side for a healthy and delicious meatless starter.

#### HONEY-BALSAMIC MARINADE

- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ cup grapeseed oil or canola oil

#### ROSEMARY-GINGER SAUCE

- 1 1-inch piece peeled fresh ginger, coarsely chopped
- 1 jalapeño chile, stemmed
- ½ teaspoon fresh rosemary leaves
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce / ▶▶

- 2 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar
- ¼ cup grapeseed oil or canola oil
- 6 large portobello mushrooms, stemmed, quartered

**HONEY-BALSAMIC MARINADE/** Using on and off turns, finely mince garlic in mini processor. With machine running, add vinegar and honey, then oil through feed tube; process until smooth. Transfer to small bowl. Season with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.

**ROSEMARY-GINGER SAUCE/** Place ginger, chile, and rosemary in mini processor; using on/off turns, finely mince ginger mixture. With machine running, add soy sauce and vinegar, then oil through feed tube; process until smooth. Transfer to small bowl. Season with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Brush grate with oil. Arrange 3 mushroom quarters horizontally on each of 8 metal skewers. Brush both sides of mushrooms with honey-balsamic marinade. Grill mushrooms until tender and slightly charred, occasionally brushing with any remaining marinade and moving to cooler part of grill if browning too quickly, about 6 minutes per side. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Serve skewers with rosemary-ginger sauce for dipping.

My husband and I had a very satisfying meal at **PRIMO** at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa in Tucson. For dessert, I ordered *zeppole*, Italian doughnuts, which have become one of my favorite things to eat. I tried making them at home, but they didn't taste the same. Please help!

—Lara Michaels • Erie, CO

## zeppole

**MAKES ABOUT 50 /** A *zeppola* is an Italian fritter. The dough is similar to choux pastry, which is used to form cream puffs, *éclairs*, and *gougères*.

- ¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 cup all purpose flour, sifted

- 4 large eggs
- Vegetable oil (for frying)

Whisk ¾ cup sugar and cinnamon in medium bowl. Set aside.

Bring 1 cup water, butter, 1 tablespoon salt, and remaining 1 tablespoon sugar to boil in heavy medium saucepan, stirring until butter melts. Add flour to mixture and stir until dough forms ball. Cook over medium heat 4 minutes to remove raw flour taste, stirring constantly. Transfer dough to medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat dough mixture until crumbly, about 1 minute. Add eggs 1 at a time to dough, blending well between additions to form smooth

dough. **DO AHEAD** Dough can be made 4 hours ahead. Press plastic wrap directly onto prepared dough and let stand at room temperature until ready to use.

Pour enough vegetable oil into heavy large saucepan to reach depth of 2 inches. Attach deep-fry thermometer to side of pan. Heat oil to 350°F. Working in batches, scoop rounded teaspoonful of dough, then use second teaspoon to scrape dough into oil. Cook dough balls until puffed and golden brown on all sides, about 7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer fritters to paper towels to drain.

Toss *zeppole* in cinnamon sugar and serve warm.

“ AT BOSTON'S **NO. 9 PARK**, I ENJOYED AN AMAZING COCKTAIL, THE **CAPETOWN COLLINS**. THE TEA AND GIN COMBINATION IS REFRESHING, AND THE ROSEMARY SPRIGS REALLY TOP IT OFF. I'D LOVE SOME INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PREPARE THIS DRINK.

—Ben Grotto • Cambridge, MA



## capetown collins

**4 SERVINGS /** Rooibos herbal tea comes from the stems and leaves of a woody legume grown in South Africa's Western Cape province. It's low in tannins and caffeine-free. Look for it at some supermarkets and at specialty foods stores.

- 1 cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 5 large fresh rosemary sprigs, divided
- 1½ teaspoons rooibos tea leaves
- 1 cup gin, divided
- 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, divided
- Ice cubes

Bring 1 cup water, sugar, and 1 rosemary sprig to boil in medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat to low and simmer until syrup measures generous 1 cup, about 5 minutes. Add rooibos; let steep 1 hour. Strain through fine mesh strainer into 1-cup glass measuring cup.

Mix half of rooibos syrup, ½ cup gin, and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in cocktail shaker filled with ice cubes. Shake well, then strain into 2 ice-filled collins glasses. Repeat with remaining syrup, gin, and lemon juice. Garnish drinks with rosemary sprigs and serve. /»

My college roommate moved to Los Angeles and raved about **THE VILLAGE IDIOT**. When I finally visited him, we stopped in for some drinks and tried the shrimp fritter appetizer, which was so good we ended up ordering another plate to share. I definitely want this recipe.

—Enid Cohen • Arlington, TX

## rock shrimp fritters with grapefruit relish

MAKES 12 /

### GRAPEFRUIT RELISH

- 1 grapefruit
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
- 1 small English hothouse cucumber (about 12 ounces), peeled, seeded, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar

### FRITTERS

- 2 cups unbleached all purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons whole milk
- 6 tablespoons buttermilk
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted
- 6 green onions, thinly sliced (pale green and dark green parts only)
- 1 pound peeled deveined uncooked rock shrimp
- Vegetable oil (for frying)
- Crème fraîche or sour cream

**GRAPEFRUIT RELISH/** Using sharp knife, cut off peel and white pith from grapefruit. Working over medium bowl, cut between membranes to release grapefruit segments into bowl. Squeeze juice from membranes into bowl. Drain segments; return juice to bowl. Add shallot to juice and let stand 15 minutes. Drain shallot, discarding juice. Thinly slice grapefruit segments crosswise; place in same medium bowl. Add shallot, cucumber, oil, and sugar; toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover and chill.

**FRITTERS/** Preheat oven to 400°F. Whisk first 6 ingredients in large bowl. Whisk milk, buttermilk, and egg yolk in medium bowl. Add milk mixture to dry ingredients; whisk until

smooth. Whisk in melted butter. Stir in green onions and shrimp. Chill batter 15 minutes.

Add enough oil to each of 2 heavy large ovenproof skillets to measure depth of ¼ inch. Heat oil over high heat. Spoon golf-ball-size dollops of batter (6 fritters per skillet) into oil in skillets. Cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Turn fritters and transfer skillets to oven. Bake until fritters are cooked through, about 6 minutes. Transfer fritters to platter. Serve grapefruit relish alongside. Garnish with several dollops of crème fraîche.

A few months ago, I went to Sydney for business and stayed at the Park Hyatt. I had several great meals at the **HARBOUR KITCHEN & BAR** in the hotel. Now that I'm home, I'd like to try my hand at a great pasta I had there—linguine with spinach and snow peas.

—Jason Ferry • St. Paul, MN

## linguine with spinach, snow peas, zucchini, and gremolata

4 SERVINGS / Italian in origin, gremolata is a garnish of minced parsley, lemon peel, and garlic. Here, it gives this dish a fresh, fragrant kick.

- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon chopped drained capers
- 1 tablespoon plus ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 ounces linguine
- 4 shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 red jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced
- 2 medium zucchini, cut crosswise into ½-inch slices
- 4 ounces snow peas (about 2 cups)
- 1 6-ounce bag baby spinach leaves
- 2 cups (packed) fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Shaved Parmesan cheese

Mix parsley, lemon peel, capers, and 1 tablespoon olive oil in small bowl. Set gremolata aside.

Cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain pasta, reserving 1½ cups cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, heat remaining ¼ cup oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots, garlic, and jalapeños; sauté until soft, about 2 minutes. Add zucchini and snow peas; sauté until tender, about 2 minutes.

Add drained pasta, 1 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid, spinach, basil, and grated Parmesan cheese to skillet. Toss until spinach and basil wilt and sauce coats pasta, adding more pasta cooking liquid by tablespoonfuls if dry, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide pasta among 4 plates. Top with shaved Parmesan cheese and sprinkle with gremolata.

My cousin lives in Lucca, Italy, and when I visited him, he took me to **DA GIULIO IN PELLERIA**, a bustling trattoria known for its home-style Tuscan cooking. I had an incredible squid dish that I want to make at home. Help!

—Lorena Chavez • Phoenix, AZ

## squid with swiss chard

4 SERVINGS / A spicy main course that's popular in Tuscany.

- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1½ pounds cleaned squid, bodies cut into rings, tentacles left whole
- 2¼ cups dry red wine
- 1½ bunches Swiss chard, chopped

Heat olive oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and dried pepper and sauté until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add squid and wine. Bring to simmer. Cover squid mixture and reduce heat to medium-low; cook until squid is almost tender, about 35 minutes. Add chard. Cook uncovered until chard wilts and almost all liquid evaporates, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

—Compiled by Diane Chang and Janet Taylor McCracken

We welcome comments and will make an effort to obtain previously unpublished restaurant recipes on request. Submissions should include the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number and be sent by e-mail to [rsvp@bonappetit.com](mailto:rsvp@bonappetit.com) or by mail to R.S.V.P., Bon Appétit, 6300 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Please include the complete address of the restaurant as well as your home address. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity and may be published or used in any medium. All submissions become the property of Bon Appétit and will not be returned. Because of the volume of mail received, we are unable to answer all inquiries.

# STARTERS

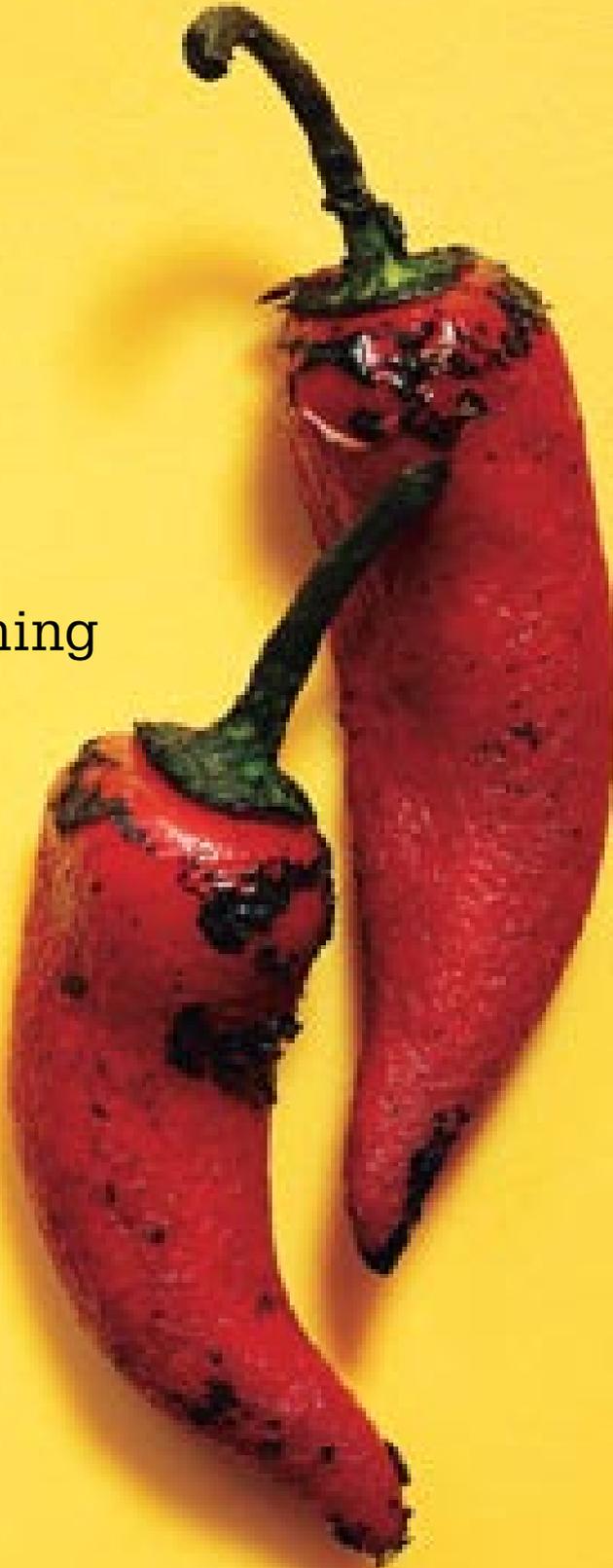
EDITED BY HUGH GARVEY

QUICK BITES  
FROM THE  
WORLD OF  
BON APPÉTIT

TASTING/

## global warming

• Chile fiends know all about the glories of a good dose of hot stuff, in everything from cocktails to salsa to barbecue. But even if you're not a hothead, just a dash of zing can be a secret weapon, giving a stealthy lift to dishes as unlikely as mashed potatoes, braised vegetables, and even fruit smoothies. Here are five of our favorite spicy condiments from around the world (see page 48). ▶▶





## OUR TOP PICKS/

hot  
stuffCONTINUED  
FROM P. 47**1/ PORTUGAL**  
**Piri-Piri**

A hot sauce with bright red-pepper aroma and a delicious briny heat. This one is perfect for Bloody Marys, not to mention huevos rancheros and marinades. \$3 for 8 ounces; 877-446-8763 or [igourmet.com](http://igourmet.com)

**2/ MOROCCO**  
**Harissa**

Smoky pepper and tomato flavors plus a pleasant heat. *Harissa* is traditionally served with couscous, and is also a delicious condiment on chicken or steak. *Mild* style, \$4 for 5 ounces; 866-350-7575 or [lepicerie.com](http://lepicerie.com)

**3/ SYRIA**  
**Aleppo Pepper**

With its roasty-sweet, subtle heat, this is great for soups, meat sauces, stews, and pastas. Use it at the beginning of cooking, as you would cayenne or red pepper flakes. \$5 for 2 ounces; 800-596-0885 or [chefshop.com](http://chefshop.com)

**4/ JAPAN**  
**Shichimi Togarashi**

This table seasoning is more than pepper: It has sesame seeds, seaweed, poppy seeds, and dried orange peel. Try a sprinkle on eggs, soups, and oven fries. \$8 for 5 ounces; 408-354-8281 or [gourmetsleuth.com](http://gourmetsleuth.com); also available at Asian markets

**5/ INDONESIA/  
MALAYSIA**

**Sambal Oelek**  
Fresh pepper aroma plus a tangy, fiery blast—the chile head's ideal burger topping. \$5 for 8 ounces; 866-646-4266 or [mingspantry.com](http://mingspantry.com); also available at some supermarkets and at Asian markets ~**AMY ALBERT**

## japanese fusion knives

Combining the best of two culinary worlds, these models meld the versatility of a classic Western-style chef's knife with the thinner blades that typify Japanese cutlery. The resulting knives have a sharper edge and are lighter in weight, which allows for incredible control and precision.

**balanced beauty/  
7-inch Gytou by Masanobu**

**the look/**

A Gytou knife is the Japanese equivalent of a Western-style chef's knife: It has a pointy tip, and, unlike straighter-edged Santoku knives, the blade is curved for more roll when chopping.

**testing notes/**

This Masanobu has the feel of a traditional Japanese knife but is less trouble to maintain, thanks to the Western-style double-edged blade. (The blade edges are not angled equally, so lefties should special-order.) Although the blade is made from high-carbon, rust-resistant steel, it's still best to dry it immediately after washing. \$259; [korin.com](http://korin.com)

**heavy hitter/  
Ken Onion Multi Chef's Knife by Shun**

**the look/**

Instantly recognizable by its distinctive 10-inch blade, this knife has a curved spine that drops dramatically to a pointy tip.

Unique in look and design, it's a true fusion knife.

**testing notes/**

While many Japanese knives have a very straight cutting edge ideal for up-and-down chopping, the curved blade of this knife lends itself to the Western technique of chopping with a back-and-forth roll. The knife has good balance, which makes it easy to maneuver despite its large blade. \$264; [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)

**good deal/  
6½-inch Superior Santoku by MAC Knife**

**the look/**

Like all Santoku knives (the name means "three virtues," because it works with meat, vegetables, and fish), this one has a dropped tip and a straight blade.

**testing notes/**

Don't let the petite size mislead you; the fine edge is one of the sharpest and thinnest we've found. Use this knife for everything from chopping tomatoes to slicing fish, though it isn't meant for heavy-duty jobs such as cutting through bones. Best of all, it's a bargain. \$60; 888-622-5643; [macknife.com](http://macknife.com)

—ELISA HUANG

## octopus

Chefs around the world are suckers for the exotic ingredient that's going from humble to haute

**what/**

Unlike its cousin, squid, octopus has more often been seen as the monster in horror films than as a beloved deep-fried food perfect for dunking in marinara sauce. Today, thanks to a growing number of chefs who understand how best to prepare it, octopus has found a place on just about every country's table. Because of its versatility in the kitchen (it can be grilled, braised, roasted, poached, and marinated, resulting in unique textures), its mild taste, and its status as a sustainable seafood choice, octopus is sticking around.

**why/**

"Chefs like weird ingredients. We get off on the challenge of taking odd, humble, and economic ingredients that most people think they don't like, preparing them in a new way, and, in the process, changing people's perception," says chef Scot Woods of LUCIEN RESTAURANT in Toronto (36 Wellington Street East; 416-504-9990; [lucienrestaurant.com](http://lucienrestaurant.com)). To that end, Woods serves an octopus *panzanella*, a riff on the classic Italian bread and tomato salad, as well as grilled octopus paired with potatoes and chorizo sausage. "If you want an indication of how talented a chef is, find out what he's doing with octopus," Woods says.

**where/**

SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN/ Octopus with green apples and pimiento foam at A FUEGO NEGRO *Calle 31 de Agosto 31*; 011-34-650-13-53-73; [afuegonegro.com](http://afuegonegro.com).... BERLIN/ Terrine of octopus with tomato and chorizo jam at FACIL AT THE MANDALA HOTEL *Potsdamer Strasse 3, 5th Floor*; 011-49-30-59-005-12-34; [facil.de](http://facil.de).... BUENOS AIRES/ Octopus carpaccio with pepper powder and citrus salt at SUCRE *Sucre 676*; 011-54-11-4782-9082; [sucrerestaurant.com.ar](http://sucrerestaurant.com.ar).... LIMA/ Octopus *anticuchos* with chimichurri sauce at LA MAR *Avenue La Mar 770*; 011-51-1-421-3365 ~ANDREW KNOWLTON



6/



5/

## THE HOT 10/

## euro bargains

The biggest obstacle facing Europe-bound food lovers today is not the language barrier—it's the weak dollar. But you can still have a memorable meal without tapping into your kid's college savings. Here are 10 casual, affordable spots where you can eat like a local.

**1/ london/ GREAT QUEEN STREET/**

This gastropub in Covent Garden comes from the owners of another outstanding pub, Anchor & Hope. The seasonal menu is one straightforward page: mushroom soup, crab on toast, pork terrine, grouse, Muscat-caramel custard. The à la carte menu tops out at 16 euros, and daily dinner specials served family-style are brilliant. / 32 Great Queen Street; 011-44-20-7242-0622

**2/ paris/ LE CHATEAUBRIAND/**

At this funky 11th arrondissement spot run by Basque chef Inaki Aizpitarte and his band of fashionably scruffy waiters, 14 euros gets you a two-course lunch, including such dishes as an outstanding beef tartare, pork terrine, and sausage and lentils. In the evening, when a five-course tasting menu is offered for 40 euros, the scene picks up, and it seems everyone knows one another. / 129 avenue Parmentier; 11th; 011-33-1-43-57-45-95

**3/ vienna/ ÖSTERREICHER IM MAK/**

Located in MAK, one of the city's premier modern-art museums, and run by celebrity chef Helmut Österreicher, this all-day restaurant blends the best of old and new Viennese cooking. The "classical" choices include Wiener schnitzel, while the "modern" menu offers dishes like sea bass with basil bread, and wild duck breast with celery risotto. / Stubenring 5; 011-43-1-714-01-21; oesterreicherimmak.at

**4/ oslo/ LILLE HERBERN/**

Nothing comes cheap in Norway. Its capital, Oslo, consistently ranks among the world's most expensive cities in which to live. So when it's time to dine, you want the most for your money—including amazing views. Reached

by a small boat, Lille Herbern is open mid-April through mid-September. Shrimp with homemade aioli, cod fillet with spring onions, whole lobsters, and lovely outdoor seating are worth every krone. / Herberneien 1; 011-47-22-44-97-00; sult.no

**5/ barcelona/ TAPAS24/**

Spain's best tapas bars are ideal for cheap eats. Our current favorite is Tapas24 from chef Carles Abellan, who trained at El Bulli and made a name for himself at the experimental Comerç24. Abellan does all the classic bites—*patatas bravas*, ham croquettes, and salt-cod tortillas—as well as his own riffs. The braised veal is not to be missed. / Diputació 269; 011-34-93-488-09-77; comerc24.com

**6/ brussels/ MUSEUM BRASSERIE/**

At Museum Brasserie, inside the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, chef Peter Goossens of the award-winning Hof Van Cleve restaurant dishes up affordable Belgian specialties—including eel with green herbs and shrimp croquette, *carbonnade*, and perfect fries (with mayonnaise, of course)—in a modern setting. The adjacent café is good for a quick and informal lunch. / Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, rue de la Regence 3; 011-32-2-508-35-80; museumfood.be

**7/ dublin/ ELY HQ/**

After you've had numerous pints at as many pubs, a place like Ely HQ is just what the palate ordered. For starters, wine from around the world is the beverage of choice, and reasonably priced, modern Irish fare—stuffed wild hare, seared king scallops, poached salmon, classic venison pie—is on the menu. As at the two other Ely branches, all beef, lamb, and pork served at Ely HQ are sourced from the

restaurant's family farm in County Clare; seafood is sourced locally as well. / Hanover Quay Docklands; 011-353-1-633-9986; elywinebar.ie

**8/ rome/ DA FELICE/**

Steps from the matchless Testaccio market, this famous trattoria remains a bargain. *Tonnarelli cacio e pepe* is tossed tableside. *Pasta alla Felice* is a blend of baby tomatoes, *ricotta salata*, mint, and basil. Don't miss the *coda alla vaccinara* (oxtail braised with celery). All that local color and flavor for only about 30 euros a head. / via Mastro Giorgio 29; 011-39-06-574-6800

**9/ berlin/ SCHNEEWEISS/**

The cutting-edge Friedrichshain neighborhood of Berlin at first seems like an unlikely place to find Snow White, until you learn that "snow white" in German is *schneeweiss*, and Schneeweiss is also the name of a hip restaurant specializing in lighter versions of German classics. Standout dishes include grape and leek tartlet with walnuts and Taleggio, and truffle-crusted pork fillet with balsamic *jus* and rosemary polenta. Best of all, the menu tops out at 18 euros. / Simplonstrasse 16; 011-49-30-29-04-97-04; schneeweiss-berlin.de

**10/ amsterdam/ RESTAURANT AS/**

A meal at Restaurant As sums up the Amsterdam experience—socially, culturally, and culinarily. For one, it shares a building with Platform 21, a kind of experimental design and exhibition space located in the Zuidas urban development project. Seating is at long, communal tables, and the food—38 euros for a three-course dinner—is a hodgepodge of global ingredients and dishes, most of which are cooked in a large Tuscan oven. / Prinses Irenestraat 19; 011-31-20-644-0100; platform21.com —ANDREW KNOWLTON

● **In a new country, what is the first step to acquainting yourself with the cuisine?**

I always try to hit the local markets wherever I am. In places like Rome and Barcelona, you can see what produce is at its seasonal peak. Plus, some of the best foods can be found in these markets—the curries and fresh coconut sweets at the Chatuchak Weekend Market in Bangkok, for example, are astonishing.

**When you're in a foreign country and completely unfamiliar with its cuisine and language, what is your approach to ordering food?**

Cooks all over the world respond well to enthusiastic, curious, respectful eaters. In Greece, when you get beyond the tourist restaurants, it is expected that you will venture into the kitchen and point to what you want to eat. In Singapore, when you approach a food vendor, you are often dealing with one-dish wonders. Just look for the freshest raw product and the biggest line, order a beer, and start salivating.

**What are some strategies for finding a good restaurant?**

Unfortunately, in many countries, often the more attractive the restaurant, the lower the quality of food experience. I am relentless in asking for recommendations from as many people as possible, and from as diverse backgrounds as possible. If you have a great restaurant or market stall or bakery or winery experience, ask where that chef or owner likes to eat. Good palates often lead to other good palates.

~ERIC STEINMAN



EXPERT ADVICE FROM/  
**the flavor hunter**

**GREG DRESCHER**

*Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives*  
THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA  
*Hyde Park, New York*

Drescher has a gastronomic dream job. In his work for The Culinary Institute of America, he logs thousands of miles a year sampling the world's cuisines. From Bangkok to Istanbul, Drescher has eaten countless meals in search of dishes, ingredients, and food trends that may end up in the institute's curriculum—and on a menu near you.

## the sipping news/

## PISCO POWER

Pisco, the clear brandy that drives one of the world's indispensable cocktails, the Pisco Sour, is the native spirit of Peru. Made using old-fashioned pot stills, it comes in a brain-busting array of different types and styles. Most (labeled *pisco puro*) are made from single varietals of grapes; others (*pisco acholado*) are a blend. Just to make things fun, the grapes from which the *puros* are made can be either "aromatic" or "non-aromatic." Italia and Torontel are two of the most important aromatics, while Quebranta, chief of the non-aromatic varietals, yields a far less floral brandy. Here are five to try. —David Wondrich

## Ocucaje Pure Pisco // \$16

A light and lemony Quebranta.



## Barsol Italia // \$20

Hints of honeysuckle, honeycomb, and meadow flowers.



## Macchu Pisco // \$22

Dark and figgy.



## La Diablada // \$38

An *acholado* with a floral nose.



## Don César Italia // \$40

Intriguing vegetal notes.



## the mix/

## THE BICICLETTA

The Bicicletta is a global cocktail that has made its way around the world in a languorous sort of way, befitting its role as a casual aperitif, ending up wherever Italians and Italophiles alight. It is served in Sydney at ICEBERGS restaurant overlooking Bondi Beach, at Fergus Henderson's ST. JOHN in London's Smithfield neighborhood, and under the bougainvillea in my backyard in Los Angeles. It is an ideal aperitif: neither too strong, too weak, nor too sweet. It has a bit of floral fruit to it, a thirst-quenching quality, and is pleasantly bitter, as a proper aperitif should be. The Bicicletta is said to get its name from the old Italian men who favor it, and who, after indulging in a few, wobble home on their bikes. A bad idea. A good story. And an even better cocktail. —Hugh Garvey

## MAKES 1

Ice cubes

2 ounces Campari

1½ ounces dry white wine

½ ounce club soda

Lemon slice (optional)

Fill wineglass with ice. Add Campari, wine, and soda; stir to mix. Garnish with lemon slice, if desired.



Waiters race outside  
Milan's Castello  
Sforzesco in 1952.

NAVIGATOR/

## insider's milan

To those who think they know it, Milan is high fashion and high prices. This is true, to an extent, but it is also a city full of culinary pleasures—both classic and contemporary—tucked in among the more famous places. The hungry visitor with the right addresses can experience the city as the locals do—a city that is less about glitz and more about substance and quality. />

**1 ristorante emilia e carlo**

After seeing Michelangelo's last sculpture, the *Pietà Rondanini*, at the nearby Castello Sforzesco, come here for a terrific meal. Start with a platter of *culatello* (sublime wine-soaked ham), followed by delicate pasta, like *tortelli di orata* or fresh tagliolini. In the warm months, any of the *bollito freddo*—cold beef tongue with herb sauce; cold veal breast with apricots; or cold chicken with balsamic vinegar and pine nuts—would be divine. A tartare of fresh fruit with lime syrup is the way to end./ *via Sacchi 8; 011-39-02-862-100; ristoranteemiliaecarlo.it*

**2 bottiglieria da pino**

Office workers and boutique clerks find value for their money at this bustling eatery in the city center. Risotto, pasta, meats, vegetables, and fine cheeses are served with a friendly smile. In a concession to international (actually, American) taste, there are main-course salads with excellent ingredients./ *via Cerva 14; 011-39-02-760-00532*

**3 ristorante piero e pia**

This consistently good restaurant is in the eastern part of Milan. *Ravioli con tartufo nero* are meat ravioli with a luxurious black truffle sauce. *Vitello tonnato* and fish are expertly prepared. The chocolate mousse or the *sorbetto di mandarino tardivo* (late-harvest mandarin sorbet) makes a great dessert. And the wine list is full of little-known grape varieties, such as Nosiola, Teroldego, and Gutturmo./ *Piazza Aspari 2; 011-39-02-718-541*

**4 trattoria milanese**

After a visit to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana to see masterpieces by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Caravaggio, a restorative meal at this nearby regional restaurant is in order. Start with an onion frittata, then savor the saffron-infused risotto and follow it with a perfectly breaded and fried veal cutlet the size of a catcher's mitt. *Zabaglione* is a luscious dessert./ *via Santa Marta 11; 011-39-02-864-5191*

**5 latteria di san marco**

Just a few blocks past the Pinacoteca di Brera museum you'll find this small restaurant, modestly called a *latteria* (milk store) because such places used to sell dairy products to the neighbors. The food is predominantly Milanese, sourced from the nearby outdoor market, plus, as one would expect, wonderful dairy products such as cheeses and creamy desserts. No reservations are taken and the tables are tight, but the vibe is friendly; you will inevitably get to know someone new./ *via San Marco 24; 011-39-02-659-7653*

**6 trattoria masuelli san marco**

Famous Milanese dishes and tasty novelties, such as herring in milk, are served at this classic and beloved trattoria./ *viale Umbria 80; 011-39-02-551-84138; masuelli-trattoria.com*

**7 le biciclette**

In the bohemian Navigli district, this bar-restaurant offers Sunday brunch, art shows, a happy hour (from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.), and simple and reliable pastas, like *pappardelle* with porcini and *pancetta*./ *via Gian Battista Torti 1; 011-39-02-839-4177; lebiciclette.com*

**8 food hall at la rinascenza**

Situated near La Scala, the Duomo, and the teeming Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, this food hall at La Rinascente department store is an ideal spot for gathering a light but delicious meal. Food halls in department stores, such as those found in London, Paris, and Berlin, were unknown in Italy until this one opened last year. Graze at a series of bars offering chocolate, sushi, fresh juices, and mozzarella. The wine bar has more than 1,000 different labels./ *Piazza del Duomo; 011-39-02-885-2471; rinascenza.it*

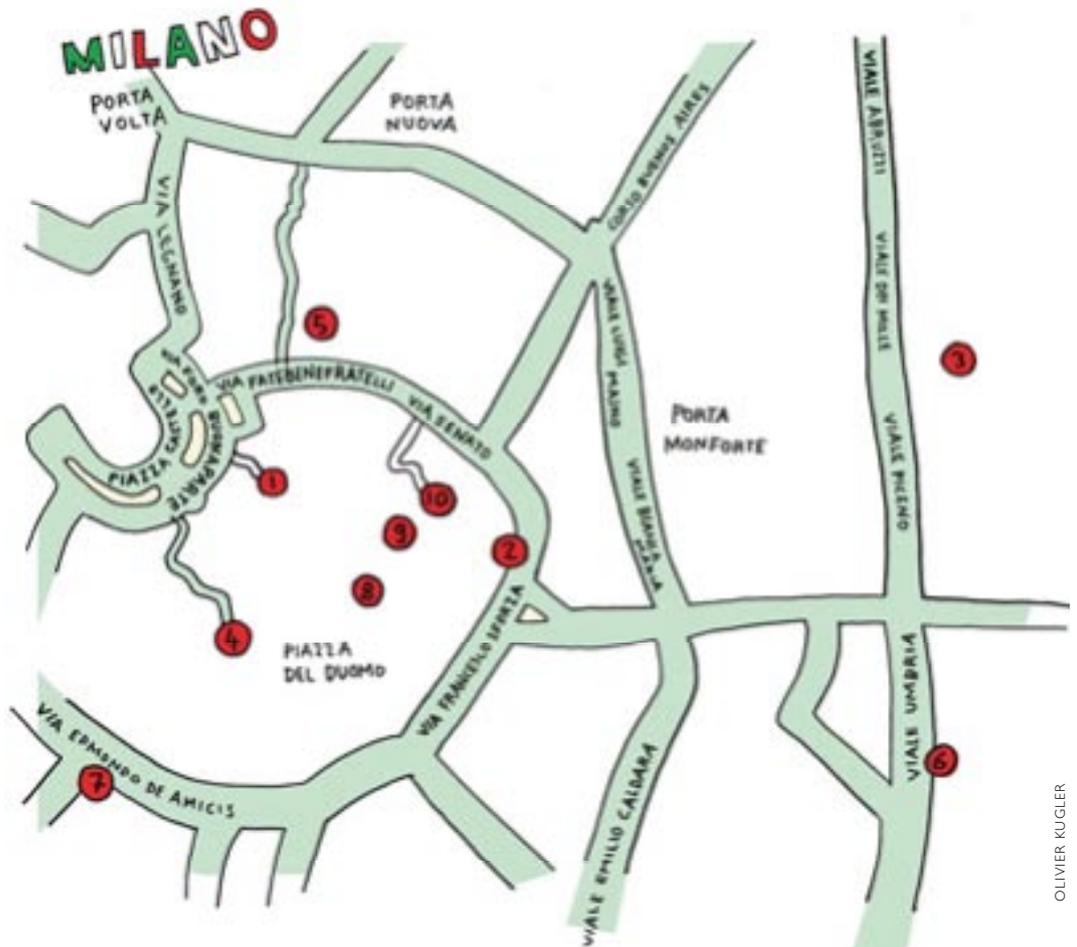
**9 hotel de la ville**

This clubby hotel is preferred by musicians working at nearby La Scala. Service is gracious, rooms are comfortable and airy, and there is a quirky little swimming pool on the roof with wonderful views of the Duomo. Across the street is the excellent bookstore Hoepli./ *via Hoepli 6; 011-39-02-879-131; delavillemilano.com*

**10 il salumaio di montenapoleone**

On the main street of Milanese fashion, chic locals nip into the "Salami Seller" when they want to eat. In addition to in-house dining, the restaurant has superb prosciutto, pristine cheeses, and a nice selection of wines available to take away./ *via Monte Napoleone 12; 011-39-02-760-01123; ilsalumaiodimontenapoleone.it*

~FRED PLOTKIN



OLIVIER KUGLER

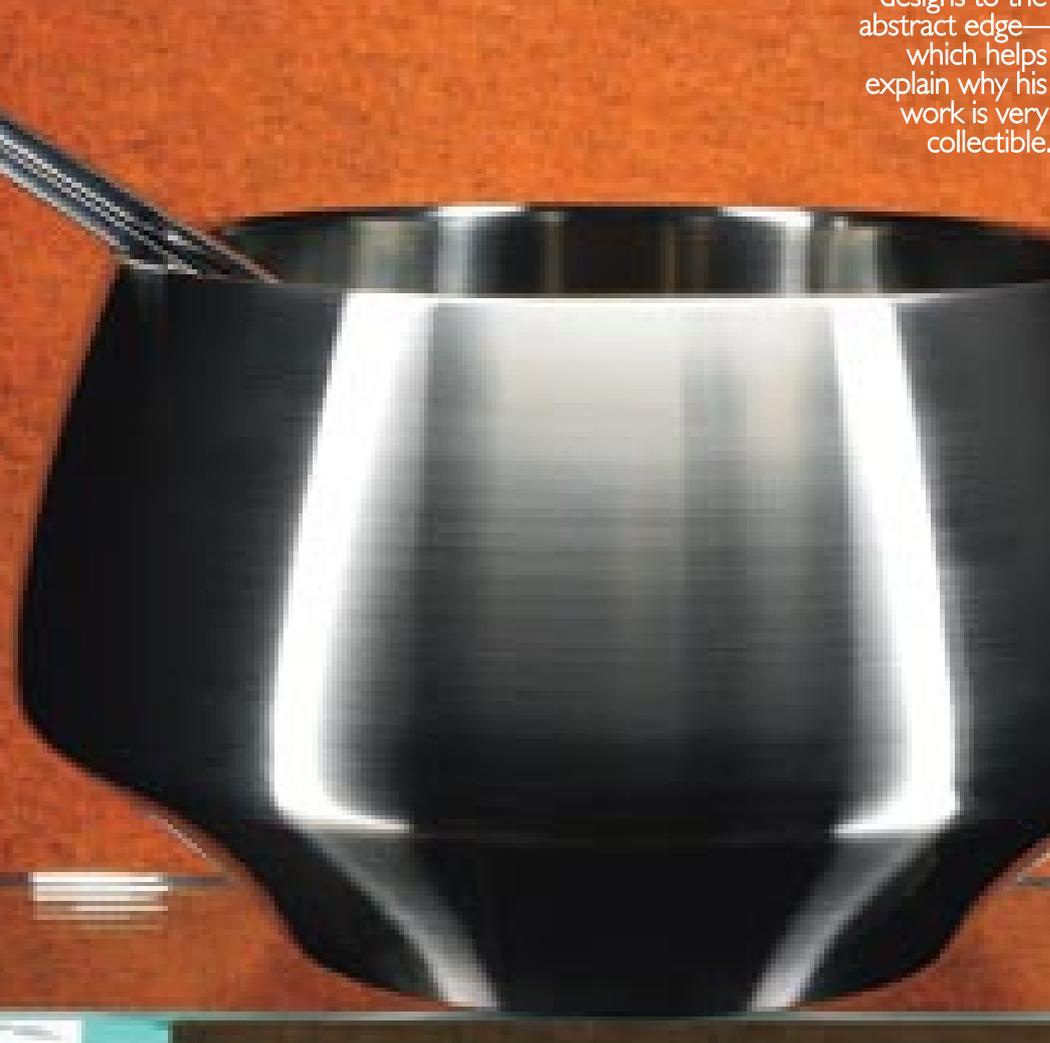
STARTERS

shopping

**OWN YOUR OWN/**  
Though designer Henning Koppel took inspiration from nature, he also took his designs to the abstract edge—which helps explain why his work is very collectible.

**ART FOR MORE THAN ART'S SAKE/**  
Gorgeous, yes, but practical, too. The bowl's smallish stature makes it a good choice for salad for two, and the steep sides make tossing easy.

**BARGAIN BUY/**  
Originally produced in silver, these new pieces are stainless steel, making them a less-indulgent investment.



**WHY WE LOVE/**

## georg jensen salad set

Good design just gets better with age. Case in point: this sleek salad bowl designed by Henning Koppel.

● **ONE OF GEORG JENSEN'S BEST-KNOWN MID-CENTURY DESIGNERS**, Henning Koppel is perhaps best known for the Caravel line, which includes a curvy flatware pattern that made its debut in 1957. The Caravel salad bowl is every bit as refined and resonant. Designed in the 1970s but never released, the bowl is now being packaged with the iconic servers in celebration of the line's 50th anniversary. Koppel's gift was the ability to seam an artist's sensibility (he got his start as a sculptor) with a knowledge of Danish silversmithing. His unique, organic designs are as relevant today as they were half a century ago. *Caravel 8-inch stainless steel salad bowl and stainless steel-black polycarbonate servers, \$295; to order, call 800-546-5253 or go to [georgjensenstore.com](http://georgjensenstore.com)* —**Laurie Glenn Buckle**

# what to buy now

Whether you're jet-setting across continents or just armchair-traveling, bring home stylish designs from around the world



## Stainless Steel Skewers / \$72 for 4

**SPAIN** Elegant but whimsical skewers pay homage to classic flatware. Unlike versions made of wood, these can be reused and are easy to clean. "Baroque" skewers from the elBulli collection for Faces Ferran Adrià; [cooperhewittshop.org](http://cooperhewittshop.org)



## One-of-a-Kind Place Mat / \$37

**ITALY** Designer Luisa Cevese laminates leftover textile scraps otherwise destined for the landfill. The results are strikingly original. Place mat by Luisa Cevese Riedizioni; available at OK; 323-653-3501



## Crystal Wineglass / \$225

**FRANCE** Glassmaker Baccarat reintroduces a classic line from the 1970s. The modern offset stem creates an asymmetrical look that captures light—and attention. "Narcisse" wineglass; 800-777-0100



## Cocktails to Go / \$145

**GERMANY** When traveling, it's crucial to pack only the priorities. This handsome leather box comes with two flasks, two cups, a stirrer, a bottle opener, and ice tongs. "Giorgio" cocktail box; [prestigeidentity.com](http://prestigeidentity.com)



## Tilted Pitcher / \$31

**MEXICO** Created from handblown glass, this pitcher has a clever exterior indentation to hold ice, so it keeps drinks cold but won't turn out watered-down Margaritas. Angled glass pitcher; [ellastyle.com](http://ellastyle.com)



## Patterned Plate / \$20

**TUNISIA** Inspired by traditional North African motifs, this plate mixes eye-catching flourishes and aqua hues for a timeless feel. "Sabrine" 9-inch square plate by Le Souk Ceramique; available at Broadway Panhandler; 866-266-5927



## Angled Bowl / \$58

**DENMARK** This bowl is designed at a subtle tilt with porcelain sides that rise at a steep angle. The result is a tilted rim and a graceful, modern silhouette. "Tilt" 8¼-inch bowl by Anne Black; [greenergrassdesign.com](http://greenergrassdesign.com)



## Screen-Printed Towel / \$38

**AUSTRALIA** Tea towel or work of art? This limited-edition print from Melbourne-area gallery Third Drawer Down is hip whether it's on the kitchen counter or on the wall. "Musical Chairs" 20x28-inch tea towel by Edwina White; [2jane.com](http://2jane.com)



## Carved Tray / \$40

**TANZANIA** Handcrafted from fallen olive trees, the beautiful design is accented with painted bone. Sales help provide sustainable living wages to local artisans. "With Olive Your Heart" 16x4-inch tray; [originalgood.com](http://originalgood.com) / ▶▶



**Salt and Pepper Shakers / \$85**

**SOUTH AFRICA** Guinea fowl—a common African bird known for its bright white spots—are hand-painted on these cheery ceramic salt and pepper shakers. 800-985-5509; jacarandastyle.com



**Market Basket / \$50**

**SWEDEN** Made of sturdy polypropylene plastic, this tote can be slung over your shoulder or mounted as a bicycle basket to carry farmers' market goodies. "Carrie" basket in green by Mary-Louise Gustafsson for Design House Stockholm; sfmoma.org



**Ginger Grater / \$24**

**JAPAN** This beautiful, traditional ginger grater might be delicate-looking, but it has serious bite. Razor-sharp, angled points turn fibrous ginger into a fine paste. 310-314-8448; tortoiselife.com



**Jet-Set Watch / \$2,300**

**SWITZERLAND** Just like a well-seasoned traveler, this dual-time leather watch holds up in hot or humid terrain, but still looks at home in an elegant restaurant. "Carrera Twin-Time" watch; 866-675-2080 or tagheuer.com for stores



**Table Runner / \$48**

**ROMANIA** Made from vintage fabric, this organic hemp and cotton runner is hand-spun by a collective that strives to preserve traditional handicrafts. Table runner with rust stripes; branchhome.com



**Horn Servers / \$55**

**VIETNAM** Buffed to a smooth shine, these attractive carved-horn pieces are handmade. A stripe of bright lacquer gives them a polished finish. Available at Yellow Lotus; 310-319-9546



**Tea Travel Pack / \$95**

**ENGLAND** With this felt pack along for the ride, tea lovers never risk having a bad brew while traveling. It comes with disposable tea filters, stirrers, and travel-size tins of Leaf tea. "Couture Travel Tea Kit"; hellodelicious.com



**Pine Cone Syrup / \$24**

**ITALY** This unique syrup has a delicious, slightly caramel flavor. Try it as an unexpected topping for fresh fruit, yogurt, and ice cream. "Mugolio" pine cone syrup by Primitivizia; markethalloffoods.com



**Kids' Puzzle Tray / \$55**

**NETHERLANDS** This jigsaw plate, cup, and flatware set will make dinnertime fun for even the pickiest eaters. The pieces are made from melamine. "Puzzle Dinner Tray" by Royal VKB; aplusstore.com ~ELISA HUANG

## my days of whine and roses

Think you want to be a restaurant critic? Think again. Our intrepid writer exposes the cruel realities of a life of bottomless wine bottles, endless global travel, and countless bad meals.

BY ALAN RICHMAN

### ● NOBODY FEELS SORRY FOR ME.

I don't understand this absence of compassion, but I suppose it has to do with the free food.

I'm not implying that restaurateurs tear up checks when they recognize me. More often, they tear up my stories. Nor are FreshDirect trucks pulling up outside my door, dropping off bags of complimentary groceries. All my bills are paid. Just not by me.

Eating is what I do for a living. It's not heavy lifting, except when it comes to the gnocchi in certain Italian restaurants.

For that matter, eating is what I do when I'm not making a living. I eat all the time, simply because it's more interesting than anything else.

The time between meals is what's tough. Restaurant critics are like ballet dancers, except we can't jump very high.

When we're not working, we have no lives.

Allow me to summarize mine:

I walk my dogs. I've noticed that all they care about is food, too. That's why we get along.

I also travel, but that's overrated. Not long ago I flew coach to three Asian destinations, and the planes were full for 42 of the 45 hours. Another thing: After three or four visits, even Stonehenge and the Taj Mahal start to get old. At least meals in restaurants are ever-changing. They're like snowflakes, never precisely the same.

That's what it's like to be a professional food writer. Not as exhilarating as you thought, is it?

Don't get me wrong. I love being at a dinner table. Your table. A friend's table. Restaurant tables. (Not mine, because I don't cook well.) I love the dinner-table conversation among

men—it's more polished than at bars, the only other venue where we are known to talk. I don't like saloons, particularly their accoutrements: hard stools and warped pool cues. Bars nurture arguments. Restaurants nurture friendships.

I'm always happy when I'm in a good restaurant. It doesn't have to be expensive, but I'm sure you've noticed that fancy places care for you better than cheap ones. Great restaurants don't just feed you; they also make you happy to be there. I don't go to a restaurant to eat. I go to a restaurant to have a good time.

Almost everybody envies my life. The other day at lunch I was seated next to an enormously famous fashion designer, and he said he wished he could be me. Small boys under the age of 12 have similar feelings. When I tell them I eat for a living, they look at me as though I were Superman.

Small girls of the same age aren't impressed. They tend to be more interested in boys than in food at that age, not realizing that if they showed more interest in food, boys would show more interest in them.

I always thought that if I didn't eat for a living, I could make good bucks offering sound advice to the young.

I don't want to give the wrong impression. It's not because I eat all the time that I suffer—except when it's nouvelle Italian cuisine, of course.

It's everything else.

First of all, you try being full all the time. I spend most of my afternoons lying flat on a couch, wondering how I can summon the strength to go to dinner.

I spend even more time trying to figure out how to write in a fascinating manner about a meal I'd rather just remember dreamily. It's not /»



painless, trying to put sensuality into prose. Because it's so difficult, almost all food writing is repetitive, the chef napping this or drizzling that. (Hard as it is to believe, those aren't sleep- or weather-related terms.)

Eating to live, which normal people do, and eating to make a living, which I do, are completely different. If you think you would like my life, try coming home from a four-hour dinner, sitting down at your computer, and composing deep thoughts. You're not a professional. You'd fall off your chair and pass out on the rug.

MY LIFE HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN THIS difficult. I spent a year in Vietnam. I had my own jeep and a .45 automatic pistol, and I knew the location of every USAID (United States Agency for International Development) hotel in Saigon selling \$3 steak dinners. I lived in a Quonset hut with a cot, a desk, a fan, mosquito netting, and a full-size refrigerator stuffed with lobsters and steaks pilfered from freighters being unloaded in the port of Saigon.

I also invaded the Dominican Republic. That wasn't hard, either. I was stationed at an air base, and the air force flew in lox and bagels for me.

Once I got out of the army, I became a journalist, and life got tough.

At first I was a sportswriter, my beat the Philadelphia 76ers of the NBA. What I remember most about those days was the free food in the press box. At my first home game, I brought a large soda and two hot dogs to the courtside press table to munch on during the first quarter. A veteran columnist walked by and said, "You're going to eat your way out of this league, kid."

It wasn't the food that did me in. It was the players.

I remember a plane ride with the 76ers during the epic 1972–73 season, when the team lost more games than any other team in league history. The great guard Hal Greer, who might have been enjoying the complimentary beverage selections a little too enthusiastically,

walked down the aisle, stopped in front of me, and started taunting, saying, "You're nothin'. You're nothin'."

And to think, sports writing is another profession that people envy.

I came to food writing late. I never wanted to be a restaurant critic until I helped start a column called "Cheap Eats" for *The Boston Globe*. I got the assignment of finding the best Peking duck in the Boston area, and I managed to turn that into one meal a week for nearly a year. I didn't feel sorry for myself back then.

In the early '90s, *GQ* gave me a food-and-wine column, and I started winning prizes. If you want to get ahead in journalism, that's how it's done. Nothing else is quite so effective, because the profession is measured in no other way. I was the same writer before getting awards, but nobody paid attention to me.

I had another bit of luck: The newspapers and magazines that hired me were always successful. Another friend of mine, an online restaurant

critic, recently wrote to me, "You write for publications that people actually read, so that must be satisfying."

A mitigating factor is mistreatment by editors. Here's something else you should know if you're thinking of becoming a writer: Editors run magazines, and, like all supreme authorities, they take care of themselves first.

An old friend from my early days as a food critic reminded me of the working conditions when I first joined *GQ*: "You toiled away in that dark, musty closet of an office you had—wasn't the ventilation system for our floor in your office?" She added, "The maintenance men would show up unannounced and constantly interrupt you, and you didn't have an assistant, so you'd have to bribe the assistants of editors with those \$4 bottles of wine you had around to pick up supplies for you."

The terrible truth is that all who put words to paper or screen suffer—writing has been called the vocation of unhappiness. For that reason alone, I was sure I could expect compassion / ▶



from my fellow food writers. I e-mailed a few of them.

One friend who was traveling in Africa on some magazine's expense account, much as I do, told me he was desperate for recognizable food and was preparing to order a steak sandwich and onion rings from hotel room service. (Only once in my life have I lost interest in a local cuisine, as he did, and that was in Havana, which no longer has a cuisine—or food, for that matter.)

My unsympathetic friend wrote back: "What you call 'suffering,' other people call 'vacation.'"

A food writer from Canada, another alleged pal, wrote back to say, "What's the worst thing that's happened to you lately? Cold pastrami? Over-oaked Chardonnay?"

I tried a different approach, this time seeking understanding from a neighbor, a psychiatrist from Vienna. He wasn't particularly kind, either. He kept talking about "imaginary enemies." He doesn't realize that the people who hate critics are real.

A few years ago, in this magazine, I wrote an extraordinarily flattering piece about the restaurant Vetri in Philadelphia, although I mentioned that the bread was merely pretty good. More recently, in a different magazine, I wrote an extraordinarily flattering item on the roasted goat at Vetri.

What people don't seem to realize is that I praise restaurants far more than I criticize them. The friends I take to meals are always unhappier than I am, but I'm paid to express my opinions.

When I do, chefs get upset. Vetri's chef-owner, Marc Vetri, sent me an e-mail. He thanked me, but added "although I was hoping for '...the best thing about Vetri is the bread.'"

Another friend reminded me that I have been called a "professional debunker" on *New York* magazine's Web site; "the ne plus ultra of bitchy dining critics" on Gawker; and "all kinds of unprintable things" by everybody in New Orleans.

I've been on eGullet.com, where I was pictured cooking in my bathrobe,

an example of what can happen when a critic relaxes his defenses, even with dinner guests. Immediately afterward I got a message from a friend who wanted to come over with a video camera and film me in an embarrassing state for YouTube. "I could sell it for some major bling," she wrote. Some people don't allow smoking in their homes; I have been forced to ban recording devices.

I WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING CLEAR. The life of the restaurant critic isn't the same as that of food writers. You do not have to feel sorry for them.

When they travel, hotels know they are coming, so they are upgraded to the Elvis Presley Suite. When they eat out, chefs who haven't been seen in their kitchens since the advent of the Food Network fly in, borrow a stained apron from their sous-chef, and walk wearily through the dining room, complaining that they were up at dawn picking out organic produce at the farmers' market.

Food writers get to do the easy stories, the ones about prizewinning pumpkins. I unconditionally recommend that profession to all of you.

One of my oldest friends, a writer whose friendship goes back 35 years, replied to my plea for sympathy by writing, "You're the Jack LaLanne of food writing, swimming toward Alcatraz in chains, pulling a rowboat filled with magnums of Chateau Figeac with your teeth."

Long ago, she was sitting beside me at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Lafayette restaurant in Manhattan's Drake Hotel when the sommelier recommended a 1983 red Burgundy.

I responded, accurately, "Wasn't there hail in the vineyards that year?" She often refers to that retort as the finest in dining history. I do have my moments.

She also gave me a moniker that I think exquisitely summarizes my life. She calls me The Prisoner of Privilege. Now there's a person who understands. / ■

*Alan Richman is a special correspondent for Bon Appétit.*



## playlist/

## SONGS FOR A PLANE RIDE

Knowing full well that the only way to get to some fabulous destinations is by sitting in a metal tube for upwards of five hours, we offer a strong audio cocktail to keep your spirits up until you're ready to touch down.

1. Frank Sinatra/ **LET'S GET AWAY**

**FROM IT ALL** The beloved Chairman of the Board playfully beckons with an invitation to "take a powder to Boston for chowder."

2. Steve Miller Band/ **JET AIRLINER**

A radio hit that is nostalgic but also serves as a reminder that a return ticket awaits you. Beware of catchy guitar hooks during flight.

3. Bob Dylan/ **GOTTA TRAVEL ON**

Dylan covers this Bill Monroe bluegrass staple and infuses it with new life and the impetus to get moving in more ways than one.

4. Kid Loco/ **FLYIN' ON 747**

A percussive chill-out track that may be best enjoyed with a complimentary refreshment and an eye mask.

5. Destroyer/ **IT'S GOING TO TAKE AN AIRPLANE**

Vancouver songsmith Dan Bejar assumes flight with this breezy and breathy David Bowie-esque tune.

6. Robert Plant and Alison Krauss/ **GONE GONE GONE (DONE MOVED ON)**

The Led Zeppelin front man and the bluegrass sweetheart are unlikely—but very inspired—collaborators on this rocking Everly Brothers cover.

7. Marvin Gaye/ **FLYIN' HIGH (IN THE FRIENDLY SKY)**

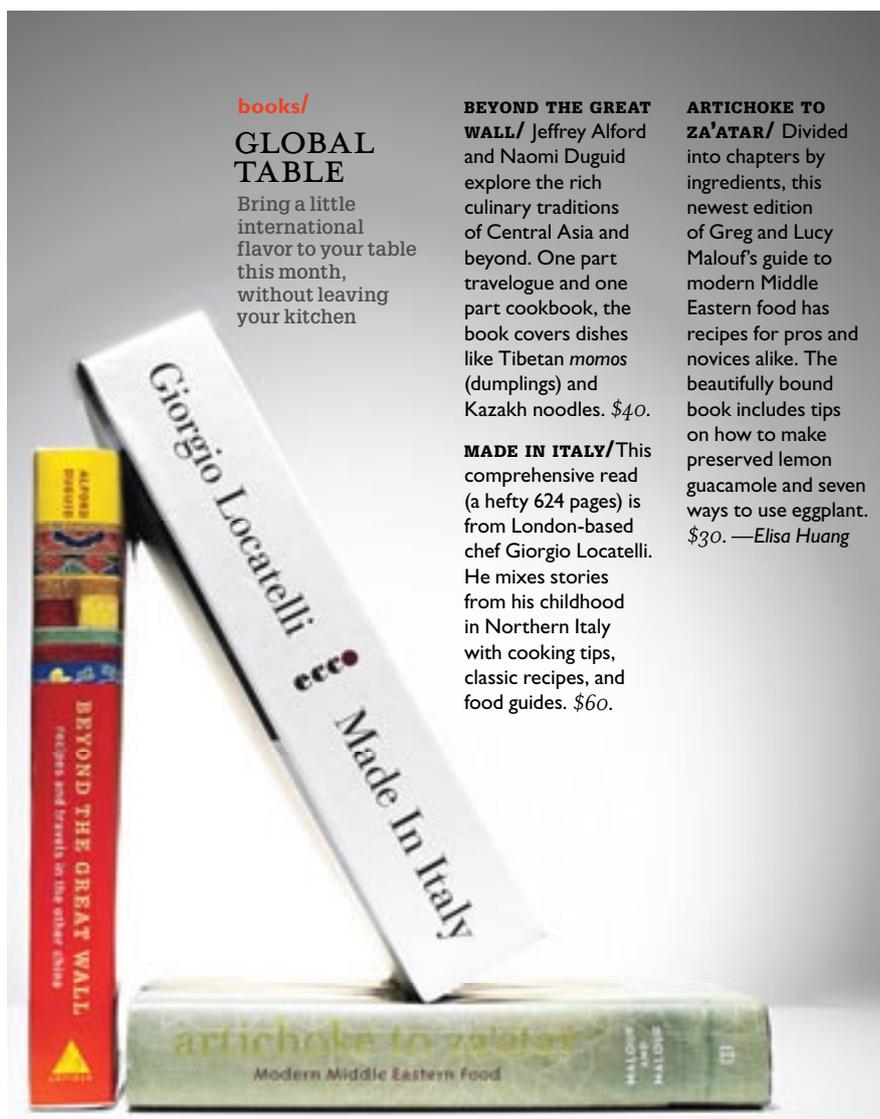
The late, great Marvin Gaye is soulful and nothing short of ethereal in this classic track.

—Eric Steinman

## books/

## GLOBAL TABLE

Bring a little international flavor to your table this month, without leaving your kitchen

**BEYOND THE GREAT WALL/**

Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid explore the rich culinary traditions of Central Asia and beyond. One part travelogue and one part cookbook, the book covers dishes like Tibetan *momos* (dumplings) and Kazakh noodles. \$40.

**MADE IN ITALY/**This comprehensive read (a hefty 624 pages) is from London-based chef Giorgio Locatelli.

He mixes stories from his childhood in Northern Italy with cooking tips, classic recipes, and food guides. \$60.

**ARTICHOKE TO ZA'ATAR/**

Divided into chapters by ingredients, this newest edition of Greg and Lucy Malouf's guide to modern Middle Eastern food has recipes for pros and novices alike. The beautifully bound book includes tips on how to make preserved lemon guacamole and seven ways to use eggplant. \$30. —Elisa Huang

## tech/

## NATIVE INTELLIGENCE

“When in Rome,” don’t spend your dream night in a dining room filled with other Americans. To truly go native, log on to these local Web sites for some hometown advice. Translate using handy tools like Babel Fish ([babelfish.altavista.com](http://babelfish.altavista.com)) and Google Language Tools ([google.com/language\\_tools](http://google.com/language_tools)). **GERMANY/** Covering the country’s big cities and small towns, Restaurant Kritik ([restaurant-kritik.de](http://restaurant-kritik.de)) has helpful lists of the latest openings and the top five places in every region. **BUENOS AIRES/** Oleo ([guiaoleo.com.ar](http://guiaoleo.com.ar)) relies on the power of the people to rate an exhaustive list of restaurants throughout the sprawling city. **TOKYO/** Read by expats and English-speaking locals alike, *Metropolis* magazine ([metropolis.co.jp](http://metropolis.co.jp)) is updated weekly and has lengthy reviews with maps and photos. **SOUTH AFRICA/** Foodie magazine *Eat Out* ([eatout.co.za](http://eatout.co.za)) offers picks for the country’s top restaurants, plus listings and reviews of hundreds more. **SHANGHAI/** Shanghai Eats ([shanghaieats.com](http://shanghaieats.com)) covers a good mix of traditional Chinese spots and flashy new food palaces like Jean Georges. **ITALY/** *Gambero Rosso* ([gamberorosso.it](http://gamberorosso.it)) awards the coveted “Three Forks” and is Italy’s most respected culinary authority. Stick with the Italian version of the site for more listings and full reviews. (Note: you’ll have to register to get access, but it’s worth it.) —Melinda Page



# fast easy fresh

quick dishes  
for every-  
night cooking  
from the  
BON APPÉTIT  
test kitchen

RECIPES BY  
LENA CEDERHAM  
BIRNBAUM, JANET  
TAYLOR MCCRACKEN,  
SELMA BROWN MORROW,  
AND SARAH TENAGLIA



mango-  
radicchio  
caprese  
p. 89



**GOOD TO KNOW** SWISS CHARD (in the pasta) is one of the most nutrient-rich vegetables imaginable.

It's high in vitamins A, C, E, and K, and in iron, potassium, and dietary fiber, among other nutrients.

**RADICCHIO** (in the caprese) is a good source of antioxidants (the antioxidant anthocyanin gives it the deep color).



CHICKEN-FRIED STEAK WITH GRAVY

### chicken-fried skirt steak with country gravy

PREP: 25 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 25 MINUTES/ 4 SERVINGS

For a complete diner-style meal, serve this indulgent main with sautéed green beans and buttermilk biscuits.

- 1 cup beef broth, divided
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- 4 4- to 5-inch-long pieces skirt steak
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
- 1 fully cooked breakfast pork-sausage patty (about 1 ounce), finely chopped
- ½ cup whipping cream
- ½ teaspoon dried sage
- Pinch of ground cloves
- ⅓ cup chopped green onion tops

Pour ½ cup broth into shallow bowl. Place flour in another shallow bowl. Sprinkle steak pieces on both sides with salt and pepper.

Dip steaks into flour, then into broth, then into flour again, coating each time.

Melt butter in large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add steaks. Sauté until brown, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to plate.

Pour off butter from skillet. Add 1 teaspoon flour from shallow bowl. Whisk in remaining ½ cup broth, sausage, cream, sage, and cloves. Boil gravy until thick enough to coat spoon, whisking often, about 3 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Mix in green onion tops. Spoon gravy over steaks.

### bacon and swiss chard pasta

PREP: 35 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 35 MINUTES/ 6 SERVINGS

See page 12 for a photo.

- 1 pound linguine
- 12 ounces bacon, cut crosswise into ½-inch slices

- 1 very large red onion, halved, sliced (about 6 cups)
- 2 large bunches Swiss chard, stemmed, chopped (about 12 cups)
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook linguine in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, cook bacon in heavy large pot over medium heat until beginning to crisp, about 10 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Drain all but 2 tablespoons bacon drippings from skillet. Add onion and sauté over medium-high heat until softened, about 7 minutes. Add Swiss chard and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add pasta cooking liquid to skillet. Toss until chard is wilted and tender, about 4 minutes. Sprinkle vinegar over; cook 1 minute.

Add linguine and oil to sauce in pot and toss to coat. Transfer to large bowl. Sprinkle with bacon and cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

### mango-radicchio caprese with basil vinaigrette

PREP: 15 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 15 MINUTES/ 4 SERVINGS

Mangoes take the place of tomatoes, so you don't have to wait until summer to enjoy this much-loved Italian salad.

- ⅓ cup chopped fresh basil plus 8 whole large basil leaves
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 8 radicchio leaves, thick ends trimmed
- 2 large mangoes, peeled, halved, thinly sliced
- 8 ¼-inch-thick slices fresh mozzarella cheese (from one 8-ounce ball)

Blend chopped basil, oil, and vinegar in mini processor until most of basil is pureed. Season with salt and pepper.

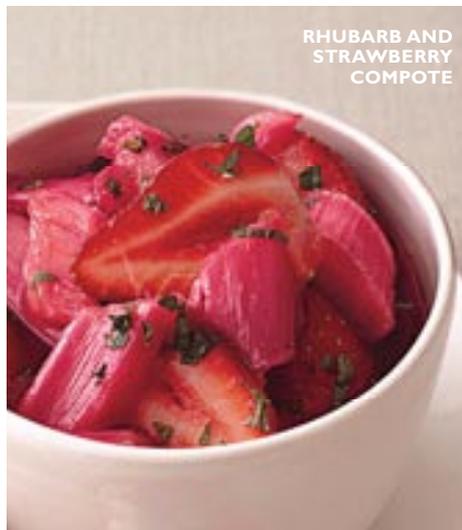
Overlap radicchio, mangoes, cheese, and basil leaves on plates. Drizzle with vinaigrette. Serve, passing remaining vinaigrette.

**INGREDIENT TIP!** The pictured salad was made with gorgeous Tardivo radicchio, but standard Chioggia (round) or Treviso (endive-like) radicchio works just as well. ▶▶

**GOOD TO KNOW** The **RHUBARB** compote is an amazingly healthy dessert. It's low in calories, fat,

saturated fat, and cholesterol; it's also high in fiber. / Green peas (such as the **SUGAR SNAP PEAS** below) are

a great source of protein. In fact, of all fresh vegetables, they rank second highest in protein (after lima beans).



RHUBARB AND STRAWBERRY COMPOTE

### rhubarb and strawberry compote with fresh mint

PREP: 20 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES (INCLUDES CHILLING TIME)/ MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

Serve the compote over vanilla or strawberry ice cream, angel food cake, pancakes, or waffles.

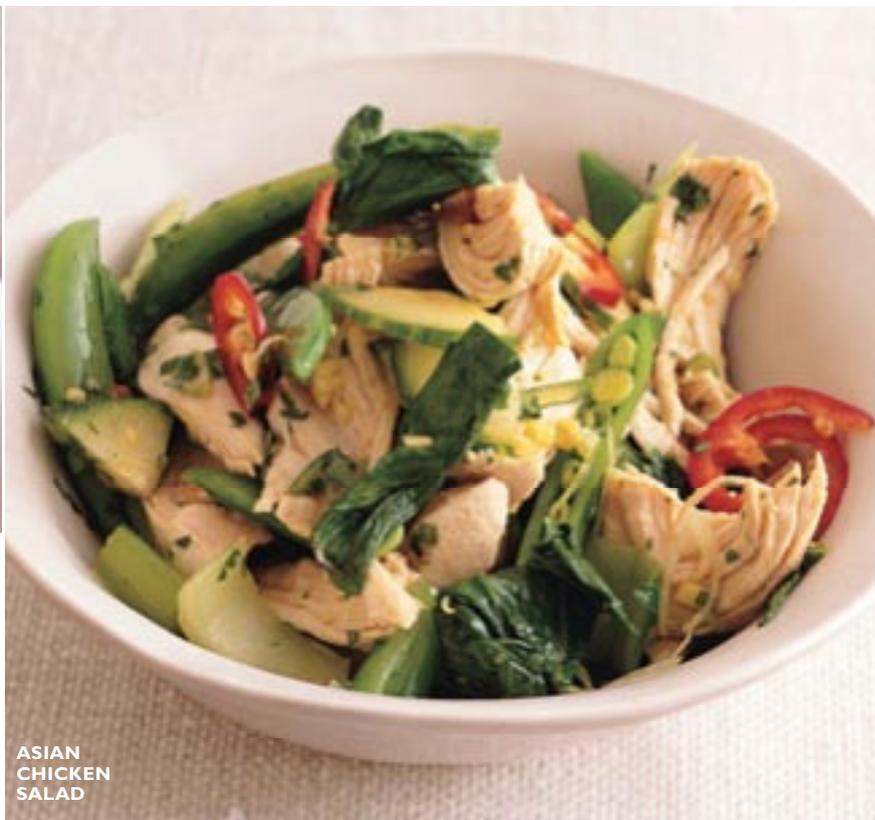
- 3 cups ½-inch-wide pieces fresh rhubarb (cut from about 1 pound)
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 1-pint container fresh strawberries, hulled, halved
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

Combine rhubarb, sugar, and ¼ cup water in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Bring to simmer, stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Simmer gently until rhubarb is tender but not falling apart, stirring occasionally, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in strawberries. Transfer to bowl and stir in mint. Chill until cold, about 1 hour.

### asian chicken salad with snap peas and bok choy

PREP: 20 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 40 MINUTES/ 4 SERVINGS

- 2 skinless boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 pound)
- 5 fresh cilantro sprigs plus ⅓ cup chopped cilantro
- 1 whole green onion plus 2 green onions, chopped



ASIAN CHICKEN SALAD

- 1 8-ounce package sugar snap peas
- 3 baby bok choy, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 English hothouse cucumber, quartered lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 red jalapeño chile, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup ponzu\*
- 2½ tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar
- 2½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger

Fill medium skillet with salted water; bring to boil. Add chicken breasts, cilantro sprigs, and whole green onion; reduce heat to medium and poach chicken until just cooked through, about 20 minutes. Using tongs, transfer chicken to plate; cool. Add snap peas to same skillet; increase heat to high and cook until crisp-tender, about 1 minute. Drain; rinse snap peas under cold water to cool. Discard whole green onion and cilantro sprigs. Coarsely shred chicken. Toss chicken, chopped cilantro, chopped green onions, snap peas, and next 3 ingredients in large bowl.

Whisk ponzu, vinegar, oil, and ginger in small bowl. Add dressing to salad; toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

\*/Available in the Asian foods section of some supermarkets and at Asian markets.

### lemon-ginger frozen yogurt

PREP: 15 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 40 MINUTES/ 6 SERVINGS

This frozen treat is low in calories and fat. You can top it with mango and crystallized ginger, if desired. If freezing overnight, thaw briefly in the microwave, stopping to stir, or let the frozen yogurt stand at room temperature for 15 minutes before serving.

- ¾ cup water
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons finely grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

Bring water, sugar, light corn syrup, and grated ginger to boil in medium saucepan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil 2 minutes. Strain into medium bowl and chill until cool. Whisk in yogurt, buttermilk, lemon juice, and lemon peel. Process in ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions; cover and freeze. />>

**GOOD TO KNOW** PLAIN YOGURT is a good source of calcium, vitamin B<sub>2</sub>, iodine, zinc, and potassium. High-

quality yogurt will most likely contain live cultures, which have been shown to help the immune system.

FAST EASY  
FRESH



FLATBREADS  
WITH RAITA

### ground coriander and cilantro flatbreads

PREP: 30 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 30 MINUTES/  
MAKES 8

Make a simple herb oil to brush over the flatbreads as soon as they come out of the skillet. Just mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground coriander. Or serve with the raita that follows.

- 1½ cups (or more) unbleached all purpose flour
- 2½ teaspoons ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup chopped fresh cilantro
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (or more) plain whole-milk yogurt
- Olive oil (for frying)

Sift first 5 ingredients into medium bowl. Stir in cilantro. Add yogurt and stir with fork until small clumps form. Knead mixture in bowl just until dough holds together, adding more flour or yogurt by tablespoonfuls for soft and slightly sticky dough. Turn dough out onto floured surface. Knead just until smooth, about 1 minute. Divide dough into 8 equal pieces.

Roll each piece into ball, then roll each dough piece out on floured surface to 4½-inch round.

Brush large nonstick skillet generously with olive oil; heat over medium heat. Working in batches, add 3 dough rounds to skillet; cook until golden brown and puffed, adjusting heat to medium-high as needed to brown evenly, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer flatbreads to platter; serve warm.

### traditional indian raita

PREP: 10 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 10 MINUTES/  
MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Can't take the heat? Then eat some raita. In India, the condiment is used to cool the palate.

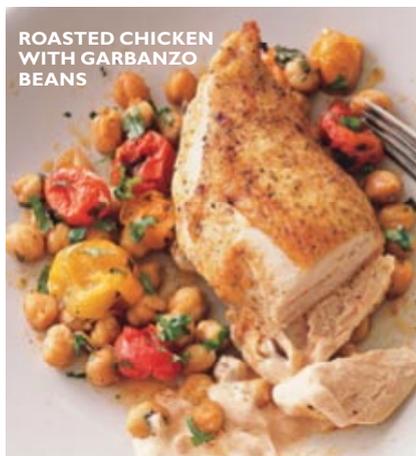
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped seeded English hothouse cucumber
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons chopped green onions
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground coriander
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground cumin

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Season to taste with salt. Chill raita, covered, until ready to serve. />>

**GOOD TO KNOW** A recent study showed that eating **GARBANZO BEANS** may lower your "bad" cholesterol. /The

New Orleans **SHRIMP** sauté is a great choice for the health-conscious eater. It's low in calories and fat.

**FAST EASY  
FRESH**



### roast chicken breasts with garbanzo beans, tomatoes, and paprika

PREP: 15 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 35 MINUTES/ 4 SERVINGS

Use leftovers for sandwiches the next day: Place shredded chicken, garbanzos, and tomatoes in a pita bread and top with the yogurt sauce.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika\*
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- ½ cup plain yogurt or Greek yogurt
- 4 chicken breast halves with bones
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained
- 1 12-ounce container cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro, divided

Preheat oven to 450°F. Mix first 5 ingredients in medium bowl. Pour 1 teaspoon spiced oil mixture into small bowl; whisk in yogurt and set aside for sauce. Place chicken on large rimmed baking sheet. Rub 2 tablespoons spiced oil mixture over chicken. Add beans, tomatoes, and ½ cup cilantro to remaining spiced oil mixture; toss to coat. Pour bean mixture around chicken. Sprinkle everything generously with salt and pepper.

Roast until chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with ½ cup cilantro. Transfer chicken to plates. Spoon bean mixture over. Serve with yogurt sauce.

\*/ Sometimes labeled Pimentón Dulce or Pimentón de La Vera Dulce; available at some supermarkets, at specialty foods stores, and from tienda.com.

### new orleans shrimp, okra, and tomato sauté

PREP: 30 MINUTES/ TOTAL: 30 MINUTES/ 4 SERVINGS

Great on polenta, grits, or steamed rice.

- 1¼ pounds large uncooked shrimp, peeled, deveined
- 3 teaspoons Cajun seasoning, divided
- 6 slices smoked bacon, chopped
- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 cups frozen cut okra (from 16-ounce package), thawed
- 1 12-ounce container cherry tomatoes
- 1 8-ounce bottle clam juice
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 green onions, chopped

Toss shrimp and ½ teaspoons Cajun seasoning in medium bowl to coat. Cook bacon in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until crisp and brown. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towel to drain. Add flour to drippings in skillet. Stir constantly until roux is very dark brown, about 5 minutes. Add okra and cherry tomatoes. Stir in remaining ½ teaspoons Cajun seasoning. Cook 1 minute. Add clam juice and allspice. Boil until sauce is thick, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Add shrimp. Sauté shrimp until just opaque in center, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Mix in chopped green onions and cooked bacon. Serve.

**INGREDIENT TIP/** Cajun seasoning varies by brand, but it almost always contains salt, onion, garlic, chiles, black pepper, mustard, and celery. It may also include bay leaves, nutmeg, and paprika. You can find it in the spice section of most supermarkets. /■



**1/3 PAGE VERTICAL RIGHT**

# family style

BY AMY FINLEY

dinner  
for you and  
your kids—  
plus leftovers



recipes  
on p. 99

**THE MENU/ TUSCAN CHICKEN FOR 4**  
Grilled citrus chicken under a brick  
Creamy corn-studded polenta  
Romaine with parmesan vinaigrette

**THE PAYOFF/** A whole lot of fun for the kids (the butterflied chicken is played out on the grill under a brick!) and a succulent whole chicken that

cooks in half the time—perfect for a weeknight family dinner. A drizzle of juice from grilled oranges is the citrusy, aromatic topper.

**THE LEFTOVERS/** Fried Polenta Cakes: Cooked in olive oil and sprinkled with cheese, polenta cakes make a nice light supper with a salad. /»



### grilled citrus chicken under a brick

4 SERVINGS/ *This is a traditional Tuscan method—bricks weigh down the butterflied chicken, resulting in even, quick cooking and crispy skin (you'll need two bricks for this recipe; wrap them in foil). If you don't have bricks, a cast-iron skillet will do the trick. Ask your butcher to butterfly the chicken for you.*

- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/3 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh oregano
- 3 teaspoons salt, divided
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 whole chicken (about 3 3/4 pounds), neck and giblets removed, butterflied
- 1 teaspoon Hungarian sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1 1/2 oranges
- 2 foil-wrapped bricks or 1 cast-iron skillet

Whisk juices, olive oil, oregano, 1 teaspoon salt, rosemary, and garlic in glass baking dish. Add chicken to marinade. Turn to coat; chill

2 hours, turning occasionally. **DO AHEAD**

Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled.

Mix remaining 2 teaspoons salt, paprika, and pepper in small bowl.

Spray grill rack with nonstick spray. Prepare barbecue (medium heat). Slice 1/2 orange into 1/4- to 1/8-inch-thick slices. Remove chicken from marinade; pat dry. Loosen skin from chicken breast and slide 1 to 2 orange slices between skin and breast. Loosen skin from thighs and slide 1 to 2 orange slices between skin and thighs. Rub paprika mixture over both sides of chicken. Place chicken, skin side down, on grill. Place foil-wrapped bricks or cast-iron skillet atop chicken (if using bricks, position 1 brick over top half of chicken and 1 brick over bottom half). Cover and grill until skin is crispy and brown, about 15 minutes. Remove bricks or skillet. Using tongs or 2 large spatulas, turn chicken. Replace bricks or skillet and cook, covered, until chicken is cooked through, about 20

### second helpings/ FRIED POLENTA CAKES

- To 1 cup POLENTA, add 1 beaten egg and a light sprinkling of flour. Add enough olive oil to large skillet to reach depth of 1/4 inch; heat oil over medium-high heat. Add polenta mixture by 1/4 cupfuls and cook until cakes are golden, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Sprinkle with grated Fontina or mozzarella cheese and let melt. Serve as a light supper with a salad.

minutes longer. Let chicken rest 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, place whole orange on grill and cook until slightly charred, turning often, about 1 minute. Cut into wedges and serve alongside for squeezing over chicken.

### creamy corn-studded polenta

4 SERVINGS/

- 3 1/2 cups low-salt chicken broth
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup polenta (coarse cornmeal)
- 3 cups fresh corn kernels (from 3 ears)
- 1 tablespoon butter

Bring broth, cream, and salt to boil in medium saucepan. Gradually whisk in polenta; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 10 minutes, stirring often. Add corn; increase heat and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until polenta is soft, thick, and creamy, stirring often, about 15 minutes. Stir in butter and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot.

### romaine with parmesan vinaigrette

4 SERVINGS/

- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 teaspoons whole grain mustard
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 hearts of romaine

Mix first 5 ingredients in jar. Place lid on jar; shake to combine. Add oil. Replace lid; shake. Season with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Keep chilled. Bring to room temperature before using.

Shake vinaigrette to blend. Trim ends of romaine, then slice lengthwise. Arrange on plates and drizzle with vinaigrette. / ■

*Amy Finley is the winner of The Next Food Network Star reality series.*

# at the market

coconut

TEXT BY AMY ALBERT  
RECIPES BY  
ANNABEL LANGBEIN

one  
ingredient  
at its seasonal  
peak and  
delicious  
things to do  
with it



**WHAT/** The largest nut there is, with a smooth outer covering (what you see hanging from the tree) that's often removed before shipping. A whole coconut is the fruit of a coconut palm, and its crunchy, sweet flesh is actually the seed. The translucent juice inside is refreshing, not too sweet, and a popular drink throughout the tropics (but don't confuse the juice with coconut milk, the creamy liquid made by pulverizing the flesh, mixing it with water, and squeezing, or "milking," it). /»

recipes  
begin on  
p. 109



**WHY TRY/** Chunks of fresh coconut meat are a world away from the shredded, packaged stuff that's sweetened. Crack open a whole coconut and the payoff is fresh, round flavor that walks the line between savory and sweet. Fresh coconut gives haunting, rich depth to Southeast Asian, Indian, and Jamaican curries and stews and adds texture and nutty sweetness to fruit salads, cakes, and cookies. Plus, the juice (also called coconut water) is a delicious and healthful hot-weather refresher.

**HOW TO BUY, STORE, AND CRACK/** A good coconut feels heavy for its size. When you shake it, you should hear the juice sloshing around. There should be no mold around the eyes (the three indentations at the stem end of the shell). Some coconuts are sold already scored around their equator to make cracking easier. A whole coconut will keep at room temperature for up to a month. After taking the meat out of the shell, store it wrapped in plastic in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for up to three months. For tips on cracking a coconut, see "Prep School," page 213.

**HEALTH MATTERS/** Coconut meat is rich in iron and a good source of potassium. It's high in saturated fat, but natural coconut oil enhances your immune system, improves digestion, helps the body absorb minerals, and improves your overall cholesterol ratio. The thin brown skin is edible and high in fiber. Coconut juice is just about the best source of electrolytes around—the balance is identical to what's in our bloodstream.

### 3 MORE TO TRY/

**TOAST** peeled strips of coconut in a dry skillet over low heat until browned and fragrant, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle coconut strips over oatmeal or granola, or toss them with nuts and dried fruit for an easy-to-eat and satisfying hiking or travel snack.

**SPRINKLE** finely grated coconut—fresh or toasted—over a tropical fruit salad of fresh mango, papaya, orange, and banana.

**MIX** chilled coconut juice with a few splashes of ginger beer and a squeeze of lime for a tasty tropical drink.



### shrimp and coconut rolls

**MAKES ABOUT 15/** *The best tool for grating is a rotary grater by Zyliss (\$20; chefcentral.com) or by Microplane (\$25; thekitchenstore.com).*

- 10 ounces peeled cooked shrimp, cut into ¼- to ⅓-inch pieces
- 2½ cups thinly sliced iceberg lettuce (about ¼ large head)
- 1¼ cups finely grated peeled fresh coconut
- ½ unpeeled English hothouse cucumber, seeded, cut into ¼-inch cubes (1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon plus ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 6 teaspoons fish sauce (such as nam pla or nuoc nam),\* divided
- 4½ teaspoons sugar, divided
- 3 teaspoons minced seeded red or green serrano chiles, divided
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped green onion
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh mint leaves
- 15 8- to 9-inch-diameter rice paper rounds (spring roll wrappers)\*\*

Combine shrimp, lettuce, coconut, cucumber, 1 tablespoon lime juice, 4 teaspoons fish sauce, ½ teaspoon sugar, 2 teaspoons chiles, green onion, and mint in large bowl.

Moisten kitchen towel. Squeeze out excess moisture and lay towel flat on work

surface. Fill large bowl with warm water. Submerge 1 wrapper in water until beginning to soften, about 20 seconds. Place on damp towel. Place ¼ cup shrimp mixture in 3-inch-long strip down center of wrapper. Fold in sides of wrapper over filling, then roll up tightly, enclosing filling. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 8 hours ahead. Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover with damp paper towels, and refrigerate. Let rolls stand at room temperature 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

Mix ½ cup lime juice, 2 teaspoons fish sauce, 4 teaspoons sugar, and 1 teaspoon chiles in small bowl. Serve rolls with dipping sauce.

\*/ Available in the Asian foods section of most supermarkets, at some specialty foods stores, and at Asian markets.

\*\*/ Thin Thai or Vietnamese wrappers (known as *banh trang*) made from rice flour; available at Asian markets.

### south indian vegetable curry

4 SERVINGS/ Great with basmati rice.

- 1 large onion, cut into 1-inch chunks (about 2 cups)
- 3 large garlic cloves, peeled /»

- 1 2-inch-long 1-inch-diameter piece peeled fresh ginger (about 2 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
- 1 tablespoon garam masala\*
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ serrano chile, seeded, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 2 teaspoons (packed) golden brown sugar
- 2 kaffir lime leaves\*\*
- 2 whole green cardamom pods
- 1 pound red-skinned sweet potatoes (yams), peeled, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 12 ounces russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1¼ cups finely grated peeled fresh coconut (about 4 ounces; grated in processor)
- 2 large carrots, peeled, cut into ½-inch rounds
- 2 tomatoes, cored, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 ounces baby spinach leaves (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Puree first 7 ingredients in processor until paste forms. Cook in large pot over medium heat until aromatic, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Add tomato paste. Cook until mixture starts to darken and brown, stirring often, about 5 minutes longer.

Add broth, brown sugar, lime leaves, and cardamom. Simmer 10 minutes, stirring often and scraping up browned bits. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Cool, cover, and chill. Bring to simmer before continuing.

Add sweet potatoes, russet potatoes, coconut, carrots, tomatoes, 1 teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper to mixture in pot. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally, about 25 minutes. Add spinach, if desired, and cook until wilted, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Discard lime leaves and cardamom. Transfer curry to bowl; garnish with cilantro and serve.

\*/ An Indian spice mixture; available in the spice section of supermarkets and at Indian markets.

\*\*/ Leaves of the kaffir lime tree; sold frozen or sometimes fresh at Asian markets. If unavailable, substitute 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice and ½ teaspoon grated lime peel for each lime leaf.

### coconut cake with mascarpone frosting

8 TO 10 SERVINGS/ *Shaving the side edge of the coconut pieces with a vegetable peeler is the best way to get strips of uniform width for garnishing the cake. For a photo of this dessert, see page 217.*

- 2½ cups all purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1⅔ cups sugar
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) plus 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 1½ cups finely grated peeled fresh coconut
- 2¾ teaspoons finely grated lime peel, divided
- ¾ cup mascarpone cheese\* (about 6 ounces)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2⅔ cups powdered sugar
- ½ cup 1-inch-long strips shaved coconut with brown inner coating left intact (about 2 ounces; use vegetable peeler)

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line bottom of 9-inch-diameter springform pan with parchment paper; butter paper and pan.

Whisk flour and baking powder in medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat sugar, ¾ cup butter, and vanilla in large bowl until blended. Beat in eggs 1 at a time. Add flour mixture alternately with milk in 2 additions each, beating until just blended. Stir in 1½ cups finely grated coconut and ¼ teaspoons lime peel.

Transfer mixture to prepared pan; smooth top. Bake until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 1 hour 20 minutes. Cool cake in pan 20 minutes. Cut around sides to loosen; invert onto platter. Cool completely.

Using electric mixer, beat 3 tablespoons butter, 1½ teaspoons lime peel, mascarpone, and cloves in large bowl. Add powdered sugar; beat just until smooth.

Spread mascarpone frosting over top of cooled cake. Garnish top edge with ½ cup shaved coconut. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover with cake dome and chill. Bring to room temperature before serving.

\*/ An Italian cream cheese; sold at many supermarkets and at Italian markets.

### coconut and ricotta pancakes with ginger syrup

8 SERVINGS/ *An exotic new spin on a breakfast classic. The pancakes puff up during cooking and deflate when taken off the griddle.*

#### GINGER SYRUP

- ¾ cup sugar
- ¾ cup water
- 2½ tablespoons matchstick-size strips peeled fresh ginger (about 1 ounce)
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

#### PANCAKES

- 4 large eggs, separated
- ¾ cup whole milk
- ¾ cup whole-milk ricotta cheese (about 6 ounces)
- ¾ cup all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon (generous) salt
- 1⅓ cups finely grated fresh coconut (about 4 ounces)
- 6 teaspoons (or more) butter
- 3 bananas, peeled, sliced on diagonal
- ½ pineapple, peeled, cored, thinly sliced, cut into triangles

**GINGER SYRUP/** Combine all ingredients in small saucepan; stir over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Boil until reduced to ¾ cup, about 5 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 weeks ahead. Cover and chill. Rewarm before serving.

**PANCAKES/** Whisk egg yolks, milk, ricotta, flour, sugar, baking powder, vanilla, and salt in large bowl. Stir in coconut. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 12 hours ahead. Cover and chill.

Beat egg whites in another large bowl until stiff. Gently fold into ricotta mixture.

Melt 1 teaspoon butter on griddle or in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, drop batter onto griddle by ¼ cupfuls. Cook until bubbles form on pancakes, about 2 minutes. Flip pancakes; cook 2 minutes longer, adding butter to griddle by teaspoonfuls between batches. Arrange 3 to 4 pancakes on each plate. Garnish with sliced fruit; pour warm ginger syrup over. / ■

*Annabel Langbein's latest cookbook is Eat Fresh. She lives in New Zealand.*

◀ PLEASE  
TEAR  
OUT  
HERE



WITH THE INCREDIBLE WEALTH of produce available year-round, it's easy to forget that fruits and vegetables have peak seasons. In this, the second of four guides (summer and fall to follow), you'll find everything you need to know about what to buy in spring and how to store it so it stays good and fresh.

by **AMELIA  
SALTSMAN**  
illustrations by  
**JOEL HOLLAND**

BON APPÉTIT  
SHOPPING  
THE  
SEASONS

# SPRING

## BEETS

**WHY TRY/** When freshly dug, their sweet earthiness and outrageous color are a universe away from the canned variety.

**HOW TO BUY/** Choose fresh, lively-looking greens and moist, fresh-looking roots.

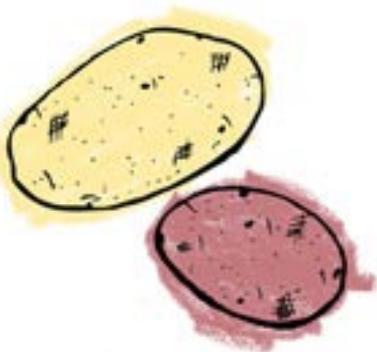
**HOW TO STORE/** Refrigerate tops in a plastic bag and use within several days. Refrigerate beets separately up to two weeks in a loose plastic bag.

BONUS  
PULL-OUT  
GUIDE



## ARTICHOKES

**WHY TRY/** Especially sweet and tender in spring, the artichoke's core is all heart. Little ones have no prickly chokes, which makes for easy prep; purple varieties are pretty. **HOW TO BUY/** Choose firm, closed artichokes with thick stalks (which mean large hearts). Bronze-colored frost marks are okay; skip those that have turned black. **HOW TO STORE/** Keep loose in the refrigerator for up to several days.



## NEW POTATOES

**WHY TRY/** Those that are freshly dug have tender skins; moist, sweet flesh; and lower starch content. **HOW TO BUY/** Choose any size, any color that's firm, bright, and unblemished with thin, almost translucent skin that's flaking in spots. **HOW TO STORE/** Keep in a paper bag in a cool, dark place for up to several days.

## STRAWBERRIES

**WHY TRY/** Although available year-round, spring is strawberries' true season, and that's when they taste the best. **HOW TO BUY/** Small to medium-size fruit yields concentrated flavor. Make sure the berries are totally red and bright with no white shoulders or soft spots. **HOW TO STORE/** Refrigerate unwashed in an airtight container lined with paper towels for up to several days. Clean with minimal water; serve at room temperature.



## PEAS, SPROUTS, AND TENDRILS

**WHY TRY/** When fresh, they're the essence of spring. Sprouts offer peas' same sweet flavor in salads and quick sautés; tendrils pack surprisingly big flavor. **HOW TO BUY/** Pods should be plump, bright, and slightly tender. Sprouts should be soft and green with delicate stalks. Tendrils should have bright leaves and fine filaments. **HOW TO STORE/** Sweetest within two days of harvest, pods can be refrigerated, unshelled, in a loose plastic bag. Keep sprouts and tendrils in a plastic bag with air trapped inside.

BONUS  
PULL-OUT  
GUIDE



## LETTUCE

**WHY TRY/** Even lettuce has a season. Butter varieties are especially substantial in spring. Dress whole leaves simply with oil, lemon, and salt. **HOW TO BUY/** Look for fresh, moist heads but make sure they're not soggy or blemished. Pass on any with browning. **HOW TO STORE/** Fresh-harvest lettuce keeps in the refrigerator up to a week when wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag with air trapped inside.

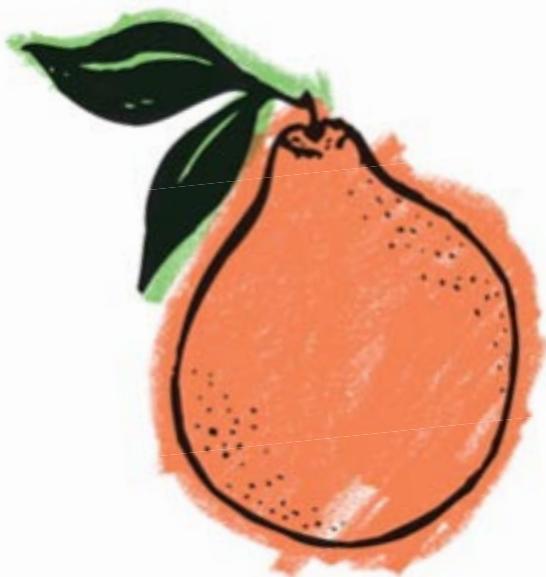


## FAVA BEANS

**WHY TRY/** The Mediterranean treasure has sophisticated bittersweet flavor and adds an emerald accent to sautés. **HOW TO BUY/** Choose young beans with fuzzy, bright-green pods that look and feel full. **HOW TO STORE/** Keep in a loose plastic bag for up to one week. Before cooking, “unzip” pods, remove beans, and blanch in boiling salted water, then slip off casings.

## TANGELOS

**WHY TRY/** This late-season mandarin orange-pomelo hybrid is fragrant and sweet-tart. Its red-orange zest adds color and flavor to cakes and scones. **HOW TO BUY/** Opt for plump fruit with smooth, richly colored skin. Minneola is the most common variety, usually with a distinctive bump that's called the “neck.” **HOW TO STORE/** Keep on the counter for a splash of color for up to one week or chill for up to two. Serve at room temperature.



## GREEN GARLIC

**WHY TRY/** Young plants, with their slender bulbs and leek-like greens, add gentle garlic flavor to soups, sautés, and seafood. **HOW TO BUY/** Slim, straight plants with newly formed bulbs and bright greens are mildest and most tender. **HOW TO STORE/** Refrigerate in a loose plastic bag. Green garlic tastes best while it's fresh, but will keep more than a week.



## ASPARAGUS

**WHY TRY/** Whether pencil-slim or thick, spears are sweetest now, especially purple varieties, which turn deep green when cooked. **HOW TO BUY/** Choose firm stalks with tightly closed heads. **HOW TO STORE/** Keep heads up, with cut ends in water, or wrap loosely in plastic. Store in the refrigerator for up to several days. / ■

—AMELIA SALTSMAN IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE SANTA MONICA FARMERS' MARKET COOKBOOK*.



**may 2-3/  
DANDELION  
MAY FEST**

*Dover, Ohio*

Is the common dandelion worthy of its own festival? Amish country's Breitenbach Wine Cellars—which produces

wine from grapes as well as a sweet dandelion variety—thinks so. Fans of the herb can participate in a dandelion-picking contest and a dandelion cook-off. Admission is free. / 330-343-3603; [breitenbachwine.com](http://breitenbachwine.com)

**may 3-8/  
PITTSBURGH  
WINE FESTIVAL**

*Pittsburgh*

The city is better known for its brews than its *crus*, but at this six-day festival, more than 100 topflight wineries from

around the world join forces to make “da 'Burgh” an oenophile's heaven. Apply the lessons learned at the wine-tasting seminars to the winemaker and chef dinners held all week at top local restaurants. Ticket prices vary. / 412-281-2681; [pittsburghwinefestival.com](http://pittsburghwinefestival.com)

**may 21-25/  
NEW ORLEANS  
WINE  
& FOOD  
EXPERIENCE**

*New Orleans*

This five-day event boasts vintner-hosted dinners at more than 30 NOLA restaurants, including Stella!, Muriel's Jackson Square, and The Pelican Club. On the Royal Street Stroll, participants can try a different wine at each shop while jazz fills the air. The festival's seminars include one on Napa Valley's sub-appellations and another on pairing wine with wild game. And, new to this year's event: a live auction. Ticket prices vary. / 504-529-9463; [nowfe.com](http://nowfe.com)

**may 24/  
TASTE OF DURHAM  
FESTIVAL**

*Durham, North Carolina*

Visit Durham's Imperial Center for this fourth annual food, wine, and beer tasting. Chow down on fine foods from top local restaurants, then visit the wine pavilion for a selection of domestic and international wines. Watch some grape stomping, or check out a performance by one of more than 30 artists. Admission is \$6. / 919-572-6551; [tasteofdurham.org](http://tasteofdurham.org)

~KAT ODELL

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DIGEST  
LEFT**

RESTAURANTS

**deep-dish dining/**

Chicago-style pizza made its debut in 1943 at Pizzeria Uno. Since then, the pie known for its thick crust and sauce baked on top of the cheese has become an icon of the Windy City. If you can't hop a plane to O'Hare, one of these parlors will satisfy cravings.

**baked in boulder/**

**BOULDER, COLORADO**  
"Chicago's Authentic Alternative" is this joint's mantra. The pizzas are so good that the regional Whole Foods carries them for purchase. We love the Greek Specialty Pie, which is a hearty classic spinach with feta, red pepper, mushrooms, and black olives. 2530 Baseline Road (inside Herb's Meats); 303-444-1773; [bakedinboulder.com](http://bakedinboulder.com)

**delfino's chicago style pizzeria/** SEATTLE

This authentic restaurant is big on Chicago tradition. In fact, even its rotary pizza oven (a 1940s Faults) is from Chicago.

Still, Delfino's has some popular riffs on the classic—such as its famous "Popeye Pizza," which is stuffed with spinach. 2631 NE University Village Street; 206-522-3466; [delfinospizza.com](http://delfinospizza.com)

**zachary's/** OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Zagat's readers voted this extremely popular spot the best in the Bay Area for pizza in 2006, among other accolades. Zachary's adds a little West Coast flavor to the Chitown classic with a stuffed pie with Mexican chorizo, Jack cheese, and green chiles. 5801 College Avenue; 510-655-6385; [zacharys.com](http://zacharys.com)

—DANIELLE McCUMBER

CALENDAR

**may 4/**  
**CHEFS & CHAMPAGNE**

*Los Angeles*  
Each year for nearly 20 years, the James Beard Foundation has hosted this extravaganza in the Hamptons. This year, they're taking the party out west to honor chef Tom Colicchio (who opened a branch of his Craft restaurant in Century City). Held on fa-

mous Melrose Place, the event will include a "Promenade of Chefs"—tastings from renowned L.A. chefs like Gino Angelini (Angelini Osteria), Govind Armstrong (Table 8), David Myers (Sona and Comme Ça), Katsuya Uechi (Katsuya), and Michael Cimarusti (Providence). General-admission tickets are \$195 for James Beard Foundation members and \$275 for nonmembers. / 212-627-2308; [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org)

**may 16-18/**  
**SEATTLE CHEESE FESTIVAL**

*Seattle*  
Held at the legendary Pike Place Market, this event showcases cheeses from nearby dairies (read: Estrella Family Creamery), international favorites (Hervé Mons), and everywhere in between. All week, local Seattle restaurants will offer "Cheese Fest Best" dishes featuring cheeses from the festival. Admission is a suggested \$1 donation. / 800-873-6685; [seattlecheesefestival.com](http://seattlecheesefestival.com)

**may 23-24/**  
**FREDERICKSBURG CRAWFISH FESTIVAL**

*Fredericksburg, Texas*  
Cajun cuisine comes to Fredericksburg with the annual crawfish festival. At the event, you'll find crawfish galore, red beans and rice, gumbo, and, this being a German-American town, plenty of German sausages. Admission for adults is \$6 per day or \$10 for a two-day pass. / 830-997-8515; [tex-fest.com/crawfish](http://tex-fest.com/crawfish)

—DIANE CHANG

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SINGLE  
SQUARE  
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# COOKING LIFE / EVERYDAY SOUFFLÉ

*Some call it fussy; others say it's difficult. But the truth is, classic cheese soufflé is easy—and one of the best meals going.*

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY WIZENBERG

**S**OUFFLÉ GETS SUCH A BAD RAP. IT'S SAD, REALLY. GO LOOK IT up somewhere, and you'll see what I mean. Everywhere you turn, there's a gloom-and-doom scenario. Soufflé is difficult. Soufflé is fussy. Soufflé will deflate if you look at it wrong. From the sound of it, you'd think making soufflé were as dire a proposition as global warming. The saddest part is that if it weren't for one woman, I probably would still believe all that. Or two women, really, if you're keeping count.

I grew up in a household of avid cooks, but there was nary a soufflé to be seen. I saw them sometimes in magazines, rising in great, exuberant puffs from the ceramic confines of their dishes. They were unquestionably beautiful—the lowly egg's best shot at heaven, I always thought, gazing at the page—but they seemed like somebody else's dinner, not mine. For one thing, they had to be darn near impossible to make—the way they skipped past gravity like that, as though inflated with a tire pump or hoisted with a jack. My family was a pasta and salad and roasted chicken kind of crowd. Soufflé wasn't even on the radar. Soufflé was for somebody else.

That somebody else, however, wasn't the person I thought it would be. I don't know about you, but when I thought of soufflé, I always envisioned waiters in starched aprons. I certainly didn't expect to find soufflé at the table of my workaday host family—one woman, four children, and a mischievous Labrador puppy—when I studied in Paris during my junior year of college.

MY HOST MOTHER WAS THE KIND OF FIGURE THAT HOMESICK STUDENTS DREAM of. She was a lovely, graceful woman with a singsong voice and an impressive way with the stove. As it happened, she was also the French equivalent of a Tupperware saleswoman. She worked for a company that made silicone baking molds and spent her days traveling to various homes and tea parties, demonstrating the uses of its remarkable (Nonstick! Easy to clean!) products. As part of her agreement to host me for six months, she was to feed me five days a week, which meant that I had the distinct pleasure of enjoying 120 meals at her table. It wasn't nearly enough.

Some nights we ate trial runs of recipes for her demonstrations: tartlets filled with caramelized endive and goat cheese; quiches flavored with leek confit and smoked salmon; or butter cakes dotted with translucent bits of apple. On less ambitious nights, she made one of a roster of humble favorites. There was spaghetti with tomato sauce, canned tuna, and onions, and *tartiflette*,

a Savoyard casserole of sorts made from Reblochon cheese, potatoes, onions, bacon, and cream. Sometimes she served a simple vegetable soup, or chicken with sauerkraut, procured from the butcher shop next door and scented ever so softly with pork fat.

And then she made soufflé. On a weeknight, no less.

I was in the process of setting the table—my usual evening task, the least I could do—when I saw it emerge from the oven, held aloft in her oven mitts, as triumphant and seemingly weightless as the Winged Victory of Samothrace. It was astounding: tender, trembling, redolent of cheese. She carried it to the table as though it were nothing—less special, even, than a plate of cold cuts. The kids, too, were nonchalant, still watching cartoons on the couch.

To say that I was stunned doesn't really do it justice. I thought I'd died / ▶▶



Classic Cheese Soufflé  
(recipe on page 125)

and gone to heaven, climbing right up there with the egg. I sat down at my place and stared at the soufflé. When she plunged the serving spoons into its center—two of them, back to back, so as not to deflate it—it let loose a raspy whisper, a sigh. It was the sort of sound a cloud might make, I imagine, if you were to tear it in two. She divided the soufflé six ways and sent a platter of steamed leeks down the table, with a pitcher of vinaigrette for saucing. Chased around the plate with slices of still-warm baguette, it was one of the loveliest meals I've ever had.

WHICH MEANT, OF COURSE, THAT I HAD TO TRY TO re-create it as soon as I got home. Coming back to the States—and to my college apartment, with its shag carpet and dented electric stove—was hard, but I would make the most of it. I would make soufflé. The only problem was that I had somehow left France without asking my host mother for her recipe. I guess I was too busy stuffing rounds of Camembert and bars of chocolate into my suitcase. It completely slipped my mind. But in moments like these, I've found, there's always someone watching my back. You've heard of her, I'm sure. Her name is Julia Child.

I didn't own many cookbooks at the time, but a couple of years prior, I'd pinched a copy of *The Way to Cook* from my parents' bookshelf. (They had two copies, so it wasn't a particularly cunning steal. Anyway, rebellion was never, sadly, my strong suit.) I loved its title: so commanding, so confident. This was a book that could teach me things. This was a book that made anything possible. Even soufflé.

Blessed be Julia Child, wherever she is. I hope she's up there with the egg, too. Her cheese soufflé was the first recipe I tried, and though I've dallied with others, it's the one I always return to. I can't be sure if it's her voice (so reassuring) or her instructions (eminently simple), but hers is a magnificent specimen. What's more, it's easy. I'm not

going to tell you that soufflés are as easy as cold cereal, but honestly, they're close. I don't know what all the bluster is about—this business of soufflés being so finicky, so hard to master—because I've yet to have one let me down. They should be in every home cook's repertoire, and I don't say that about just anything.

A basic soufflé is made up of two components: a flavor base and beaten egg whites. The base is usually a white sauce made from butter, flour, and milk, cooked together on top of the stove until creamy and thick. To this base you add egg yolks for richness and flavor, as well as seasonings: salt, nutmeg, and paprika. (You could also add pepper, but I prefer to leave it out, for purity of flavor. And don't be tempted to skip the paprika: It adds a lovely depth.) Then you whip egg whites until they hold smooth, stiff peaks, and you fold them gently into the base, along with some coarsely grated cheese. I like Gruyère, but any Swiss-style cheese would be nice, or sharp cheddar.

In the heat of the oven, the air bubbles in the whipped egg whites expand, causing the whole lovely mass to climb skyward. When the soufflé is starting to rise, it's quite fragile, so it's important not to disturb it by opening the oven door, which could let in a draft of cool air. Instead, do as I do: Pour yourself a glass of wine, sit down on the couch, and don't touch that door for at least 20 minutes. It's much better that way, both for the soufflé and for you. You'll know dinner is ready when the soufflé is nicely browned and has puffed a couple of inches above the rim of its dish.

Then, if you know what's good for you, you take it straight to the table and dig in, preferably with a baguette. And then, when the last bits are gone, you set a date to make another. ■

*Molly Wizenberg is better known as Orangette, which also happens to be the name of her award-winning blog.*

## CLASSIC CHEESE SOUFFLÉ

4 TO 6 MAIN-COURSE SERVINGS/

*This recipe was adapted from a version in The Way to Cook by Julia Child.*

- 2 **tablespoons finely grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1 **cup whole milk**
- 2½ **tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 3 **tablespoons unbleached all purpose flour**
- ½ **teaspoon paprika**
- ½ **teaspoon salt**

- Pinch of ground nutmeg**
- 4 **large egg yolks**
- 5 **large egg whites**
- 1 **cup (packed) coarsely grated Gruyère cheese (about 4 ounces)**

Position rack in lower third of oven and preheat to 400°F. Butter 6-cup (1½-quart) soufflé dish. Add Parmesan cheese and tilt dish, coating bottom and sides. Warm milk in heavy small saucepan over medium-low heat until steaming.

Meanwhile, melt butter in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and

whisk until mixture begins to foam and loses raw taste, about 3 minutes (do not allow mixture to brown). Remove saucepan from heat; let stand 1 minute. Pour in warm milk, whisking until smooth. Return to heat and cook, whisking constantly until very thick, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in paprika, salt, and nutmeg. Add egg yolks 1 at a time, whisking to blend after each addition. Scrape soufflé base into large bowl. Cool to lukewarm. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.

Using electric mixer, beat egg whites in another large bowl until stiff but not dry. Fold ¼ of whites into lukewarm or room temperature soufflé base to lighten. Fold in remaining whites in 2 additions while gradually sprinkling in Gruyère cheese. Transfer batter to prepared dish.

Place dish in oven and immediately reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Bake until soufflé is puffed and golden brown on top and center moves only slightly when dish is shaken gently, about 25 minutes (do not open oven door during first 20 minutes). Serve immediately.

# HEALTH WISE / THE RAW TRUTH

Just what is raw-milk cheese—and what does the FDA have against it? Is it an indulgence? A health risk? Or might it even be good for you? BY NINA PLANCK

**T**HE LAND WAS BRIGHT GREEN AND THE SKY DULL GRAY when I arrived in County Cork six years ago to talk about the revival of traditional foods in America. Europeans think we're all hooked on Cheez Whiz, but many Americans—in red states and blue ones—eat real foods: foods like raw-milk cheese, the stuff of Irish peasant lunches going back centuries.

At the Irish food symposium, I told stories about farmers like Joel Salatin, an evangelist of traditional diets for man and beast. He has sold more than 100,000 books on grass-fed beef and other real foods. His latest title, *Everything I Want to Do Is Illegal*, sums up his feelings about food safety law. I talked about Americans who don't believe butter causes heart disease, eat red meat with impunity, and join underground buying clubs to get a quasi-legal substance: unpasteurized milk.

But I must have been muddled, because when I came to the law on raw milk and cheese, a man in the front row with a fetching grin corrected me. Raw-milk cheese, he called out, could be sold in the United States if it has been aged for at least 60 days. My heckler was Rob Kaufelt, proprietor of Murray's Cheese in New York City, and my education was just beginning.

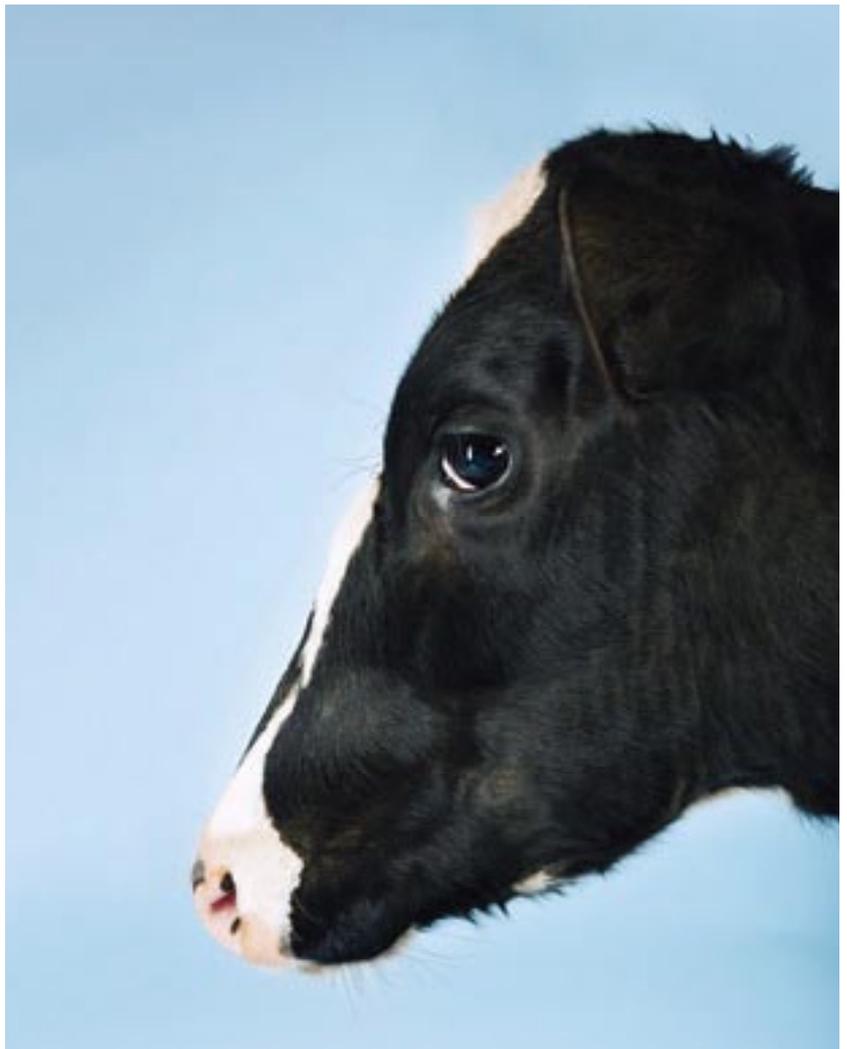
As a nutrition geek, I knew why grass-fed and raw dairy foods were good for you: They're rich in the vital fat-soluble vitamins (A and K<sub>2</sub>), calcium, healthful fats, and good bacteria for your gut and immune system. But as an eater, I was a neophyte.

GOOD MILK, THE RIGHT CULTURES, and a talented cheesemaker give cheese its flavor, texture, and complexity. Even the milk itself is complex and variable: Protein and fat content differ by animal and breed. And grain, grass, and wild herbs all make their presence felt in the form of aromatic plant compounds called terpenes.

These terpenes are one reason the cheese world is obsessed with raw milk; some cheesemakers believe that pasteurization flattens the interesting

contours of fresh milk. Heat kills natural flora and yeasts, and inactivates many enzymes responsible for aroma and flavor. "A cheese made from natural raw milk will embody *terroir* in a more immediate way," writes Will Studd in the authoritative book *Chalk and Cheese*.

Pasteurization also affects the technical bits of cheesemaking. Heat greatly alters proteins, limits the />>



action of rennet, and retards ripening. Meanwhile, health nuts swear by raw-milk cheese for its beneficial enzymes and bacteria, which are tonics for digestion and immunity.

RAW MILK ITSELF HAS STALWART PROPONENTS, BUT DRINKING it neat is controversial. Nationwide, pasteurization is the law. It's illegal to transport raw milk for human consumption across state lines, but you can buy it legally in California and 27 other states. In this age of large industrial dairies, pasteurization to kill pathogens is surely a necessity.

Raw-milk cheese is a different story. The FDA requires raw-milk cheese to be aged at least 60 days, after which, presumably, the deadly bacteria have given up in the presence of salt and acids. But since the 1980s, when *Listeria* started showing up in dubious fresh cheeses, including illegal imports from Mexico, the 60-day rule has resembled the heroine squirming on the railroad tracks—ever in peril. Cheese lovers became worried when the FDA said new data cast doubt on the effectiveness of the 60-day rule, which dates to the late 1940s.

A total ban on raw-milk cheese could whisk from the cheese counter imported classics such as Parmigiano-Reggiano and Gruyère, as well as such award-winning American varieties as the buttery Pleasant Ridge Reserve from Wisconsin and the nutty Vermont Shepherd from Major Farm.

But that's not likely. Studies from Australia show that firm aged cheeses (such as Parmigiano-Reggiano) are safe. Also, FDA risk assessments find that properly made hard cheeses are safer than deli meats.

The FDA review focuses on *Listeria* in soft-ripened cheeses, such as Camembert or Brie. Some say FDA oversight is overdue. Catherine Donnelly—a professor of nutrition at the University of Vermont, a leading researcher on cheese safety, and a friend of raw-milk cheese—told me the FDA's concern about the safety of soft-ripened cheeses is “laudable.”

That's because aging per se doesn't stop *Listeria* from growing in soft-ripened cheeses. In hard cheeses, the pH drops—that is, acidity increases—with age, and that can prevent *Listeria* from getting a toehold. In moist, soft cheeses with those distinctive gray bloomy rinds, pH rises.

Thus, the 60-day rule may not make any difference with soft-ripened cheeses. Donnelly confirmed this by tainting aged Camembert-style cheeses made with raw and pasteurized milk with *Listeria*. The pathogen grew happily in

both. Her experiment suggests two things: First, that raw and pasteurized cheeses are equally vulnerable to post-production contamination; second, that aging 60 days is irrelevant in terms of assuring cheese safety.

The French approach might be more sensible. Raw milk used to make authentic Camembert and Brie must pass stringent tests for pathogens, including *Staphylococcus* and *Listeria*. If the milk isn't clean enough, it's reported.

So Donnelly asked the next logical question: Do artisanal cheesemakers producing raw-milk cheese use clean milk? Her survey found that the raw milk from small herds in the Northeast had fewer pathogens than the FDA allows in pasteurized milk. Dirty hands, poor cheesemaking methods, and post-production contamination are more often responsible for *Listeria*-tainted cheese than the raw milk itself, says Donnelly.

Any proposal to tighten raw-milk rules will likely be met with fierce objections by cheesemakers, cheese mongers, and cheese lovers. They've been riled before and are now freshly organized in the Raw Milk Cheesemakers' Association, advised by Donnelly and led by such luminaries as Cary Bryant and David Gremmels of Rogue Creamery, who make raw-milk blues in Oregon, and Helen Feete of Meadow Creek Dairy, whose Grayson put Galax, Virginia, on the map.

“Raw milk gives our cheese depth of flavor and complexity, thanks to the enzymes in the native plants and grass in our pasture,” Gremmels told me. “The less we do to the milk, the better.” Rogue River blues are now exported to London, Paris, and Amsterdam—with, I noted, the blessings of the FDA.

The Raw Milk Cheesemakers' Association means to educate its colleagues, customers, and regulators about the best practices to ensure the safety of the traditional foods they sell. Most good cheesemakers would probably welcome testing raw milk for pathogens. “We're the ones with our hands in the vat,” says Gremmels. “We understand the milk and the risks, and we know how to make raw-milk cheese safe and healthy.”

ONE APRIL IN IRELAND, I MANEUVERED DINNER CHAIRS SO I could sit next to that outspoken cheese monger, little knowing what I'd learn about him or cheese. Thanks to Rob, I eat better cheese today—including the raw-milk cheeses he brings home from Murray's. When I was pregnant with our son, Julian, I happily ate raw-milk cheese, and now Julian does, too.

Nothing is risk-free, and no one—not the farmer, not Uncle Sam, not your mother—can protect you from every hazard. Bacteria have found their way to American kitchens on packaged salad greens and eggs from caged chickens. At our house, we keep our eyes open for dangers. Still, all told, I trust the traditional food chain more than the industrial one, and when it comes to raw-milk cheese, I look to the man with his hands in the vat. I'll have what he's having. / ■

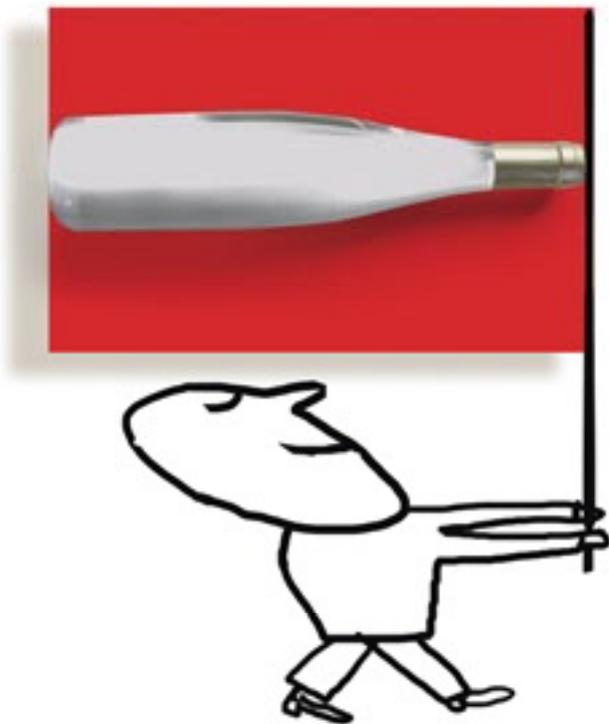
*Nina Planck is the author of Real Food. Her next book is Real Baby Food.*

“ / NOTHING IS RISK-FREE, AND NO ONE—NOT THE FARMER, NOT UNCLE SAM, NOT YOUR MOTHER—CAN PROTECT YOU FROM EVERY HAZARD.

# WINE & SPIRITS/ DRINKING ALONG THE DANUBE

*Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, Pinot Blanc—Austria's alluring whites are really catching on here. Our writer went straight to the source.*

BY JAMES HAMILTON-PATERSON ILLUSTRATION BY SERGE BLOCH



One evening I was invited to Schloss Erlahof, an old baroque castle on the edge of the nearby town of Spitz. Normally this castle houses a museum of Danube river-going history, with boats and ancient hauling tackle on display. That night the exhibits were still there, but among them individual stands had been erected throughout the vast building. On each, a local wine producer showed his or her wines. There was free tasting for all comers, most of whom had arrived from town in procession behind a brass band. Fortunately, there were also stands selling snacks of sausage and bread, but as the evening progressed and the empty bottles piled up behind the stands, the crowds of visitors in national costume became noticeably merrier and more expansive. They included the children, whose apparent tipsiness may not have been entirely due to the atmosphere.

That evening I sampled some wonderful wines as well as some fairly undistinguished ones. This showed how much in wine-making is down to the skill of the vintner, since the predictions were proved right and 2006 was indeed a great year for Wachau whites. Diners should know that these wines are classified strictly in one of three categories, regardless of the grape variety. *Steinfeder* are the lightest and most quaffable, with up to 11 percent alcohol. *Federspiel* have more body and elegance (and up to 12.5 percent alcohol). *Smaragd* wines (12.5 percent alcohol and up) are complex and often powerful; the best examples are made only in good years from late-harvest grapes. Indeed, most of the truly great Wachau wines are *Smaragd* whites. One vintner let me sample a freak *Smaragd* of 15 percent alcohol. A curiosity rather than a sellable product, it suggested considerable complexity before poleaxing my palate.

Austria grows the familiar white wine grapes such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and /»

**I**N LATE 2006 I MOVED TO AUSTRIA AFTER A QUARTER CENTURY in Italy. Spoiled rotten as I was by Italian food and wines, I resigned myself to a diet of wall-to-wall sausages and beer. Very excellent sausages and beer, no doubt, but still... And then a local lady, taking pity on my ignorant immigrant status, invited me to lunch. She served wonderful Upper Austrian cold cuts, cheeses, and homemade breads with four different Austrian white wines of such quality that, for the first time, I felt really happy about my move.

Long prized in Germany, Austria's superlative white wines—most notably spicy Grüner Veltliners, crisp Rieslings, and delicate Pinot Blancs—are only just beginning to be widely recognized in the United States. White wine is produced in several Austrian regions but most famously in Wachau, which hugs the Danube to the west of Vienna. The summer of 2006 was excellent, with plenty of sun and good rainfall at just the right moments, and everyone was predicting a wonderful year for wine. So last May I arrived in time for the release of the white wines. From the northern bank of the Danube (a river that, despite the title of Johann Strauss's celebrated waltz, is not remotely blue), the ground rises steeply up to craggy hillcrests. Nearly every square foot of these south-facing slopes is terraced, and the vines fall in thick braids right into the little medieval towns down by the river.

I was staying in Weissenkirchen, and it was immediately obvious that practically every business in this pretty village was connected with wine. On almost every street, great doors leading to ancient cobbled yards stood open with an invitation to sample that vintner's wines. Outside every *Heuriger*, or wine tavern, hung a bunch of greenery signifying the arrival of the owner's new wine.

Pinot Blanc, but several of the region's chief grape varieties are almost exclusive to the country and have their own intriguing flavors. These include Grüner Veltliner, Gelber Muskateller, and the rarer but sumptuous Neuburger. It was in Spitz, at the winery of Franz Hirtzberger, that I tried what I still think is the most delicious white wine I have ever tasted, his 2005 Smaragd "Honivogl" Grüner Veltliner. Maybe it was the May sunshine, maybe the crickets already chirping in the nearby vineyard, or the sight of the region's famous apricots filling out on the trees, but for a brief moment Hirtzberger's wine seemed to transcend mere liquid in a bottle and become a distillate of heartbreaking pleasure. Such is the power of great wine.

Given that Austria has been exporting world-class wines for years, why has it taken so long for it to gain a reputation as the wine country to watch? One obvious reason is the scandal 23 years ago, when a handful of Austrian producers were caught doping their wines with diethylene glycol, a component of antifreeze that was found to impart sweetness and body to wines that otherwise lacked them. One vintner told me this practice had by no means been restricted to Austria but that other countries deftly played the "Who, me?" card with such round-eyed innocence that today the episode is known as the Great Austrian Antifreeze Scandal. But it's arguable that, in the long run, this has had a salutary effect. Thanks to stringent national legislation, wine production in Austria is now probably more modernized and rigorously controlled than in any other European country.

“ / ON ALMOST EVERY STREET, GREAT DOORS LEADING TO ANCIENT COBBLED YARDS STOOD OPEN WITH AN INVITATION TO SAMPLE THAT VINTNER'S WINES.

In my quest I moved eastward, on to the adjacent wine regions of Kremstal and Kamptal. The ancient wine town of Krems in Kremstal lies on Wachau's easternmost edge and here the landscape changes. Suddenly the Danube valley broadens and flattens, and smaller rivers, the Krems and the Kamp, join it from the north. There's a new openness to the terrain, and it subtly alters the wines' character. The Grüner Veltliners become slightly softer, not quite so flinty. A mere six miles to the northeast of Krems is Langenlois, Austria's biggest wine town and the center of the Kamptal region. Here, the Kamp flows through gently rolling hills that are home to some tremendous whites, especially the Grüner Veltliners and Rieslings. The places to look for on wine labels are Langenlois itself and Gobelsburg.

I finished my tour in Neusiedlersee, the region to the southeast of Vienna that flanks the Hungarian border and, until 1921, was part of Hungary. It is a completely different landscape, both hotter and flatter, but one equally shaped by wine. This region and neighboring Burgenland, to the south, are home to some of Austria's greatest red wines, whose variety and quality are at last being acknowledged outside the country.

However, many vineyards here grow white grapes as well. Ernst Triebaumer, from the village of Rust, though spoken of mainly as the prizewinning father of the current trend in Austrian reds, also produces some outstanding whites and a range of truly noble dessert wines, such as his exquisite Ruster Ausbruch "Essenz." Fans of sweet wine owe it to themselves to try Triebaumer's sensationally dry yet buttery 2006 Grüner Veltliner. Sadly, you'll have to travel to Austria to taste Triebaumer's dry whites. But Triebaumer is only one of many makers of top-class Austrian white wines, many of which are available outside Europe. Your own path of discovery awaits. / ■

*James Hamilton-Paterson is a British nonfiction writer and novelist who perversely moved to Austria in 2006 after living in Italy for 25 years.*

## HOT BOTTLES

Back at home, look for these Austrian whites on wine lists and in fine wine shops across the country.

**Sattlerhof 2006 "Klassik" Weissburgunder, Südsteiermark (\$17).** This dry white made from Pinot Blanc grapes has juicy apricot flavors.

**Schloss Gobelsburg 2007 "Gobelsburger" Riesling, Kamptal (\$20).** Citrus and

apple with subtle spice and bright acidity.

**Heidi Schröck 2006 Weissburgunder, Neusiedlersee-Hügelland (\$26).** A Pinot Blanc with lovely herbal and mineral notes.

**Hiedler 2005 "Thal" Grüner Veltliner, Kamptal (\$26).** This spicy version has green apple flavors with white pepper and nutmeg on the finish.

**Prieler 2006 "Seeberg" Pinot Blanc, Neusiedlersee-**

**Hügelland (\$27).** Notes of apples, almonds, and citrus zest make this a crowd-pleaser.

**Weingut Bründlmayer 2006 Langenloiser "Steinmassel" Riesling, Kamptal (\$36).** Dried apricot, juicy peach, and citrus flavors with a hint of spice.

**FX Pichler 2005 Smaragd "Steinertal" Riesling, Wachau (\$60).** A gorgeous example of bright citrus fruit with big hits of pepper and spice.

**Nigl 2006 "Privat" Riesling,**

**Kremstal (\$62).** Peaches and apricots with a hint of citrus balance beautifully with mineral notes.

**Weingut Knoll 2006 Smaragd "Ried Schütt" Riesling, Wachau (\$80).** Ripe stone fruit intensity with lemon aromas and a spicy finish.

**Weingut Knoll 2006 Smaragd "Vinothekfullung" Grüner Veltliner, Wachau (\$80).** A luscious wine with honey and tropical fruit flavors.

—Heather John

**THE WORLD'S BEST RECIPES.**

Imagine the picking, choosing, testing, and tasting that went into this issue. Should we include the *steak frites* from our favorite Parisian bistro? Authentic Moroccan *b'stillas*? Luscious pit-barbecued, Yucatán-style pork? But we prevailed. Here's a taste of the best food in the world—all in one issue. Hop on a plane and enjoy it on location, or make it at home with our delicious, authentic recipes.

**PARIS** / pp. 144, 154, 160

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL OF CUISINE: THE RIGHT BANK IS WHERE IT'S AT, AND THERE'S A NEW BRAND OF BISTRO RAISING THE BAR. PLUS, 10 MORE THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT FRANCE.

# THE TRAVELER



**COUNTY CORK** / p. 164

IRELAND'S FOODIEST CORNER IS HOME TO STELLAR CHEESEMAKERS, UPDATED IRISH COOKING, AND FRIENDLY PUBS (PLUS, A PUB CRAWL THAT MAY JUST BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES).

- ARGENTINA / PP. 52, 76
- AUSTRALIA / PP. 38, 58, 66
- AUSTRIA / PP. 54, 138
- BELGIUM / P. 54
- CANADA / P. 52
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- INDONESIA / P. 47
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## **MARRAKECH**/p. 174

YOU'VE BEEN TO COOKING SCHOOLS IN FRANCE AND ITALY—NOW IT'S TIME TO STIMULATE ALL FIVE SENSES WITH AN EXCITING, DELICIOUS ADVENTURE IN MOROCCO. A LUXURY HOTEL, SPICE MARKETS, AND AN AUTHENTIC FEAST AWAIT.

## **UMBRIA**/p. 192

AN L.A. RESTAURATEUR TOOLS AROUND ORVIETO ON A VESPA TO SHOP FOR A SPECTACULAR DINNER PARTY HE'S HAVING ON A PALAZZO ROOFTOP.

## **YUCATÁN**/p. 182

BEACHES? CHECK. PYRAMIDS? CHECK. AUTHENTIC, TONGUE-BLISTERING BARBECUE? DOUBLE CHECK. FOR THE REAL THING, YOU'VE GOT TO GO TO THE SOURCE.

## **KUALA LUMPUR**/p. 202

TAKING IT TO THE STREET: IN THE LARGEST CITY IN MALAYSIA, STREET VENDORS SERVE UP SOME OF THE MOST DELICIOUS FOOD IN THE COUNTRY.

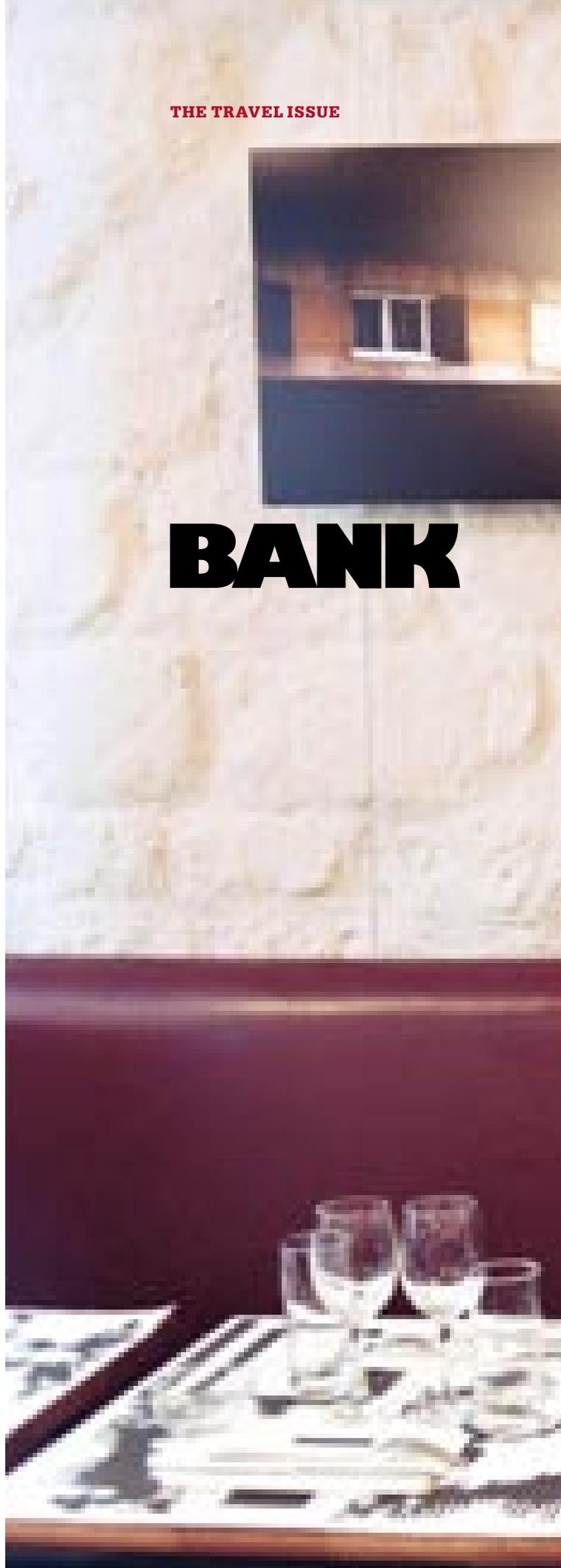
- ITALY / PP. 38, 54, 58, 60, 66, 76, 192
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# RIGHT



THE TRAVEL ISSUE

# BANK

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blazer, is sitting at a table in a restaurant. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The table in front of her is set with several dishes, including a bowl of soup, a plate of food, and a glass of beer. The background shows a stone wall and a window with curtains.

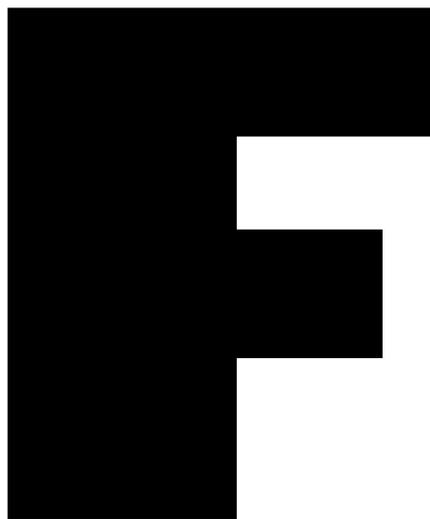
# RIGHT

# NOW /

**CLOTILDE DUSOULIER**  
HAS MADE A CAREER  
OUT OF BLOGGING PARIS  
ON HER POPULAR WEB SITE,  
CHOCOLATE & ZUCCHINI.  
HERE'S HER GUIDE TO  
AN EMERGING FOODIE SIDE  
OF THE CITY, WHERE  
CLASSIC FRENCH DISHES  
GET DELICIOUS GLOBAL  
TWISTS. PLUS, A COUPLE  
OF HER FAVORITE RECIPES.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNA WOLF

The author  
digs into  
Urbane's take on  
world cooking.



FORGET SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS AND THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES: THE FASTEST-CHANGING, MOST EXCITING AREAS IN PARIS ARE IN THE EASTERN HALF OF **THE RIGHT BANK**, WHERE THE ONCE-SCRUFFY *QUARTIERS POPULAIRES*—THE WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBORHOODS—ARE COMING INTO THEIR OWN. WITH RENTS STILL AFFORDABLE AND A HIGH LOCAL DEMAND FOR NEW AND ATYPICAL DINING OPTIONS, BUDDING RESTAURATEURS ARE ABLE TO SNATCH UP SPACES AND ESTABLISH THEIR DREAM BUSINESSES ON A BLANK SLATE, WHILE THE PROXIMITY OF ETHNIC INFLUENCES KEEPS THEM INSPIRED AND REAL.

Those of us who frequent these parts are, for the most part, young and urban. But our dining desires are simple: We want to eat out and we want to eat well, but we don't want a full-blown feast with five waiters hovering around the table. Above all, we long for friendly, relaxed spots where regulars drop by for a drink or a snack or a meal.

These emerging neighborhoods are a little out of the way—though easily accessible by Métro—and their relative isolation gives them a village-like feel. It is no wonder, then, that the most successful venues are the ones that provide multiple services in a single location, in the tradition of the café-cum-greengrocer. Imagine a bakery where you can nestle by the warm oven and dig into a fresh-baked quiche, a wine bar that takes you on a tasting tour of France's quirkiest charcuteries, or a restaurant that sells its fig vinegar so that you can reproduce its stellar salad at home.

The following are delicious illustrations of this exciting new trend. And because the savvy urbanite knows to make the most of an adventure, I've included some of my favorite places of interest within walking distance of each.

### LA CANTINE DE QUENTIN

What do you get when you combine a specialty foods shop, a restaurant, and a wine cellar in a blender? The answer is La Cantine de Quentin. The dining room is lined all

around with assorted jars and bottles, and the menu marks with asterisks those ingredients that may be purchased on your way out—from fig vinegar and duck confit to unusual candy and eau-de-vie—in case you want to re-create the dishes at home, or add to your stash of smuggled gifts.

The fare (lunch and brunch only) hops between old favorites and inventive finds—a beet and crab napoleon, a salmon tartare on a bed of cucumbers and goat cheese, a vine-peach cappuccino. The simple, almost disheveled presentations are deceptive: The chef used to work for Guy Savoy, and his skill comes across in every forkful.

So close to the Canal Saint-Martin you can practically throw pebbles in from the little terrace, La Cantine also serves a popular Sunday brunch, acts as a CSA farm-box pickup point, and offers catering and private-chef services.

**LA CANTINE DE QUENTIN**, 52 rue Bichat in the 10th arrondissement; 011-33-1-42-02-40-32. Métro: Jacques Bonsergent. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD:** Donostia (Spanish foods; 20 rue de la Grange aux Belles in the 10th; 011-33-1-42-08-30-44) and l'Opus (bar and club; 167 quai de Valmy in the 10th; 011-33-1-40-34-70-00; opusclub.free.fr).

### ZOÉ BOUILLON

On a winding side street off Belleville that you might never think to explore, in a checkerboard-tiled, café-like room, Zoé Bouillon's staff ladles out freshly made soups with infectious enthusiasm. Each soup in the weekly rotation of 12 to 14 kinds (curried eggplant, leek and ginger, fresh herb velouté) comes with matching toppings (herbed croutons, whipped cream and chives, toasted sesame seeds) and may be paired with a seasonal side salad or a slice of moist quick bread (called *cake* in France), perfect for dipping.

Once served, carry your tray to a table, settle in on the oyster-colored banquette, and dig into this good-for-you, vegetarian-friendly lunch. It's perfect for the daytime crowd that hungers for something quick and healthful, but in the evening, the *boutique à soupe* turns into a regular restaurant, delivering a colorful, gently priced menu cooked by a Brazilian chef.

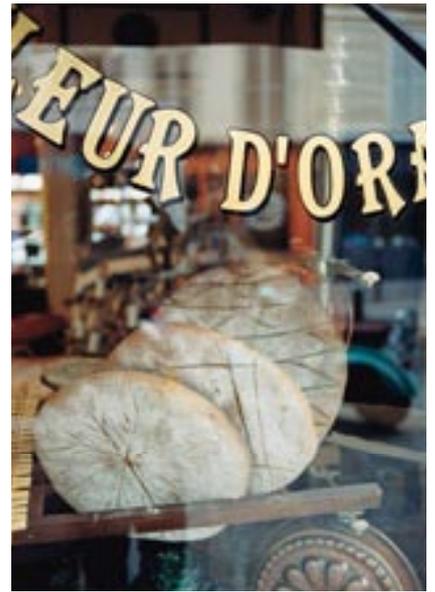
Zoé Bouillon can also provide the catering for your next party, teach you how to cook during its monthly cooking classes, and will even let you test-drive the restaurant: Book the room, pick the menu, call your friends, and play maître d' for the night.

**ZOÉ BOUILLON**, 66 rue Rébeval in the 19th; 011-33-1-42-02-02-83; zoebouillon.fr. Métro: Pyrénées. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD:** Chapeau Melon (wine bar; 92 rue Rébeval in the 19th; 011-33-1-42-02-68-60) and Les Doigts de Fée (North African pastry shop; 356 rue des Pyrénées in the 20th; 011-33-1-43-49-12-34).





The Canal Saint-Martin winds through the 10th arrondissement.



**THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT /** Quentin Hoffmann, owner of La Cantine de Quentin. Sea bream with lemongrass and green beans at Urbane. Loaves in the window of Du Pain et des Idées bakery. La Cocotte owner, Andrea Wainer. The author at Zoé Bouillon. A baker from La Boulangerie par Véronique Mauclerc. Locals on the rue Rébeval. Outside the North African pastry shop Les Doigts de Fée.



**OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT /** Veal kidneys at Quedubon. Young patrons at La Cocotte. The menu at Urbane. Pastries at Les Doigts de Fée. Bread baskets at La Boulangerie par Véronique Mauclerc. The author bicycles down the rue Paul Bert.





## URBANE

Run by a French-Irish couple who used to own a similar operation in Belfast, Urbane strikes a rare chord between trendy and sincere. Located in a shabby-but-clearly-on-the-rise area of the 10th arrondissement, the space features the work of artist-friends, and the menu plays the world-cuisine game with Anglo, French, and Asian influences.

But what could result in one more affected restaurant is, instead, turned into an inviting neo-bistro by its bright young chef—whose enthusiasm leaps out from the creative dishes he assembles—and a discreetly warm waitstaff.

Urbane presents a different face depending on the time of the day and the day of the week. The noon service revolves around a short daily *formule*: a poached egg served with fingers of polenta over arugula, a fillet of sea bream on a bed of lemongrass-infused green beans, a salad of mango and kiwi with toasted almonds. In the evening, the lights are dimmer and the menu is flashier, offering warm crawfish steamed with lemongrass and seaweed, scallops from Erquy swimming in a green-curry foam, braised lamb shank with a mash of root vegetables, apricot lollipops with almond-milk ice cream....

DJs take turns creating musical ambience on Friday and Saturday nights, but the sound level remains low enough for girlfriends to catch up on one another's lives. And on most Sundays, Parisians enjoy Urbane's delicious cross-Channel brunch with live acoustic music.

**URBANE**, 12 rue Arthur Groussier in the 10th; 011-33-1-42-40-74-75. Métro: Goncourt. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD**: Du Pain et des Idées (bakery; 34 rue Yves Toudic in the 10th; 011-33-1-42-40-44-52) and place Sainte-Marthe (a small, pretty square with cafés).

## LA BOULANGERIE PAR VÉRONIQUE MAUCLERC

Right around the corner from the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, one of the largest, steepest parks in Paris—and my hands-down favorite—a bakery hides behind its ornate facade one of the few wood-burning bread ovens that remain in operation in France. Aside from this century-old construction of brick and cast iron, La Boulangerie par Véronique Mauclerc is home to another rarity: a woman bread baker, who keeps the oven alive with her artisan loaves.

Shelves display a dozen different kinds (country bread, multi-grain, rye, quinoa, spelt, chestnut, with nuts or cheese), all made with organic flour and naturally leavened, their crusts kissed by the intense heat of the venerable oven.

The savory tarts and pastries (goat cheese and leek quiche, sugar-dusted almond croissants) are just as irresistible, and the little room at the back operates as a *salon de thé*, where one can sample the shop's offerings for breakfast, brunch, or lunch. When the weather is mild, I take my purchases to the park, climb to the top, and improvise a picnic on a bench.

**LA BOULANGERIE PAR VÉRONIQUE MAUCLERC**, 83 rue de Crimée in the 19th; 011-33-1-42-40-64-55. Métro: Laumière. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD**: Quedubon and rue de Mouzaïa (a little-known street in the 19th, lined with charming houses and small gardens).

## QUEDUBON

It takes a fair amount of self-confidence to call a restaurant Quedubon (the name translates roughly to “only the good stuff”), but Gilles Bénard's impeccable track record, as founder of Chez Ramulaud in the 11th arrondissement and Aux Zingots in the 10th, has certainly given him that. His new venue is a casual-chic *bistro-cave*—that is to say, a mix of a wine shop and a restaurant.

The star of the show here is undoubtedly the wine, as demonstrated by the extra-large chalkboards that act as a wine list. Bénard is an enthusiastic supporter of *vins naturels* (“natural wines”), made in small quantities from unsprayed, hand-harvested grapes, with little to no chemical manipulation and no filtering. Quedubon is the ideal spot to get acquainted with these singular French wines and meet the vintners during the tastings that Bénard regularly hosts. Bottles may be bought to go or uncorked on the premises (a corkage is added to your tab) to enjoy with some of Quedubon's market-fresh edibles.

As is more and more frequent these days, the menu is short and sweet, offering a daily choice between two starters, two main dishes, and two desserts (examples include vegetable napoleon with bell pepper coulis, crispy beef cheeks, chocolate and lavender molten cake). But I always try to convince someone in my party to share a selection of charcuterie straight from a co-op in the French Basque country (air-cured ham, dry sausage, *lomo*) or a platter of artisanal cheese brought up from the Auvergne region (sheep's-milk Tomme, Saint-Nectaire, Cantal).

**QUEDUBON**, 22 rue du Plateau in the 19th; 011-33-1-42-38-18-65. Métro: Buttes-Chaumont. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD**: Le Pavillon Puebla (Italian restaurant inside the park, at the angle between rue Botzaris and avenue Simón Bolívar in the 19th; 011-33-1-42-02-22-45) and La Boulangerie par Véronique Mauclerc.

## LA COCOTTE

The latest addition to the rue Paul Bert, a small but increasingly gourmand street, is La Cocotte. This girly boutique (the name means both “chick” and “stew pot”) is run by Andrea Wainer, a young Argentine woman who puts forth an inspiring and international selection of books on food and beverages—and any publication that is somehow related to either, including novels, *manga*, children's books, and art books.

But La Cocotte is not just a *librairie du goût*: Kitchenware and cute linens share the remaining shelf space, and the shop triples as a tea salon that your dolls would adore. Tea is served alongside whimsical treats (dulce de leche cookies, marshmallows, and “biscocotti”) whipped up by Rachel Khoo, the pastry chef. And as if that weren't enough to make the local crowd swoon, La Cocotte also hosts author events, tasting sessions, and baking classes for children.

**LA COCOTTE**, 5 rue Paul Bert in the 11th; 011-33-1-43-73-04-02; lacocotte.net. Métro: Faidherbe-Chaligny. **ALSO IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD**: Le Bistrot Paul Bert and L'Écailler du Bistrot (respectively, a classic French bistro and an oyster bar; 18 and 22 rue Paul Bert in the 11th; 011-33-1-43-72-24-01 and 011-33-1-43-72-76-77).

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*Clotilde Dusoulier's latest book is Clotilde's Edible Adventures in Paris.*



Freshly baked baguettes at La Boulangerie par Véronique Mauclerc.



GET A TASTE OF THE **RIGHT BANK**—IN YOUR OWN KITCHEN

## POACHED EGGS WITH ARUGULA AND POLENTA FINGERS

4 SERVINGS

From Olivier Maindroult of Urbane.

- 1 13.5- to 14-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk\*
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup polenta (coarse cornmeal)\*\*
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2½ tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups arugula
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- Fleur de sel\*\*\*

Butter 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Bring coconut milk and ½ cup water to boil in heavy medium saucepan. Gradually whisk in polenta; reduce heat and simmer until polenta is

very thick and tender, stirring frequently, about 7 minutes. Mix in cheese. Pour polenta into half of pan; spread to form 9x6-inch rectangle. Press plastic wrap onto surface of polenta and chill until firm, about 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep refrigerated.

Preheat oven to 300°F. Turn polenta out onto cutting board. Cut into 3x1-inch rectangles. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large nonstick skillet over high heat. Working in batches, add polenta fingers; cook until golden, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to baking sheet; keep warm in oven.

Add enough water to large skillet to reach depth of 2 inches; bring to simmer. Mix in 1 teaspoon coarse salt and white wine vinegar. Crack each egg into separate custard cup. Slide eggs into water and cook until whites are set but centers are still runny, about 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, toss arugula with ½ tablespoon oil and balsamic vinegar in medium

bowl; divide among 4 plates.

Top each salad with poached egg. Break yolks with tip of knife. Sprinkle with fleur de sel. Serve with polenta.

\*/ Sold at many supermarkets and at Indian, Southeast Asian, and Latin markets.

\*\*/ Sold at some supermarkets and at natural foods stores and Italian markets. If unavailable, substitute an equal amount of regular yellow cornmeal and cook about half as long.

\*\*\*/ A type of sea salt; available at some supermarkets and at specialty foods stores.

## CURRIED EGGPLANT SOUP WITH PARMESAN CREAM

6 SERVINGS

To add little flecks of color to the soup, remove the skin from all but a quarter of one eggplant. This recipe is from Agnès Morsain, co-owner of Zoé Bouillon.

- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2¼ pounds eggplant (about 2 medium), peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces

- 4 cups water
- ½ cup canned crushed tomatoes with added puree
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- ½ cup chilled whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in heavy large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook until golden, about 8 minutes. Add garlic, curry, and turmeric; stir 1 minute. Add eggplant, 4 cups water, and tomatoes; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until eggplant is very tender, about 40 minutes. Cool soup slightly. Mix in basil. Working in batches, puree soup in blender. Season to taste with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Chill uncovered until cold, then cover and chill.

Whisk cream in medium bowl to soft peaks; fold in cheese. Bring soup to simmer. Ladle into bowls, then top with dollop of Parmesan cream. / ■



**OPPOSITE,**  
**FROM LEFT /**  
Owner Olivier  
Maindroult of  
Urbane. Inside  
Quedubon.  
The place  
Sainte-Marthe.  
**THIS PAGE /**  
A cheese plate  
at Quedubon  
(clockwise  
from top left):  
Comté aged 18  
months, Saint-  
Nectaire *fermier*,  
Roquefort, Tomme  
de Brebis, and  
Cantal *entre-deux*.

# THE NEW PARIS BISTRO /



TUNA, FRESH  
MOZZARELLA,  
AND BASIL  
PIZZA  
recipe on  
page 156

FORGET EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW ABOUT BISTROS IN PARIS. **DORIE GREENSPAN** REPORTS ON—AND GETS A MENU FROM—THE NEWEST TREND IN TOWN: THE *BISTRONOMIQUE*, WHERE THE FOOD IS CASUAL, THE VIBE IS FUN, AND THE COOKING IS THREE-STAR DELICIOUS.

I FELL IN LOVE WITH YVES CAMDEBORDE WAY BEFORE I ever met him. It was in 1992 or '93, just after the chef had made news by doing two things the media and many of his colleagues considered professional suicide. He decamped the posh, Michelin-starred kitchens of the Hôtel de Crillon and opened a bistro, La Régalade, when bistros had about as much cachet as corner delis. But I wasn't following the news. I was following the must-go urgings of my French food friends and, sitting at the cramped window table, sometime between the perfectly seasoned pâtés made by the chef's brother and the silky-smooth chestnut soup that covered a snippet of foie gras, I must have begun making little sighing sounds, because that's when my husband said, "You've got a crush on the chef, don't you?" You can tell he knows me well.

It was easy to be smitten and just as easy to be surprised: There was nothing else like La Régalade in Paris. While it had the simple, homey trappings and the friendly bustle of a classic bistro, the food was polished and the prices were astonishingly reasonable. And even though Camdeborde has since told me he's not a planner, La Régalade was, if not exactly what he'd planned, then exactly what he'd hoped for. "I wasn't sure what the restaurant would be," he said, "but I knew that I wanted to have really great food—after all, I was a child of Michelin—and I wanted prices so low that people who ate at the neighborhood pizzeria could come to my place."

Sixteen years later, a lot has changed on the Paris food scene and Camdeborde's the pioneer to thank. Dozens of renegades from Michelin-starred kitchens have followed the charismatic chef's lead and opened their own gastro-bistros—now known as *bistronomiques*—where they're cooking sophisticated dishes like avocado mille-feuille layered with crab, herb-scented ice creams with caramelized fruit, and roasted asparagus with brown-butter-coated eggs so softly boiled that they open and become a dressing at the touch of a fork. In all of these dishes the chefs use the same artisanal products—hand-beaten butter, cheeses from the city's great *fromageries*, and vegetables from small, local growers—that they used when they were cooking at far more luxurious restaurants. And, remarkably, the prices, though now higher than a pizzeria's, remain low.

But the papa of the revolution is still the man at the top of the trend. After he sold La Régalade, Camdeborde opened Le Comptoir in Saint-Germain-des-Prés (my

neighborhood—hooray!) and, since day one, it's been the toughest table to score in all of Paris. If you want dinner, which is a fixed five-course meal for 48 euros, you'd better call three months in advance. If you're craving the chef's beef cheeks and carrots or his smoked salmon *croque-monsieur* for lunch, when reservations aren't accepted, then you should do what I do: Get there at 12:15, before the line is three-deep at the door.

The new bistro looks like it was built for a movie set. It's teensy, romantic, and quintessentially Parisian, and I know that when Camdeborde comes racing up the kitchen steps into the dollhouse dining room, I'm not the only one holding my breath and hoping he doesn't knock over a tray-carrying server or smother a regular customer with an affectionate bear hug. His *joie de vivre* is almost too outsized for the cozy room.

However, small is perfect for Le Comptoir. "I think part of its magic is its size," says Camdeborde. "You can feel the energy in the room, catch bits of conversation, and see what everyone's eating. For me it makes it lively and Parisian. And I love that I can be in touch with everybody."

We love it, too, which is why my food-loving friends and I are willing to wait for a table or a reservation. But if you're an impatient type, you can make the menu Camdeborde created for us—chez you. It hits all of the chef's strengths: The pizza with tuna and ginger is playful and completely original; the veal chops are deeply flavorful and delicately sauced (Camdeborde's technique here is easy and perfect for the meat); ditto the confit of carrots in orange juice; and the dessert waffles with salted-butter caramel, a favorite from his childhood, show his great appreciation for tradition and for foods that are simple, generous, and satisfying.

And when you're in Paris, you can eat where Camdeborde does: at his friends' *bistronomiques* (see "Chef's Choice: Seven More Bistros to Try" on page 158). Like Le Comptoir, these places have something very special about them, something Camdeborde summed up for me in a flash: "All the chefs cook with their hearts." Certainly it's what he does.

LE COMPTOIR, 9 carrefour de l'Odéon, 6th; 011-33-1-44-27-07-97

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG CUTLER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOEL HOLLAND

## BISTRO MENU FOR 4

### STARTER

Tuna, Fresh Mozzarella,  
and Basil Pizza

### MAIN & SIDES

Veal Chops with  
Asparagus and Morels

Baby Carrot Confit with  
Orange Juice and Cumin

### DESSERT

Crispy Waffles with  
Salted Caramel Coulis

### DRINKS

Rosé  
Pinot Noir

## TUNA, FRESH MOZZARELLA, AND BASIL PIZZA

4 SERVINGS

Frozen puff pastry makes a quick and easy crust for this modern take on pizza.

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil plus additional for brushing and drizzling
- 4 large green onions, chopped
- 1 8-ounce ahi tuna steak, cut crosswise into twelve ¼-inch-thick slices
- ½ 8-ounce ball fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into 12 thin slices, drained on several layers of paper towels
- 12 large fresh basil leaves
- 4 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 4 Kalamata olives, pitted, quartered
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon minced peeled fresh ginger

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 400°F. Roll out puff pastry on floured work surface to 11-inch square. Using 4½-inch bowl as guide, cut out 4 rounds from pastry. Transfer pastry to large ungreased baking sheet, spacing apart. Place another baking sheet atop pastry rounds to weigh down slightly. Bake until pastry is golden brown and baked through, about 20 minutes. Uncover pastry and cool completely.

**DO AHEAD** Pastry can be made 6 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat 2 teaspoons olive oil in medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add green onions; sauté until soft but not brown, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

Divide green onions among pastry rounds. Brush tuna lightly with olive oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Alternate 3 tuna slices, 3 mozzarella slices, and 3 basil leaves in concentric circles, slightly overlapping, atop green onions on each pastry round. Scatter tomatoes, olives, and radish slices over each. Sprinkle each with ginger and drizzle with olive oil. Bake just until tuna is opaque around edges but still translucent in center, about 3 minutes. Transfer to plates.

**WHAT TO DRINK** With the pizza, pour a rosé. Try the Domaine Le Galantin 2006 Bandol Rosé (\$17), which has stone fruit, mineral, and rose petal flavors.

## VEAL CHOPS WITH ASPARAGUS AND MORELS

4 SERVINGS

The roasted chops are finished with a mix of asparagus, morels, and herbs.

- 16 thick asparagus spears, trimmed, cut on diagonal into 2-inch lengths
- 5 tablespoons peanut oil, divided
- 12 ounces fresh morel mushrooms, rinsed, halved lengthwise if large
- 4 8- to 9-ounce veal rib chops (each ¾ to 1 inch thick)
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 4 shallots, peeled, halved lengthwise, plus ½ cup minced shallots
- 6 whole fresh sage leaves plus 6 fresh sage leaves, sliced
- 6 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup low-salt chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Cook asparagus in large saucepan of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Drain. Transfer asparagus to bowl of ice water. Drain well. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Wrap asparagus in paper towels; place in resealable plastic bag and chill.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Heat 2 tablespoons peanut oil in heavy large ovenproof skillet or wide pot with lid over medium-high heat. Add morels and sauté until tender and browned, about 8 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer morels to bowl (do not clean skillet).

Heat 1 tablespoon peanut oil in same skillet over high heat. Sprinkle veal chops with flour, salt, and pepper. Add veal chops to skillet; cook until browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to plate. Add remaining 1 tablespoon peanut oil to same skillet; add shallot halves, 6 whole sage leaves, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves to skillet and sauté until shallots are softened, about 6 minutes. Return veal chops to skillet; cover and roast in oven until tender, about 12 minutes. Transfer chops and shallot mixture to plate. Add remaining peanut oil to skillet; add ½ cup minced shallots, sliced sage leaves, and garlic and sauté 3 minutes. Add asparagus, morels, and broth; simmer until asparagus is tender, about 5 minutes. Return veal chops to skillet, cover, and cook just until heated through and liquid is slightly reduced, about 3 minutes. Transfer veal chops, morel-asparagus mixture, and pan juices to plates. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve.

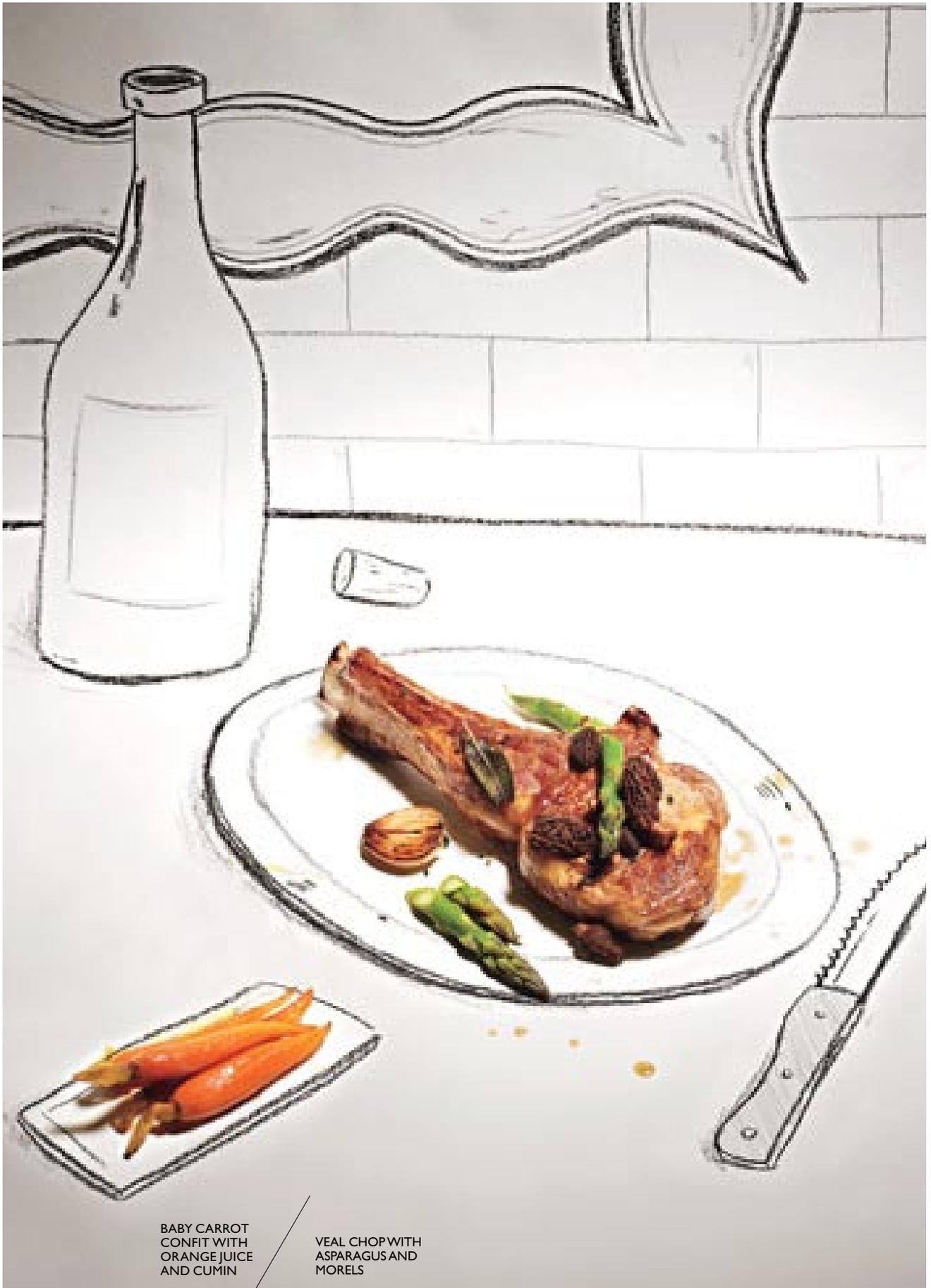
**WHAT TO DRINK** A lighter-style Pinot Noir would be great with the veal chops. We like the earthy, dark berry flavors of the Domaine Jean Grivot 2004 "Les Charmois" Nuits-St.-Georges (\$47).

## BABY CARROT CONFIT WITH ORANGE JUICE AND CUMIN

4 SERVINGS

- 4 bunches baby carrots with green tops attached, tops trimmed to 1½ inches, carrots peeled (about 24)
- ¼ cups fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

Place carrots in pot large enough to hold carrots in double layer. Pour orange juice over; add cumin. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium, cover, and simmer until carrots are just tender, about 10 minutes. Transfer carrots to plate. Boil liquid in pot until slightly reduced and syrupy, about 2 minutes. Stir in butter. Return carrots to pot and simmer just until heated through, about 2 minutes. Season carrots to taste with salt and pepper.



BABY CARROT  
CONFIT WITH  
ORANGE JUICE  
AND CUMIN

VEAL CHOP WITH  
ASPARAGUS AND  
MORELS

# CRISPY WAFFLES WITH SALTED CARAMEL COULIS

4 SERVINGS

The perfect finish to a cozy bistro dinner. If desired, top each waffle with a dollop of softly whipped cream.

## SALTED CARAMEL COULIS

- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 3½ tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ teaspoon fleur de sel or coarse kosher salt

## WAFFLES

- 1¼ cups all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, melted, slightly cooled
- Peanut oil
- Powdered sugar

**SALTED CARAMEL COULIS/** Combine sugar and ¼ cup water in heavy medium saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and boil without stirring until syrup is deep amber color, occasionally brushing down sides with wet pastry brush and swirling pan, about 10 minutes. Add heavy whipping cream (mixture will bubble vigorously). Stir over low heat until any caramel bits dissolve. Remove from heat. Stir in unsalted butter and fleur de sel or coarse salt. Transfer caramel to small pitcher or bowl. Cool. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Stir over low heat just until warm enough to pour before using.

**WAFFLES/** Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, and ½ teaspoon salt in large bowl to blend. Whisk whole milk, 2 large eggs, and melted butter in medium bowl to blend. Add milk mixture to dry ingredients in large bowl and whisk until batter is smooth. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 hour ahead. Let batter stand at room temperature.

Heat waffle iron according to manufacturer's instructions (medium-high heat). Brush grids lightly with peanut oil. Pour enough batter onto each waffle grid to cover generously (about heaping ½ cup batter for 4½x3½-inch grid); spread evenly with offset spatula. Close waffle iron and cook until waffles are golden brown and crisp on both sides, 5 to 6 minutes.

Cut each waffle in half, forming either rectangles or triangles. Divide waffles among 4 plates. Dust with powdered sugar and drizzle with salted caramel coulis. Serve waffles, passing remaining salted caramel coulis separately. / ■

## CHEF'S CHOICE: SEVEN MORE BISTROS TO TRY

**AFTER A TRIP TO Le Comptoir, explore the other bistro-nomiques of Paris. Here are Chef Camdeborde's favorites.**

### LES FABLES DE LA FONTAINE

Owned by Camdeborde's mentor, Christian Constant, who was executive chef at Les Ambassadeurs at Hôtel de Crillon, this is one of several bistros Constant has created on rue Saint-Dominique. Among the others are **CAFÉ CONSTANT** (139 rue Saint-Dominique, 7th; 011-33-1-47-53-73-34), which was a neighborhood café and is now a bustling bistro with great wines and an often-changing blackboard menu, and **LES COCOTTES** (135 rue Saint-Dominique, 7th; 011-33-1-45-50-10-31), where everyone eats at the counter and, in addition to great salads and creamy scrambled

eggs with truffles, there are main courses served in cast-iron casseroles. 131 rue Saint-Dominique, 7th; 011-33-1-44-18-37-55

### RIBOULDINGUE

In the shadow of Notre Dame, Chef Clavel, who was Camdeborde's sous-chef at La Régalade, has opened a bistro with a menu that highlights offal and the odd cuts of meat that turn delicious when treated with care, tenderness, time, and talent. This is one of the most talked-about new restaurants in town. 10 rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, 5th; 011-33-1-46-33-98-80

### CHEZ MICHEL

A simple, elbows-on-the-table, always-packed bistro where Thierry Breton, a native of Brittany, riffs on his region's specialties, including a buttery, sugary *kouign amann*, which is the perfect finish to any meal here, whether it's pristine scallops in their shells

or *kig ha farz*, a Brittany stew of veal, pork, and baby vegetables. 10 rue de Belzunce, 10th; 011-33-1-44-53-06-20

### LE TROQUET

Christian Etchebest has made a name for himself modernizing the dishes of his Basque country roots. His cooking is light, fresh, delicate, and the reason so many people opt for his reasonably priced six-course tasting menu. 21 rue François Bonvin, 15th; 011-33-1-45-66-89-00

### LES PAPILLES

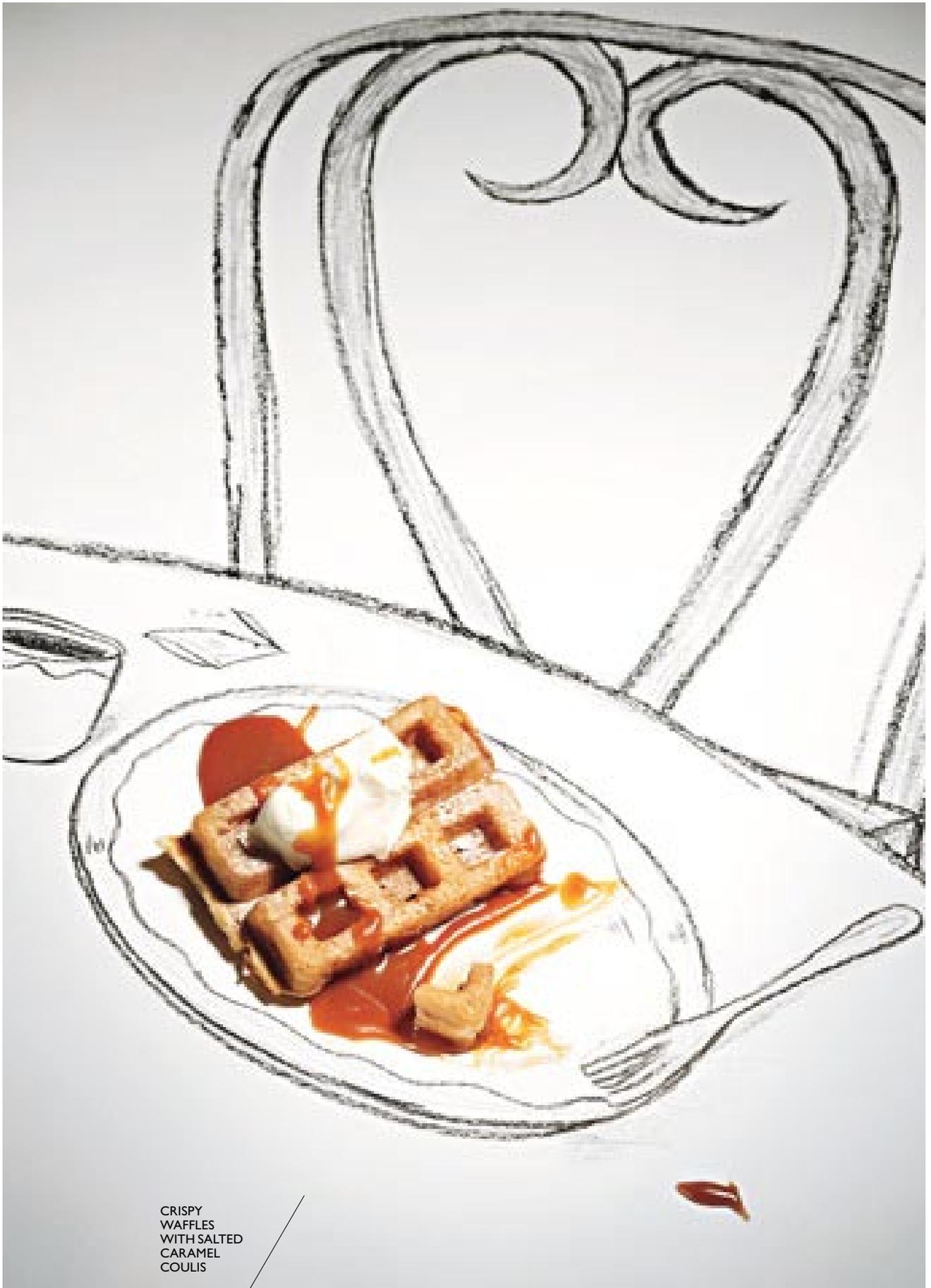
Once a neighborhood grocery store, Les Papilles's walls are now lined with bottles of wine, which you can buy to take home or, better yet, purchase to go with the simple lunches and appealing fixed-priced dinners that Bertrand Bluy, formerly a pastry chef at Taillevent, sends out. 30 rue Gay-Lussac, 5th; 011-33-1-43-25-20-79

### L'OS À MOELLE

Thierry Faucher cooked alongside Camdeborde at Les Ambassadeurs. For years his talent for choosing exquisite ingredients and letting them shine has won his somewhat out-of-the-way bistro a devoted following. 3 rue Vasco-de-Gama, 15th; 011-33-1-45-57-27-27

### CHEZ L'AMI JEAN

Stéphane Jégo, Camdeborde's protégé, friend, and running partner (they ran the 2006 New York marathon together), comes from the Basque country and you can taste that in every spoonful of every one of his dishes (if pigeon's on the menu, grab it). When you're craving duck confit, don't go anywhere else. 27 rue Malar, 7th; 011-33-1-47-05-86-89



CRISPY  
WAFFLES  
WITH SALTED  
CARAMEL  
COULIS

# TEN MORE THINGS WE ♥ ABOUT FRANCE

WE TASTED, SIPPED, AND SHOPPED OUR WAY THROUGH FRANCE TO BRING YOU THE DELICIOUS BEST. FROM WARM-OUT-OF-THE-OVEN MACAROONS IN BORDEAUX TO DECADENT DUCK-FAT FRIES IN TOULOUSE TO BIKING THE MAJESTIC LOIRE, HERE ARE TEN COMPELLING REASONS TO GO NOW.

—THE EDITORS / ILLUSTRATIONS BY JILLIAN TAMAKI



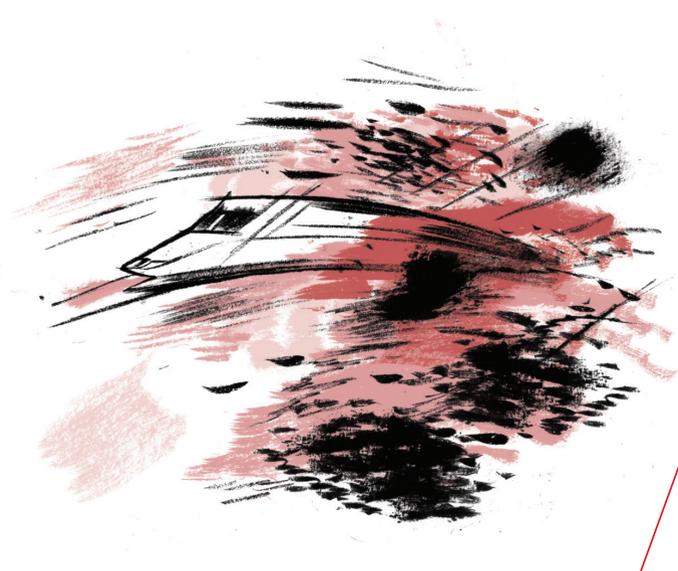
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## IT'S THE FROMAGE!

To borrow from Charles de Gaulle, how can you not love a country with 246 kinds of cheese? One place we particularly love to buy it is in Beaune, the charming, bustling center of the Burgundy wine region. Alain Hess Fromager is that town's answer to Paris's Fauchon or Hédiard and every bit as well stocked and gleaming. Hess's selection of oils, vinegars, teas, coffees, spices, wines, chutneys, jams, and chocolates will leave you amazed. But best of all is the lovingly tended cheese case, filled with a dizzying array of local selections aged by the shy, soft-spoken Hess, who's a third-generation *fromager*. If goat cheese is your thing, be warned: The shop stocks more than 80 types. And don't leave without trying some Le Colombier de Sivry, a heavenly washed-rind cow's-milk cheese from a tiny farm 30 miles west, as well as a disc of Époisses, the region's famed and deliciously stinky soft-ripened cheese, plus at least one piece of Délice de Pommard—a luscious triple-crème rolled in mustard seeds from nearby Dijon—created by Hess himself. *Alain Hess Fromager*, 7 place Carnot, Beaune; 011-33-3-80-24-73-51; [fromagerie-hess.com](http://fromagerie-hess.com)

## 2 ORGANIC IN PROVENCE

At first glance, L'Atelier de Jean-Luc Rabanel appears to be the antithesis



3 4



of the obvious Provence: Instead of a sheaf of dried lavender in the window, there is a flat-screen TV playing a live feed of the kitchen; instead of a rustic-quaint *mas*-like interior, the decor is minimalist. But sit down to the degustation menu, and you quickly realize that you're experiencing the modern evolution of Provençal cuisine: "You will be having 15 courses tonight. Mostly vegetables," says the waiter at this spot—the first all-organic restaurant in France to earn a Michelin star. The succession of gorgeous little dishes that come out of the kitchen, overseen by the dynamic Jean-Luc Rabanel, is not unlike Provence itself: relaxed, freewheeling, and, above all, sensual. Salsify tempura is enlivened with Asian chile sauce and soy; Mediterranean tuna is localized with asparagus, celeriac, and pumpkin seeds. Pig's feet come with Szechuan pepper flowers, both visually and gustatorily striking. Dinner ends with a strawberry, battered and fried and skewered on a rosemary sprig. Of course. It's spring. A nearby table of vacationing Marseillans are eating it all up. A party of young French couples toast one another as night falls. And over the evening, you witness modern Provence progressing, one course at a time. *L'Atelier de Jean-Luc Rabanel, 7 rue des Carmes, Arles; 011-33-4-90-91-07-69; rabanel.com*

### 3 THE FOODIE TRAIN

Trains have always evoked romance and adventure: They're sexy, sleek, and fast—and who can forget that scene with Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint in *North by Northwest*? But the sexiest, sleekest, fastest train in France, the high-speed, high-style TGV, is also a foodie traveler's best friend. Sure, there are great snacks on board—pressed sandwiches and Champagne—but hop on after touching down at Charles de Gaulle in Paris, and in no time you're dining at Paul Bocuse in Lyon, sipping *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti* on location, or basking poolside before feasting at the revamped *Le Petit Nice* in Marseilles. Most recently, Alsatian Rieslings and *tarte flambe* are a mere two hours away with the TGV service to Strasbourg. At speeds of nearly 200 miles per hour, it's okay if, like Ms. Saint's character, you "never discuss love on an empty stomach," because in no time you can have your fill at any number of the best restaurants in France. All aboard. [tgv.co.uk/](http://tgv.co.uk/)

### 4 "COUPE" DE FOUDE

We can't think of anything more decadent—or pretty—than a coupe of pink Champagne, especially when it's Krug. Pale pink-gold with opulent raspberry, ginger, and peppercorn notes

and the tiniest bubbles, Krug Rosé is love at first sip. Skin-fermented Pinot Noir grapes, which give color, are blended with traditionally fermented Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier, as well as reserve wines from the Krug cellars, to produce an elegant and delicate Champagne as lovely to look at as it is to drink. \$300 per bottle

### 5 A BASQUE COUNTRY STAR

The Spanish side of the Basque region may receive the bulk of the press and tourists, but France's Basque country is a must-visit for the traveler with an appetite for discovery. It has the ingredients—*Idiazábal* cheese, Bayonne ham, *piment d'Espelette* (peppers), *bacalao* (dried salt cod)—as well as the destination restaurants. At the top of our list is *L'Auberge Basque* in the town of Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle. Two years ago, chef Cédric Béchade transformed a farmhouse built in 1672 into an 11-room inn that flawlessly blends modern decor and amenities with country charm. But it's in the dining room, complete with an open kitchen and stunning views of the rolling countryside, where the 31-year-old chef really makes his mark. A ten-year disciple of Alain Ducasse at the *Hôtel Plaza Athénée Paris*, Béchade takes a light and sophisticated approach to hearty and rich Basque cuisine in

## TEN MORE THINGS WE ♥ ABOUT FRANCE

dishes like poached egg in green pepper jelly, smoked eel and *pipérade* tomato consommé, and Ibaiona pork roasted and braised in pistachio with black Tolosa beans and a reduced Tempranillo and *Espelette* pepper sauce. If you've ever wondered what it was like to eat the food of France's great chefs—Bocuse, Robuchon, Ducasse—at their prime, you'll want to visit Cédric Béchade. *L'Auberge Basque*, D 307 vieille route de St. Jean de Luz, Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle; 011-33-5-59-51-70-00; aubergebasque.com

### 6 MACARONS FROM MME BLANCHEZ

The beloved French macaroon has made its way stateside, from Asian-influenced versions (like sour plum at Jin Patisserie in Venice, California) to American favorites (like peanut butter at Mad Mac in New York). But to purists, these

sandwich-style cookies with creamy fillings made famous at Ladurée on rue Royale in Paris are known as *macarons parisiens*. To get an authentic taste, you'll need to go back to basics with the superlative *macaron* from Madame Blanchez in Saint-Émilion. At her shop in the heart of Bordeaux, Mme Blanchez uses a 1930s family recipe to turn out light and perfectly chewy macarons, made from sweet and bitter almonds and egg whites. The batter is spooned onto parchment paper bearing her name and baked until golden brown. Simply put, it's a bite of perfection. *Madame Blanchez*, 9 rue Guadet, Saint-Émilion; 011-33-5-57-24-72-33

### 7 THE MARKET AT COLLIOURE

French markets have inspired M.F.K. Fisher and Julia Child and all of us,

too. They're the reason we first fell in love with France and with real food. A favorite is the weekly Sunday market in the picturesque town of Collioure, located along the Mediterranean coast near the border of France and Spain. But Collioure, best known for its legendary anchovies and artists—Matisse, Picasso, and Chagall—is neither French nor Spanish; it's Catalan. You can hear it in the language, see it in the bright red-and-gold Catalan flags that fly everywhere, and taste it in the food. The market is best in the spring, when the year's first fruit appears—cherries from nearby Ceret, red Roussillon apricots, and peaches. Look for beef raised in the Pyrenees, goat cheese from Maria and Leo Van der Steen, and foie gras, rillettes, and confit made by the Vassail-Planes family. Catalan sausages hang above rows of tomatoes, fresh

### BRITTANY'S BEST SOUVENIR, THIS VERSION IS FROM CRÊPERIE DE LABRI.



8

### BUCKWHEAT CREPES WITH GOAT CHEESE AND HONEY 8 SERVINGS (16 CREPES)

- 1/4 cups buckwheat flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup water, divided
- 1 large egg
- 2 cups whole milk
- Melted butter
- 2 ounces (about) goat cheese (preferably Bûcheron), crumbled
- Honey (preferably buckwheat)

Mix flour and salt in large bowl. Whisk 3/4 cup water and egg in medium bowl to blend. Stir water-egg mixture into flour mixture and knead just until dough forms. Stir in remaining 1/4 cup water. Using electric mixer, beat dough 5 minutes. Cover and refrigerate dough at least 12 hours and up to 1 day.

Preheat oven to 250°F. Add milk to dough and whisk until crepe batter is well blended. Heat 10-inch-diameter nonstick skillet over medium heat; brush skillet lightly with melted butter. Pour 3 tablespoonfuls batter into skillet, swirling skillet to coat bottom evenly with batter. When batter is set on top, about 2 minutes, scatter 1 teaspoon goat cheese atop half of crepe; fold crepe in half, then in half again. Transfer crepe to rimmed baking sheet; keep warm in oven. Repeat with remaining crepe batter and cheese, brushing skillet with melted butter as needed.

Transfer 2 crepes to each plate. Drizzle with honey and serve.

**INGREDIENT TIPS/** Buckwheat flour and buckwheat honey are available at specialty foods stores. Bûcheron, a tangy but mild French goat's-milk cheese, can be found at some supermarkets and at cheese stores.



7 10



eggs, violet artichokes, and jars of local honey. If wild snails are available, persuade a local to share his recipe for *cargolade*, the grilled Catalan specialty made with pig fat, garlic, salt, and pepper. The scent of salt, wild thyme, rosemary, and laurel permeates the market air. It's a smell you never forget. *place du 8 Mai 1945*

## 8 BUCKWHEAT CREPES IN BRITTANY

Take a trip to Brittany, the windswept, rugged northwest corner of France, and we guarantee you'll come away as obsessed as we were with the crepes. They're a local delicacy, and you'll find a *crêperie* (or two) in every city square and on every village street. Of course, you can indulge in sweet crepes, sprinkled with sugar, topped with jam, or slathered with *caramel au beurre salé* (an addictive salted caramel spread). But we went for the savory crepes, known as *galettes*. Made with earthy buckwheat flour, they are topped with fish or seafood, ham, cheese, vegetables—you name it, somewhere in Brittany they've put it on a crepe. Our favorite? The delicious goat cheese *galettes* drizzled with buckwheat honey that we had at the tiny *Crêperie de l'Abri* in the seaside village of *Combrit-Sainte-Marine*. Paired with a glass of the local hard cider (nearby *Cidre*

*Le Rhun au Verger de Poulamul* makes a superb one), it's simplicity at its best. *Crêperie de l'Abri, 15 quai Jacques de Thézac, Combrit-Sainte-Marine; 011-33-2-98-51-98-72*

## 9 DUCK-FAT FRIES

Toulouse is an often-overlooked, energetic college town in southern France with a charming, walkable center and perhaps more Armagnac and foie gras per capita than anyplace else in the world. It is also a culinary wonderland that boasts what might be the world's most satisfying bar snack: the terrific duck-fat *frites* at *Restaurant J'Go Toulouse*. Here's the plan: J'Go is catty-corner to the town's central market. First, work up an appetite strolling the aisles, filled with stunning produce, charcuterie, and, of course, ducks. Then, walk across the street to J'Go to satiate that hunger. One side is a sit-down restaurant, where you can order dishes made with the region's lamb, if you wish. But that's not where you're going. The other side is a bullfighting bar where, in the evening, a local crowd gathers. They are a bit rowdy. They are foodies. And they are eating various bar snacks to shame all others: thin slices of foie gras draped on crusty toast. Skewered and grilled bits of lamb. And those duck-fat fries. Golden. Crunchy. Aggressively salted. Cut medium-thick. Order something local to drink. Red. Most likely Grenache-

based. Most likely earthy. It cuts the fat perfectly with every sip, readying you for another blissful bite. That, with some *Manu Chao* on the stereo at happy hour here, is pretty close to perfect. *Restaurant J'Go Toulouse, 16 place Victor Hugo, Toulouse; 011-33-5-61-23-02-03; lejgo.com*

## 10 BIKING THE LOIRE

What's filled with gently rolling hills and enormous chateaux? It's the Loire Valley, and there's no better way to work off all the goat cheese and *tarte Tatin* you'll eat there than bicycling through some of France's most peaceful, gorgeous countryside. Start in *Azay-le-Rideau* for a look at some prime real estate: its turreted 16th-century chateau. Once you've checked a big, fat castle off your list, rent a bicycle in the medieval town of *Chinon*. Head west ten miles toward *Fontevraud-l'Abbaye* (check out the 900-year-old abbey) to where the Loire and Vienne rivers meet, biking past vineyards, sunflower fields, and medieval ruins—and through towns where you'll need to stop, of course, at the local *crêperie* or bakery for a bit of sustenance. For centuries, the Loire was the playground of French kings and queens; as you pass the chateaux, have fun imagining the masked balls that once took place behind those old stone walls. *Butterfield & Robinson bike tours; butterfield.com for information / ■*

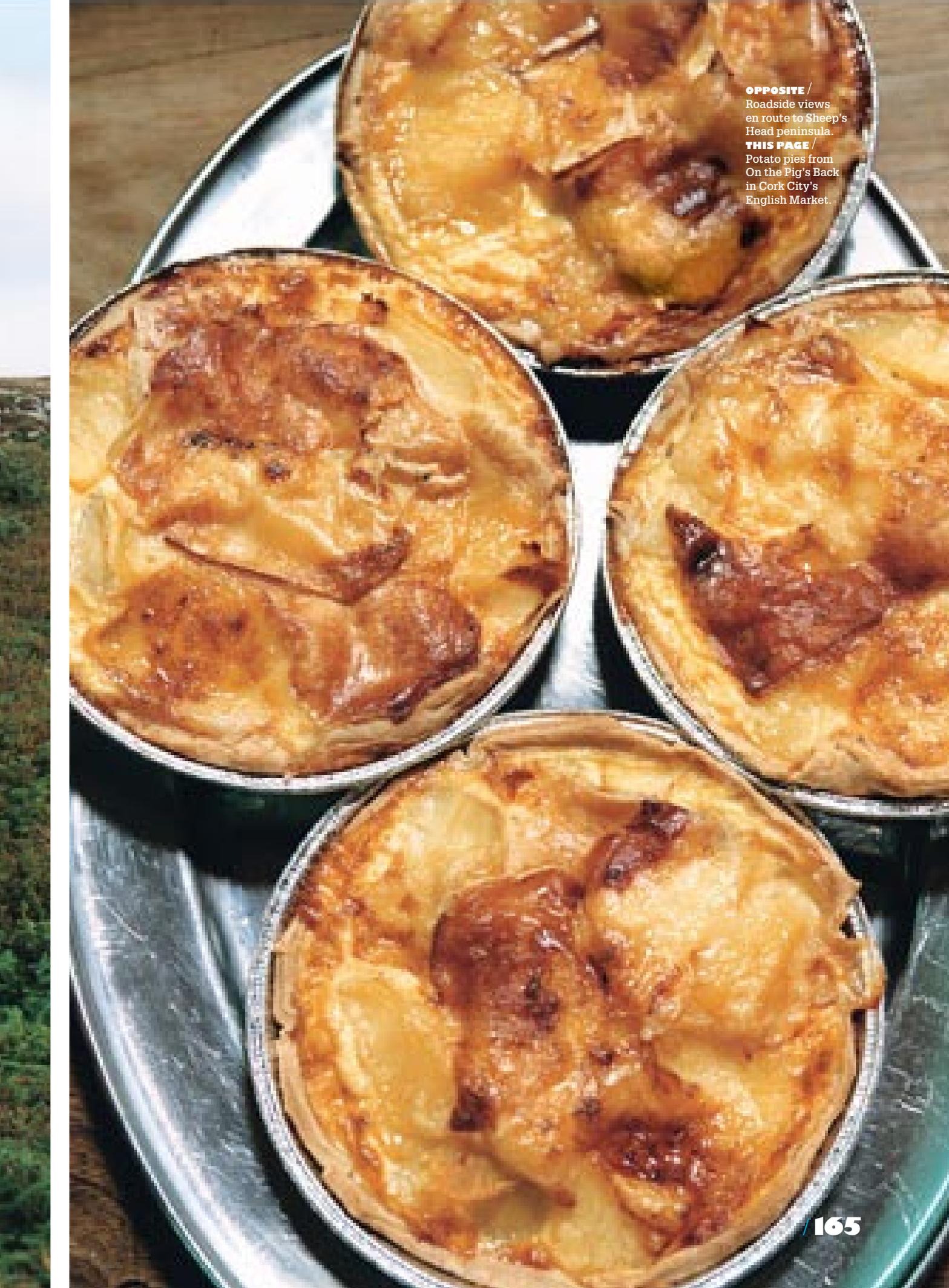
THE TRAVEL ISSUE

JOIN TRAVEL  
CORRESPONDENT  
**RAND RICHARDS  
COOPER** ON A  
FARM-TO-FORK TOUR  
OF THE FOODIEST  
CORNER OF IRELAND

# AN APPETITE FOR COUNTY

# CORK /

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CEDRIC ANGELES

A high-angle, close-up photograph of four round potato pies, each in its own aluminum foil tin. The pies are arranged in a diamond pattern on a larger silver metal tray. The crust is a rich golden-brown color, and the filling is visible through several slits cut into the top. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wooden table.

**OPPOSITE /**  
Roadside views  
en route to Sheep's  
Head peninsula.  
**THIS PAGE /**  
Potato pies from  
On the Pig's Back  
in Cork City's  
English Market.



THE GUY NEXT TO ME ON THE FLIGHT TO SHANNON, AN IRISHMAN LIVING IN NEW YORK, WAS WAXING EFFUSIVE OVER THE WORK ETHIC OF HIS ADOPTIVE COUNTRY. “YOU AMERICANS GET THINGS DONE,” HE ENTHUSED. “BUT US? SIT THREE IRISHMEN TOGETHER AT LUNCH,” HE JOKED, “AND THEY’LL DRAW IT OUT FOR HOURS, THEN STARE IN HORROR AT THEIR WATCHES AND SAY, ‘TWENTY TO THREE?!’”

No, he’d never move back to Ireland. “It’s just too slow,” he said. And I pictured: a meadow in the countryside, a cottage by a crumbling stone wall. And myself, in an ecstasy of laziness, getting absolutely nothing done.

Ireland is easy to dream about. Even if your people aren’t Irish, the place exerts what feels like an ancestral pull. It’s the fantasy of returning to a premodern way of life, one paced to the slow turn of the seasons.

“When God made time,” an Irish saying goes, “he made plenty of it.” Ignore your watch and draw that lunch out for hours.

There’s nowhere better to do this than in Cork, Ireland’s southernmost county and its culinary gem. Just three hours from Dublin and home to flourishing markets and a burgeoning Slow Food movement, Cork has attracted a new wave of bakers and brewers, cheesemakers and fish smokers: food artisans who work hand-in-hand with talented chefs to turn your visit into a farm-to-fork fantasy.

Long a bustling port, Cork City straddles the River Lee, a series of graceful stone bridges joining the city center to its hilly northern bank, where a church clock tower known as the Four-Faced Liar used to show different times on each of its four clocks. The heart of the city occupies an island between two channels of the river. Three avenues—Paul, St. Patrick’s, and Oliver Plunkett—traverse it in parallel, with smaller shops, restaurants, and pubs lining the lanes that run between them.

Everything centers on the gastronomic pleasure dome of the English Market, whose iron gates open to a soaring atrium housing food stalls under striped awnings. On my first day, I wandered around the market in a trance, ogling trays of mussels and oysters at O’Connell’s, lavish berry tortes at Heaven’s Cakes, and bins of fresh pasta at Iago. At a gourmet stand called On the Pig’s Back, Isabelle Sheridan introduced me to superb local cheeses: smooth, slightly smoked Gubbeen; creamy, sharp, semisoft Durrus; and Ardrahan, a crumbly white cheese with a citrusy tang.

To lunch at the English Market, you can go upstairs to Farmgate Café for stylish eating (terrific breakfasts, too) on a balcony lined with photos of local farmers and food artisans. Or put together your very own market lunch. I bought some provisions from On the Pig’s Back and went to Rory Gallagher Square, where a guitarist was singing a rowdy version of “Mrs. Robinson”—though I could barely hear over the deafening flavor of Isabelle’s incredible pork-and-plum terrine.

My game plan for Cork was to take day drives into the countryside, then return at night to join the city’s raucous pub crawl. This made my mornings a little dodgy, but—despite being Ireland’s largest county—Cork is just half the size of Connecticut, and the short driving distances helped. One morning I headed south, to the pretty harborside town of Kinsale, with brightly painted galleries and restaurants arrayed around a harbor where kids with fishing poles were trying their luck. I visited Fishy Fishy, a café beloved by Irish foodies, and lunched on oysters I’d seen delivered a half hour earlier. Just as fresh was a salad of cod, prawns, monkfish, and salmon, all mixed up with quartered roasted potatoes, tomato, frisée, cucumbers, and black-eyed peas. The friendly couple at the next table, regular visitors, explained to me the secret of Fishy Fishy’s success: “Do a few things, do them simply, and do them well.”

The next day I drove east, to one of Cork’s pioneering farmers’ markets in Midleton, where the sign reads, “Be a Local Hero—Buy Local Food!” There I met Darina Allen, head of the famed Ballymaloe Cookery School and a prime mover behind the farmers’ markets that have sprung up across County Cork. “People are desperate for fresh local food,” she told me. “And they want to connect their children to how it is produced.” In recent decades, Ireland has experienced a drastic culinary “de-skilling,” Darina said. To help reverse it, she teaches a number of “Forgotten Skills” courses covering everything from beekeeping to butchering to butter-making.

We drove over to the cooking school, located on a 100-acre organic farm near the Allen family estate, and strolled through the orchards and vegetable gardens. Darina stopped to show me a variety of kale, known as Hungry Gap, that tided people over between the end of winter vegetables and the coming of summer. “I feel blessed to live on a farm,” she said. “We often sit down to a meal where we have raised and grown every single thing on the table. I want to show people that they can do this, too.”

Maybe it was the splendor of Darina’s vegetable garden that led me to Cafe Paradiso in Cork that night. Chef



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE /**  
The grounds of Ballymaloe House hotel in Shanagarry; Cafe Paradiso chef-owner Denis Cotter; roasted eggplant with pine nuts and goat cheese from Chef Cotter's kitchen; the Cafe Paradiso staff has breakfast before lunch service begins.



Denis Cotter creates vegetarian food bold enough to shock even the most fanatical carnivore into a crisis of faith. My own conversion began with two superb starters—a caramelized red onion tartlet with watercress pesto, and a carrot, almond, and feta terrine in vine leaves, its colors slyly mimicking the Irish flag. Roasted eggplant came layered with kale, grilled tomato, tapenade, and goat cheese. And I couldn't resist the chive gnocchi with brandy-sautéed chanterelles. I mopped up its lemony cream sauce with chunks of fennel-and-sun-dried-tomato bread.

Again and again Cork showed me how far Irish food has come from its meat-and-potatoes roots. Yes, you can still get shepherd's pie, Irish stew, or liver and onions. But you can also sample the "trans-ethnic fusion" of celeb chef Seamus O'Connell, whose menu at Ivory Tower features such exotica as blackened shark with banana ketchup and mango salsa. Or the Irish tapas at Boqueria, where I warmed up a rainy midday with a bowl of chickpeas and black pudding. Such surprising juxtapositions highlight the ingenuity of Cork's chefs, mingling traditional foods with other cuisines and radically expanding the lexicon of Irish eating.

No place better conveys what's happening on the Irish food scene today than West Cork, home to many of the county's food artisans. Known as "the California of Ireland," West Cork is famed for the rugged beauty of its landscapes; I had trouble keeping my eyes on the road as I drove past glacial moraines and glittering bays to Gubbeen House, in the village of Schull. I was there to meet Giana Ferguson, one of Ireland's premier farmhouse cheesemakers and part of an influx of artists, writers, and world travelers who have remade themselves as food artisans in West Cork.



"People come here from Berlin, from London and France and all over," Giana told me, once we'd put on Wellingtons and were tramping around the family's 250-acre farm. Giana was born in England, grew up in Spain (her father had gone there to make a documentary about the poet and playwright Garcia Lorca), and was educated in London and Paris. Later, she married Tom Ferguson, whose family has been farming in West Cork for five generations, and wandered into cheesemaking—fascinated, she says, by fermentation and the cheesemaker's balance of science and art. Gubbeen is a family operation: Tom manages the farm, daughter Clovisse grows herbs and vegetables, son Fingal makes sausages, and Giana oversees the cheese production. She showed me the maturing rooms, where rounds of Gubbeen were being turned and washed. She held one up to my nose. "Do you smell mushroom?" she asked me. "Forest floor? I think of cheese as an extension of the world around us. Everything is in it."

Giana exemplifies West Cork's cosmopolitan farmer. Fluent in three languages, equally happy discussing French poetry or what to feed the pigs, she's a partly reformed

## THE CORK PUB CRAWL

**CORK CITY TEEMS WITH** drinking establishments that run the gamut from the pretty to the gritty. If you're looking for craft beers, visit **THE FRANCISCAN WELL BREWERY** (North Mall; 011-353-21-421-0130), a brewpub with an attractive beer garden. But the microbrew concept remains exotic in a country dominated by big-label ales and stouts. Guinness is the standard, but two Cork-based stouts provide tasty alternatives: Murphy's, maltier and sweeter, and Beamish, creamier, paler, and less bitter. There's also an elusive Beamish red ale, hard to find even in Cork bars but worth the hunt.

My Saturday night pub crawl began at **MUTTON LANE INN** (Mutton Lane, off Patrick Street), a 200-year-old grotto near the English Market with a dark, conspiratorial vibe. From there, it was on to **AN SPAILPÍN FÁNAĆ** (South Main Street), a warren of brick-walled rooms where a trio played Irish music (and I found that Beamish red). At **LONG VALLEY PUB** (10 Winthrop Street; 011-353-21-427-2144), I quaffed a Murphy's while sitting in one of the booths fashioned out of wood from a wrecked ocean liner. Later, I met up with Dave Monagan, an American living in Cork and the author of *Jaywalking with*

*the Irish*. We went off in search of some stellar pub philosophizers, and landed at the **CORK ARMS** (MacCurtain Street), raising a tumbler of Paddy Irish Whiskey with a bearded and wild-eyed Tolstoy lookalike named Ray. Ray introduced me to the pub ritual of "winding you up," a.k.a. kidding you, provoking you, and deliberately annoying you for sport. A Civil War buff, Ray inquired whether I was from a blue state or a gray. When I said I was a Connecticut Yankee, he broke into a lusty rendition of "Dixie." But my favorite pub moment in Cork came at midday. I'd made the steep, scenic climb up Patrick's Hill and

around to Military Hill and stopped to consult my map in front of a cherry-red house with window flower boxes, **SHEEHAN'S LOCAL BAR** (Military Hill). A man in a tweed suit and cap, with an enormous moustache and a dog on a leash, stood in the door. He resembled an ad put out by the Irish Tourist Board. "You're lookin' to be a bit of a lost soul," he called out. I was lost, in fact, and sweating from the climb. I checked my watch—11:50. "Am I too early to start drinking?" I asked him. "Too early?" He laughed. "You're almost too late!" And in I went.



An Irish  
breakfast at  
Ballymaloe  
House hotel.

## IN THIS STORY

### CORK CITY

#### BOQUERIA

6 Bridge Street  
011-353-21-455-9049  
boqueria.ie

#### CAFE PARADISO

16 Lancaster Quay  
011-353-21-427-7939  
cafeparadiso.ie

#### FARMGATE CAFÉ

English Market  
011-353-21-427-8134

#### HEAVEN'S CAKES

English Market  
011-353-21-422-2775

### IAGO

English Market  
011-353-21-427-7047

#### IVORY TOWER RESTAURANT

Exchange Buildings  
35 Princes Street  
011-353-21-427-4665  
seamusconnell.com

#### O'CONNELL'S

English Market  
011-353-21-427-6380

#### ON THE PIG'S BACK

English Market  
011-353-21-427-0232  
onthepigsback.ie

### COUNTY CORK

#### BALLYMALOE

#### COOKERY SCHOOL

Shanagarry  
011-353-21-464-6785  
cookingisfun.ie  
ballymaloe.ie (hotel)

#### FISHY FISHY CAFE

Pier Road, Kinsale  
011-353-21-470-0415  
fishyfishy.ie

#### GOOD THINGS CAFÉ

Ahakista Road, Durrus  
011-353-27-61426  
thegoodthingscafe.com

#### GUBBEEN

#### FARMHOUSE

Gubbeen, Schull  
011-353-28-27824  
gubbeen.com

#### GWEN'S

#### CHOCOLATES

Main Street, Schull  
011-353-28-27853  
gwenschocolates.com

#### MIDLETON

#### FARMERS' MARKET

Saturdays, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.  
Hospital Road, Middleton  
middletonfarmersmarket.com

#### SCHULL FARMERS' MARKET

Sundays, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.  
Pier Car Park, Schull



**OPPOSITE/** Pat Harmon, one of the regulars at Sheehan's Local Bar in Cork City.  
**THIS PAGE/** Cork's River Lee, which runs through the city.



radical who talks about “creating a new humanity” through the Slow Food revolution—yet her glam past includes dating Jeremy Irons. Gubbeen, meanwhile, has grown into a bustling operation whose success has helped revive local agriculture. “And all it took,” Giana told me with a sly grin, “was a little injection of the hippie imagination.”

It was market day in Schull and we headed into a cluster of stalls by a bay lined unexpectedly with palm trees. The Schull Farmers’ Market showcases West Cork’s blend of homey and chic. You’ll buy honey from a little old lady named Mrs. Love, then chat with an installation artist headed tomorrow for Ulaanbaatar. At the crowded Gubbeen stand, Giana’s son, Fingal, told me about his latest smokehouse experiment—Bloody Mary sausages that he and some friends had made on a whim. “We just threw in the ingredients!” he said with a laugh.

I spent some sweet moments with Gwendall Lasserre, a young French chocolatier selling lavender and elderflower ganaches. At another nearby stand, Frank Krawczyk of West Cork Salamis served me a slice of his Rebel County smoked beef as he railed against the government’s perceived preference for large-scale, standardized food production. “I’m using 300-year-old technology!” he shouted. “Every batch of meat I smoke is unique. If you standardize, you take that away. Because the way I feel today is not the way I felt yesterday!” It occurred to me that I had seldom heard so many people talk so articulately, passionately, and eccentrically about food as here in Ireland. And all these characters...where else will you meet a salami maker who espouses “Gandhian nonviolent assertiveness”?

“West Cork attracts eccentric genius,” says John McKenna, a food critic who, along with his wife, Sally, publishes *The Bridgestone Irish Food Guide*. “The weird and

wonderful wash up here.” The McKennas met me for a late lunch at Good Things Café, in a cottage in Durrus, not far from Schull. Good Things is the creation of Carmel Somers, a chef who “washed up” in West Cork a few years back—with all her kitchen and restaurant stuff stashed in her van, John told me, “right down to the tablecloths.” Our lunch was terrific: a thin-crust spinach pizza made with buttery Durrus cheese and seasoned with nutmeg; and kedgerree, the smoked fish and rice dish. John talked about the contribution Cork’s chefs and small food producers have made to Irish culinary life—and to the Irish psyche. “Now we can hold our heads up among the French and the Italians.”

Afterward, I had time for a drive out onto Sheep’s Head, a lonely peninsula jutting southwest into the Atlantic. My one disappointment so far had been the dismal weather. But the night before, I had prayed to St. Fridolin for relief—and now, here it came, fog melting into sunshine as I drove through a landscape of unearthly beauty, complete with grazing sheep, purple and orange wildflowers, tumbledown stone cottages, and dizzying vistas of the water far below. Here at last was that emerald world I had fantasized about, and I parked the car and sat for a long while.

A funny thing happened on the drive back to my hotel. I’d planned to stop in the town of Clonakilty, but got lost on winding back roads. Finally I came to a baffling crossroads. To the right pointed a sign, “Clonakilty 16,” and to the left, another: “Clonakilty 31.” No wonder I had gotten lost. Now I could take my pick: fast or slow.

It had been a long day; I had an early flight in the morning. But then I remembered where I was, and why. And so I took off my watch, stashed it in the glove compartment, and turned left.



**THIS PAGE/**  
Vanilla  
cupcakes from  
Ballymaloe  
Cookery School.  
**OPPOSITE/**  
Cheesemaker  
Giana Ferguson  
(and her rooster)  
at a Slow Food  
event; the  
English Market  
in Cork City.



**PINK PEPPERCORN  
PAVLOVA WITH  
STRAWBERRIES, VANILLA  
CREAM, AND BASIL SYRUP**  
MAKES 6

*In this dessert from Cafe  
Paradiso, pink peppercorns  
give the meringues a subtle  
floral flavor.*

**BASIL SYRUP**

- 1/3 cup (packed) fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup

**MERINGUES**

- 4 large egg whites, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon pink peppercorns, lightly crushed

**STRAWBERRY COULIS**

- 1 1-pint basket strawberries, hulled
- 2 tablespoons sugar

**VANILLA CREAM**

- 3/4 cup chilled whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 1 1-pint basket strawberries, hulled, quartered
- Fresh basil leaves (for garnish)

**BASIL SYRUP/** Blanch 1/3 cup basil leaves in small saucepan of boiling water 30 seconds. Drain, then transfer basil to bowl of ice water to cool. Drain; squeeze out excess water from basil. Puree basil with corn syrup in blender. Cover and chill at least 2 hours or overnight to allow flavors to develop. Bring basil syrup to room temperature, then strain through sieve into small bowl.

**MERINGUES/** Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 275°F. Firmly trace six 2 1/2-inch circles on parchment paper, then invert onto baking sheet. Using electric mixer, beat egg whites in large bowl to soft peaks. Gradually add 3/4 cup sugar, beating to medium-firm peaks. Mix remaining 1/4 cup sugar and cornstarch in small bowl. Gradually beat sugar-cornstarch mixture into meringue; continue

beating until very stiff. Beat in white wine vinegar. Fold in peppercorns. Divide meringue between circles; spread to fill completely. Bake until outside is dry, about 25 minutes. Turn oven off and open door just slightly. Let meringues cool in oven until completely dry, about 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool completely. Store in airtight container at room temperature.

**STRAWBERRY COULIS/** Puree berries and sugar in blender until smooth.

**VANILLA CREAM/** Place cream and sugar in medium bowl. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean. Using electric mixer, beat cream to soft peaks. **DO AHEAD** Coulis and vanilla cream can be made 6 hours ahead. Cover separately and refrigerate.

Place small dollop of vanilla cream in center of each of 6 plates. Spoon circle of strawberry coulis around vanilla cream. Top each with 1 meringue. Spoon generous amount of vanilla cream atop meringues. Top with quartered strawberries and fresh basil leaves. Drizzle basil syrup over and serve.

**OPEN-FACE OMELET**  
**ARNOLD BENNETT**  
2 SERVINGS

*This simple dish from Good Things Café is named after the British novelist.*

- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3/4 cup flaked smoked whitefish\* (about 3 1/2 ounces)
- 3/4 cup grated sharp white cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon whipping cream

Preheat broiler. Whisk eggs in large bowl to blend. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat 10-inch broilerproof nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add butter and let brown. Add eggs to skillet; stir with heatproof spatula until eggs are softly set but still a little runny, about 30 seconds. Sprinkle smoked whitefish and cheddar cheese over eggs, then drizzle with cream. Broil until omelet is set and golden brown at edges, about 1 minute. Slide omelet out onto platter. Cut omelet into wedges and serve.

\*/ Smoked whitefish is available at some supermarkets and specialty foods stores. /■

THE TRAVEL ISSUE

FOR **LISA  
ABEND,**  
A TRIP TO  
MOROCCO  
WAS MORE  
THAN JUST  
A VACATION.  
THANKS  
TO A SPECIAL  
CULINARY  
PROGRAM,  
IT BECAME  
A FEAST  
FOR ALL  
THE SENSES.

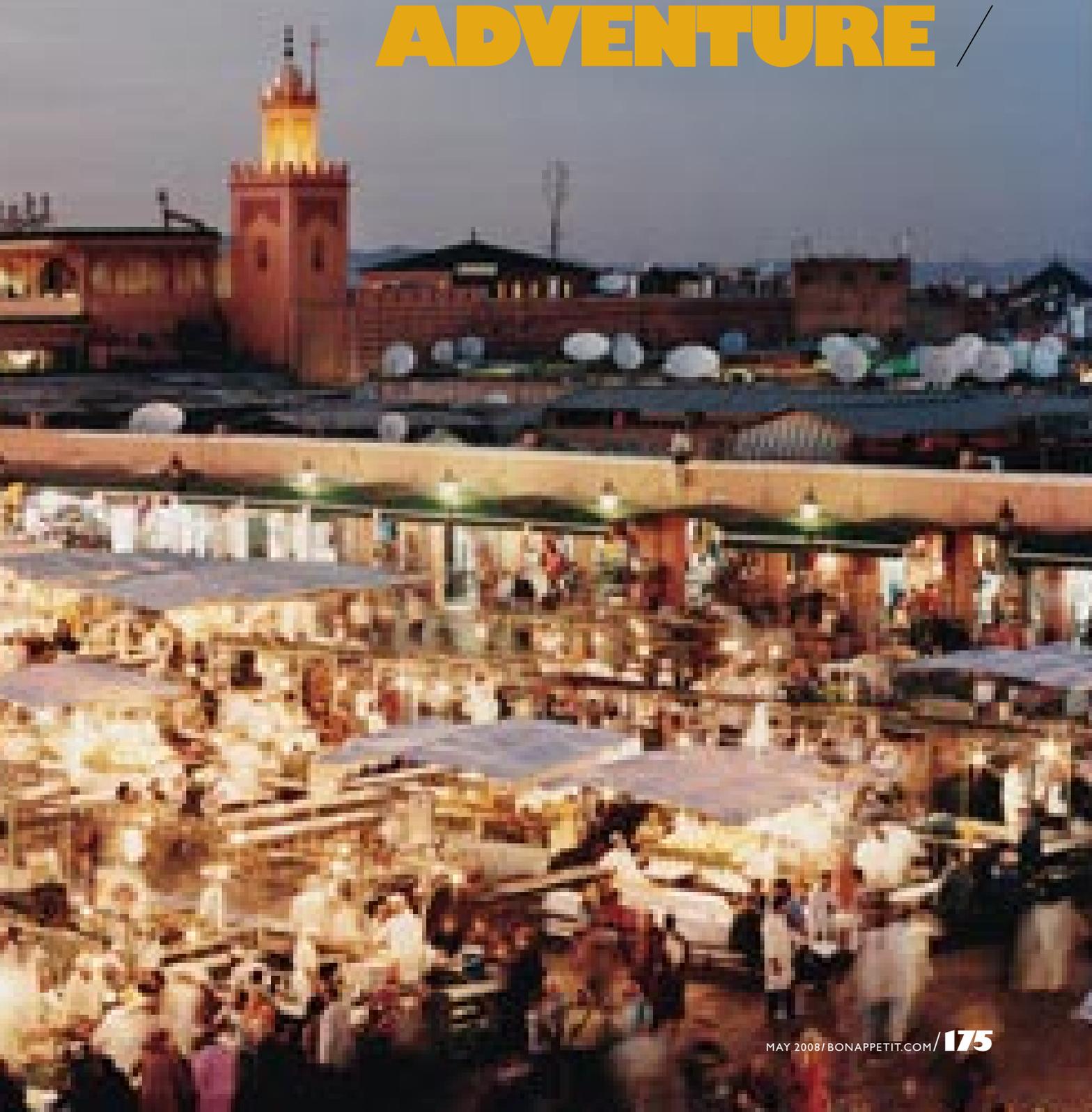
Marrakech's  
Djema el Fna,  
the main square  
in the medina, is a  
source of spices—  
and inspiration—  
for the cooking  
school at the Jnane  
Tamsna hotel.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA LIMER



# A MARRAKECH COOKING SCHOOL

## ADVENTURE /



LIKE SO MANY PLACES IN **MARRAKECH**, THE KITCHEN AT JNANE TAMSNA THREATENS TO OVERLOAD THE SENSES. I AM HERE TO LEARN TO COOK FISH *B'STILLA* AND LAMB *TAGINE* FROM BAHIJA, THE VILLA'S INFECTIOUSLY ENTHUSIASTIC CHEF. BUT BETWEEN THE SCENTS RISING FROM THE BRAZIERS WHERE OUR STEWS SIMMER (CUMIN, CINNAMON, CHARRED TOMATO)

and those floating off the garden (jasmine, mint, frangipani), I'm finding it hard to concentrate. Just before I slip into reverie, however, all action in the kitchen halts abruptly. Bahija turns to her assistant, who enters the room bearing a bowl so regally that I half expect it to be loaded with gold. But no—the bowl holds cinnamon sticks, dried peppers, star anise, fennel seeds, and far too many other spices to count. Bahija picks it up reverently. "*Ras-el-hanout*: the secret to the Moroccan kitchen," she says, then adds with a sly wink, "though it has other uses as well."

Of course it does. In Marrakech, even the spices transgress boundaries. Hot, noisy, maddening, and utterly enchanting, the city was once an important Berber trading center, and amid the acrobats turning cartwheels in the main square, the women who extend intricately hennaed hands to sell tiny eggplants as glossy as Christmas ornaments, the ceramicists and ironmongers and wool dyers and herbalists, it remains a thoroughly exotic place. Recently, as Europeans have transformed old houses into pretty boutique hotels called *riads* and opened stylish nightclubs that could compete with any in Ibiza, Marrakech has acquired a few new adjectives: hip, chic, sophisticated. But if I had to pick one descriptive for the city, it would be *sensual*. By blurring the lines between the senses, Marrakech puts all five of them on high alert.

I came to this revelation at the sink of my room at Jnane Tamsna. A collection of villas and gardens in the area known as the Palmeraie, Jnane Tamsna is the creation of Meryanne Loum-Martin, who designed every exquisite room, and her American husband, Gary Martin, an ethnobotanist who took charge of the gardens. Standing at the hammered-brass basin, I am taken with the soap: hand-



cut slices of glycerine topped with what look like dried seeds. They make for good exfoliation, and they give the soap its divine scent. Good enough to eat, in fact. I touch my tongue to it, tentatively: rosemary.

To fully understand a place that would coat its soap with edible herbs, I head out to explore the old part of the city, known as the medina, where Meryanne and Gary shop for spices. It is a cacophony of sounds, sights, and smells: the

In the kitchen at Jnane Tamsna, students learn the secrets of modern Moroccan home cooking from Bahija (right), the chef and cooking teacher at the *riad*.



sweet scent of cedar mixing with the acrid tang of tanning leather; the narrow, twisting streets hung with purple and red yarns, newly dyed and drying in the fierce sun. I start my tour with sweet orange juice—squeezed in front of me—at one of the many carts in the Djemaa el Fna—the medina’s sprawling main square. From there, I lose myself in the warren of artisan stalls, shops, and hidden courtyards that make up the medina.

Before I know it, I am welcomed—pulled, really—into Said El Bydary’s herbalist shop. Dressed in a white lab coat, he holds one jar after another under my nose. “This one is a blend for seasoning fish,” he says, “and this one”—he reaches for a container filled with black leaves—“is for sinus problems.” There is no pause between the medicinal and the culinary; to Said, they are part of the same continuum.

And then there is the *ras-el-hanout*. The word translates

**OPPOSITE/**  
At Jnane  
Tamsna, making  
lamb *tagine*  
is a hands-on  
experience.

roughly to “house blend,” and Said is certainly proud of his. “Thirty-five different herbs and spices,” he proclaims, though he’ll only name the more obvious ones. In this town, herbalists keep their recipes secret; Said learned his from his father and grandfather. “You can use this for lamb, for brochettes, for chicken,” he explains. I remember Bahija’s coy wink, and press him for other uses. “You’ve heard of Viagra? This is the Moroccan version,” he finally admits.

After the medina, I fully appreciate the hotel’s more subdued pleasures—inviting salons lined with antique photographs, swimming pools rimmed with oleander, shady nooks beneath the white bougainvillea that are perfect for napping. Meryanne, who was born in Senegal and raised in London and Paris, worked for years as a corporate lawyer before surrendering to her artistic nature. She says

she wanted to respect local traditions: “I’m inspired by cultural authenticity. My style is organic—I wanted to create a place that looked like it had always been here.”

That spirit extends to the gardens as well. “There are so many hotels and resorts in Marrakech with green lawns and geraniums everywhere,” says Gary. “Our garden is Mediterranean and respects the local ecology, which means we grow plants that can endure heat and water stress.” The fruits and vegetables grown organically on the property end up in the restaurant kitchen. As do the herbs and spices—rows of lavender and rosemary, clumps of basil and mint, and the berries from a cluster of trees adorned with what looks like rose-colored tinsel: pink peppercorns. I learn firsthand that what Gary says is true: Heat and lack of water concentrate the essential oils of the herbs, resulting in explosive flavor.



But that’s only one of the lessons at Jnane Tamsna. Bahija’s kitchen brings a host of others. We start by making *b’stilla*—the classic Moroccan savory pastry, which is usually stuffed with squab. But Bahija is no traditionalist: Our *b’stilla* is plump with fish and preserved lemon. “I like to lighten things up,” she says. She briskly distributes knives—in Bahija’s kitchen, you learn by doing—and we begin following her directions, slipping fish into a pot of broth, finely dicing red and green peppers, and carefully folding the dough that becomes the crisp, layered crust. The grammar is different, less linear than what I’m used to. At each step we seem to circle back, toasting more spices, chopping more herbs. Bahija talks about the role of food in Moroccan culture, admitting that although most women view food preparation as an inherent part of their identity, she saw herself as more chef than cook. Finally, with all the chopping, toasting, and grinding behind us, I realize: We have been building complexity, adding impossibly deep layers of flavor.

“You have to cook with a good heart, or not cook at all,” Bahija says. “You have to enter the kitchen in joy and happiness.” Of all Marrakech’s lessons, the main thing I have learned is that flavor—and the pleasure it brings—isn’t just about what you put in your mouth. In other parts of the world, spices are for seasoning, not curing sickness; soap is for cleaning, not tasting. But here, where a delightful meal is as much about the sound of water trickling into the fountain as it is about the delicious ginger chicken on your plate, the old logic disappears. I have watched camels lope across the sand from the rooftop patio of elegant Jnane Tamsna, and I have tasted soap and found that it, like Marrakech itself, holds unexpected flavor.

Madrid-based Lisa Abend last wrote for *Bon Appétit* about the restaurants *Echaurren* and *El Portal* in *La Rioja*.

## IN THIS STORY

### JNANE TAMSNA

Located in the Palmeraie area, this luxury *riad* offers guests individual cooking classes with house chef Bahija. For a more expansive culinary experience, including three classes with Bahija and ingredient-shopping tours of the medina, Peggy Markel’s Culinary Adventures offers a ten-day trip to Marrakech with accommodations at Jnane Tamsna.

Douar Abiad, Palmeraie;  
011-212-24-32-9423;

[jnanetamsna.com](http://jnanetamsna.com)

Peggy Markel’s Culinary  
Adventures; 800-988-2851;  
[peggymarkel.com](http://peggymarkel.com)

### HERBALIST LES AMIS

Herbalists are dotted throughout the medina, including this sparkling shop not far from the Djemaa el Fna. Outgoing Said El Bydary is more than happy to explain the many uses of the hundreds of fascinating concoctions on his shelves. *Souk Charratine*  
No. 2, Medina



THESE RECIPES ARE TAUGHT  
AT JNANE TAMSNA  
COOKING SCHOOL BY  
THE HOUSE CHEF, BAHIJA

## LAMB TAGINE WITH TOMATOES AND CARAMELIZED SWEET ONIONS

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 9 cups chopped sweet onions (such as Vidalia or Maui; about 3 pounds), divided
- 3 pounds boneless lamb stew meat, cut into ¾- to 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups water
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon crumbled saffron threads
- 4 cups chopped plum tomatoes (about 1½ pounds)
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley, divided
- ¼ cup olive oil

Combine 3 cups chopped onions, lamb, and 2 cups water in heavy large pot. Add cinnamon sticks, ground cinnamon, salt, pepper, ginger, and saffron; bring to boil over medium-high heat. Partially cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer gently 1½ hours. Add tomatoes and 2 tablespoons parsley. Continue to simmer, partially covered, until lamb is tender and juices thicken, about 30 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove cinnamon sticks.

Meanwhile, heat oil in heavy large skillet over high heat. Add remaining 6 cups chopped onions. Sauté until beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; sauté until onions are deep brown, stirring often, about 45 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Stew and onions can be made 1 day ahead. Cool, cover, and chill separately. Rewarm each over low heat before continuing.

Transfer lamb stew to large shallow bowl. Scatter caramelized onions and remaining 2 tablespoons parsley over.

## ROASTED PEPPER, CUCUMBER, AND TOMATO SALAD

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 1 large green bell pepper
- 3 6- to 8-ounce tomatoes, halved, seeded, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 large English hothouse cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, cut into ½-inch cubes
- ¾ cup oil-cured black olives, pitted, quartered
- ¾ cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Char pepper over gas flame or in broiler until blackened. Enclose in plastic bag 15 minutes. Peel, seed, and cut pepper into ½-inch cubes. Place in large bowl. Add tomatoes, cucumber, olives, onion, and parsley. Whisk oil and lemon juice in small bowl to blend; season with salt and pepper, then mix into vegetables. Let vegetables marinate at least 15 minutes before serving. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 hours ahead. Cover and chill.

## SPICED PEARS WITH ORANGES AND CARAMEL SAUCE

4 SERVINGS

The *ras-el-hanout* spice blend adds complexity to this dessert. For a photo, see page 217.

- 4 7- to 8-ounce Anjou pears, peeled
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons water
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground *ras-el-hanout*\*
- 4 ¼- to ½-inch-thick orange slices
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted

Using melon baller and starting from bottom, core each pear. Cut thin slice off bottom of each pear to make level.

Stir sugar and ¼ cup water in heavy large saucepan over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and boil until syrup is deep amber color, brushing down sides of pan with wet pastry brush and swirling pan occasionally, about 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat; whisk in butter, then 2 tablespoons water.

Stand pears in caramel sauce in saucepan. Sprinkle cinnamon over. Cover and cook over low heat 10 minutes. Uncover; sprinkle with *ras-el-hanout*. Cover and continue to cook until pears are tender, occasionally spooning caramel sauce over pears and shaking pan so pears don't stick, about 15 minutes. Arrange orange slices around pears; spoon caramel sauce over. Cover and simmer until orange slices soften, about 5 minutes.

Place orange slices on plates. Stand pears atop orange slices. Spoon caramel sauce over and sprinkle with almonds. Serve warm or at room temperature.

\*/ A Moroccan spice blend available at some specialty foods stores and

Middle Eastern markets, and by mail from The Spice House (312-274-0378; thespicehouse.com).

## FISH AND VEGETABLE B'STILLAS

MAKES 6

These savory pies are filled with fish instead of the traditional squab.

- 2 large garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 1 1-pound black cod fillet with skin
- 5 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 preserved lemon,\* flesh scraped out and discarded, peel chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons Hungarian sweet paprika
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 tablespoon harissa sauce\*\*
- 1 bundle rice stick noodles (*maifun*; half of 6- to 7-ounce package)\*\*\*
- 12 18x12-inch sheets phyllo pastry, thawed if frozen
- Melted butter

Add enough water to large deep skillet to reach depth of 1½ inches. Add unpeeled garlic cloves and bring water to simmer. Sprinkle fish with salt; add to skillet. Poach fish gently until just opaque in center, about 10 minutes. Transfer fish to plate; cool. Flake fish coarsely; discard skin. Peel and mince cooked garlic.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add bell peppers and sauté until beginning to soften, about 4 minutes. Add preserved lemon peel, tomato paste, paprika, ginger, cumin, black pepper, turmeric,

and minced garlic. Sauté 5 minutes to blend flavors. Remove from heat; mix in cilantro, parsley, harissa, and remaining 3 tablespoons oil. Cool mixture. Gently stir in flaked fish.

Cook rice noodles in large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Drain; rinse under cold water to chill quickly. Cut noodles into 1-inch pieces. Stir noodles into fish mixture and season filling to taste with salt.

Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Place 8-inch plate on work surface. Place 1 phyllo sheet over plate, centering plate underneath. Fold another phyllo sheet in half, brush with butter, then fold in half again and place in center of phyllo over plate. Mound 1 cup fish filling on folded phyllo; shape filling into 5-inch-diameter round. Fold 1 corner of phyllo sheet over filling. Continue to lift and fold edges of phyllo sheet over filling at 6-inch intervals, brushing each fold with melted butter and covering filling completely. Turn b'stilla onto parchment-lined baking sheet, seam side down. Brush all over with more butter.

Repeat with remaining phyllo and filling, making 6 b'stillas total. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 6 hours ahead. Refrigerate.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake b'stillas until heated and pastry is golden brown, reversing sheets after 12 minutes, 18 to 20 minutes. Transfer to platter.

\*/ Lemons that have been soaked in salt and lemon juice for several weeks; available at specialty foods stores and Middle Eastern markets, and from igourmet.com.

\*\*/ A spicy North African red chile paste; available at specialty foods stores and at Middle Eastern markets.

\*\*\*/ Available in the Asian foods section of some supermarkets and at Asian markets. / ■

**OPPOSITE/**  
A Moroccan feast on the hotel's veranda; in the cooking school, folding cinnamon-almond pastries.



FOR A SLIDE SHOW OF GREAT MEDITERRANEAN DISHES, GO TO [bonappetit.com/slideshows](http://bonappetit.com/slideshows).

THE TRAVEL ISSUE

# YUCATÁN HEAT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM SCHIERLITZ

PIBIL-STYLE PORK  
WITH PICKLED  
ONIONS AND  
HABANERO SALSA  
*recipe on page 188*



THE YUCATÁN PENINSULA HAS FABULOUS BEACHES, ANCIENT PYRAMIDS, AND A BARBECUE CULTURE THAT HAS CHANGED LITTLE SINCE THE DAYS OF THE CONQUISTADORES. PITMASTER **STEVEN RAICHLEN** TAKES US THERE AND—WITH 11 TRULY AUTHENTIC RECIPES—HELPS BRING THESE INCREDIBLE FLAVORS HOME.

# B

BACK BEFORE SKYSCRAPERS ROSE ON THE HORIZON, TURNING CANCÚN INTO A VIRTUAL LAS VEGAS OF THE TROPICS, THERE WERE THE MAYA, WHOSE ANCESTORS BUILT THE STONE PYRAMIDS THAT STILL DOT THE YUCATÁN. THERE WERE FISHERMEN, WHOSE DESCENDANTS STILL SAIL FROM CAMPECHE. BUT MOST OF ALL, THERE WAS BARBECUE—DISHES WITH EXOTIC NAMES LIKE TIKINXIC AND COCHINITA PIBIL.

The Yucatán Peninsula juts like a blunt thumb into the Gulf of Mexico. Three Mexican states call it home: the Yucatán proper in the north, with its capital, Mérida; Campeche on the west coast, with the colorful colonial houses in its eponymous capital; and the east coast state of Quintana Roo, host to the booming resorts of Cancún and Cozumel. Despite its popularity, the Yucatán retains a fierce pride in its indigenous traditions, especially its barbecue.

When I arrive in the Campeche town of Hecelchakán, night has fallen. I'm standing amid low mounds of dirt on the outskirts of town. "You're standing on your dinner," quips my host, who has the tongue-twisting name of José Antonio Callan Mut y Mirna Couoh Poot. Callan is the owner of the popular Taquería y Refquería del Amigo Callan and is the go-to guy for the most famous barbecue on the peninsula, *cochinita pibil*.

Curiously, some of the Yucatán's best barbecue comes not off the grill, but from an underground pit. For just as we make a distinction between the high-heat method called "grilling" and the low, indirect method known as "barbecue," Yucatecans differentiate foods cooked on the *parrilla* (grill) and in the *pib* (a subterranean barbecue pit).

Earlier this evening, Callan combined achiote, allspice, nutmeg, cloves, oregano, and garlic to make a pungent, salty *recado rojo*. He poured these ingredients over 40 pounds of fresh ham, ribs, and pork shoulder, piled in a large rectangular metal box. Meanwhile, Callan's acolytes built a blazing fire, and as the wood burned to embers, they placed a dozen or so round stones on the coals to heat. On top went the box with the pork. Then someone grabbed a shovel and buried the *cochinita* under six inches of loose dirt.

The fragrant steam that emerges when the *pib* is opened bowls me over. Using a technique that would be familiar to any pitmaster in North Carolina, Callan hand-pulls some shreds of meat and piles them on a soft, chewy "baguette." A spoonful of crisp red onion and sour orange relish goes on top. It's the Yucatecan version of a Carolina pulled-pork sandwich, and for less than \$2, you could eat yourself silly.

Almost every Yucatán restaurant offers some manner of grilling—whether off a professional grill, a steel drum, or a jerry-rigged grill fashioned from an old wheel rim. But what unites them are two distinct local ingredients: achiote and *naranja agria*. The former is a rust-colored seed—the primary ingredient in *recado rojo*, the omnipresent marinade. The latter is the sour orange, whose acerbic juice combines the acidity of a lime with the fruity perfume of an orange.

Which brings me to *tikinxic*. This ancient Mayan dish (pronounced "tee-keen-SHEEK") turns up at beach shacks, stylish restaurants, and everywhere in between. The original recipe likely resembles one prepared by Sigifredo Chale Velazquez at the laid-back Casa Tikinxic on Isla Mujeres.

Velazquez paints a fillet of amberjack with *recado rojo*. He pinions it in a fish basket, slaps it over a blazing fire, and to keep the fish from drying out, squirts it with a mix of water and oil from a plastic squeeze bottle. He serves the *tikinxic* with tortillas and a tongue-blistering salsa made with the Yucatán's habanero chile.

Elsewhere in the Yucatán, the fish might be mackerel, loosely wrapped in banana leaves before grilling. The leaves do double duty by imparting a haunting herbal flavor and keeping the fish moist.

Mérida is the cultural heart of the peninsula—and the home of another grilled specialty, *tacos al pastor* (shepherd-style tacos). Mexicans debate its origins—many people associate these distinctive tacos with Puebla—but either way, the unlikely marriage of Mexican and Middle Eastern grilling found a ready home in Mérida.

The inspiration for vertical spit-roasting came from Middle Eastern *shawarma*—brought to Mexico by Lebanese merchants. The locals adopted the dish, substituting their preferred meat—pork—and seasoning it with cinnamon, cloves, and guajillo chiles. Then someone had the genial idea to sandwich the pork between slices of onion and fresh pineapple, and one of the greatest examples of fusion cuisine—crispy bits of spice-scented pork and crunchy sweet pineapple piled on a corn tortilla—was born.

Most people come to the Yucatán for the sun, sea, and sand. Me? You'll probably find me hovering over a grill or a *pib*, impatiently awaiting the next bite.



GRILLED FISH  
TACOS WITH  
SALSA VERDE  
*recipes on  
page 191*





CARNE ASADA  
WITH SALSA  
MEXICANA

## CARNE ASADA

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

*Arrachera* (skirt steak) is one of the most popular grilled meats in the Yucatán—served sizzling hot off the steel-drum grills of street vendors and at restaurants like La Parrilla in Cancún.

- 8 poblano chiles
- 2 bunches green onions (about 12), dark green tops trimmed
- 2 pounds skirt steak, cut crosswise into 6-inch-wide pieces
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- Coarse kosher salt
- Corn or flour tortillas
- 2 avocados, peeled, pitted, sliced
- Lime wedges
- Salsa Mexicana (see recipe)

Prepare barbecue (high heat). Grill chiles and onions until charred all over, about 3 minutes for onions and 5 minutes for chiles. Transfer chiles to large bowl; cover with plastic and let stand 15 minutes. Peel and seed; cut into 1-inch-wide strips. Transfer to plate; tent with foil.

Rub steak with garlic; sprinkle with coarse salt and pepper. Grill until cooked to desired doneness, about 3 minutes per side for medium. Transfer to work surface; cool 5 minutes. Grill tortillas until warm and slightly charred, about 10 seconds per side. Cut steak crosswise into strips; transfer to plate.

Serve steak with tortillas, chiles, green onions, avocado slices, lime wedges, and Salsa Mexicana.

## SALSA MEXICANA

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 12 ounces tomatoes (about 2 medium), cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 1 medium white onion (about 7 ounces), cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 2 to 8 serrano or jalapeño chiles, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- Coarse kosher salt

Combine first 5 ingredients in medium bowl. Season to taste with coarse salt.

**DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

## YUCATECAN-STYLE GRILLED MAHI-MAHI

4 SERVINGS

*Tikinxic*—Yucatán's ubiquitous grilled fish—gets a double wallop of flavor: first from a *recado rojo* (fire-red achiote marinade), then from a wrapping of banana leaves, which help keep the fish moist, prevent it from sticking to the grill, and add their own unique taste.

- 4 6- to 8-ounce mahi-mahi fillets
- ¼ cup achiote paste
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- ½ teaspoon coarse kosher salt or sea salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 3-foot-long pieces of banana leaves
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 4 bay leaves
- 4 fresh epazote or Italian parsley sprigs or 4 pinches of dried epazote

- 2 plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 2 limes, thinly sliced
- Yucatecan Pickled Onions (see recipe)
- Habanero-Tomato Salsa (see recipe)

Place fish in 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Whisk achiote paste and next 7 ingredients in medium bowl. Pour achiote mixture over fish; turn to coat. Cover and chill 1 hour.

Prepare barbecue (high heat). Brush shiny side of banana leaves with 2 tablespoons oil; place each on baking sheet, oiled side down (some of leaf will hang over edge of sheet). Arrange 2 fillets with marinade still clinging crosswise in center of each banana leaf, spacing 2 inches apart. Drizzle wine around fish in leaves. Top each fillet with 1 bay leaf and 1 sprig of fresh epazote or parsley or 1 pinch of dried epazote. Fold overhanging edges of banana leaf over fish to enclose loosely. Transfer fish from baking sheet to grill, folded edges up. Cover and grill until fillets are just opaque in center, about 10 minutes.

Open banana leaves. Transfer fish to

plates. Garnish with tomato and lime slices. Serve with Yucatecan Pickled Onions and Habanero-Tomato Salsa.

## YUCATECAN PICKLED ONIONS

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 6 cups water
- 1 large red onion, cut crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices, rings separated
- 2 garlic cloves, quartered
- 1 tablespoon coarse kosher salt
- ½ cup distilled white vinegar
- 3 whole allspice
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin

Combine 6 cups water, onion, garlic, and 1 tablespoon coarse salt in heavy medium saucepan. Bring to boil, then boil 1 minute. Drain. Return onions and garlic to same saucepan. Add vinegar and all remaining ingredients. Add

enough water to saucepan just to cover onions. Bring to boil over medium heat. Remove from heat, cover, and cool.

Transfer onion mixture to bowl, cover, and chill overnight. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 week ahead. Keep chilled.

Drain onions and serve.

## HABANERO-TOMATO SALSA

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

Wear gloves when working with super-hot chiles like habaneros.

- 3 large tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 2 cups finely chopped white onion
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 6 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 6 habanero chiles or 8 serrano chiles, seeded, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Mix all ingredients in large bowl. Season to taste with salt. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.



GRILLED MAHI-MAHI WITH PICKLED ONIONS AND HABANERO SALSA

## PIBIL-STYLE PORK

10 TO 12 SERVINGS

Tradition calls for achiote-scented *cochinita pibil* to be roasted underground in a pit called a *pib*. Indirect grilling produces a terrific *pibil*, and because Yucatecans don't prize the flavor of wood smoke for this dish, a gas grill is ideal. The meat needs to marinate four hours.

- 1 medium onion, quartered through core
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup achiote paste
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- 1 4½- to 5-pound bone-in pork shoulder roast (Boston butt)
- 1 13x9x2-inch disposable aluminum pan
- Corn tortillas
- Yucatecan Pickled Onions (see recipe on page 187)
- Habanero-Tomato Salsa (see recipe on page 187)

Heat medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic to dry skillet and cook until browned in spots on all sides, turning occasionally, about 8 minutes for onion and 4 minutes for garlic. Core and coarsely chop onion. Transfer onion and garlic to blender. Add orange juice and next 7 ingredients to blender; puree until smooth. Transfer to large resealable plastic bag; add pork. Seal bag, releasing excess air; turn to coat. Chill at least 4 hours and up to 1 day, turning occasionally.

For charcoal grill, light 30 briquettes in chimney starter; heat until ash-gray. Remove top rack from grill and place 1 disposable aluminum pan on 1 side of grill. Pour briquettes onto opposite side of grill. Return rack to grill.

For 2-burner gas grill, remove rack and place 1 disposable aluminum pan on 1 side of grill. Return rack; light grill (medium heat) on side opposite pan.

For 3-burner gas grill, remove rack and place 1 disposable aluminum pan in center of barbecue. Return rack and light grill on both sides of pan (not under pan).

For all grills, brush rack with oil. Place pork with some marinade still clinging on rack above pan. Close lid; insert thermometer into hole in lid. Cook pork until instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 195°F, about 3½ hours, maintaining grill's internal temperature at around 350°F by opening and closing vents, adjusting gas grill's burners, or adding more hot briquettes from chimney starter to charcoal grill.

Transfer pork to cutting board and let rest 10 minutes. Pull out and discard bone and any large lumps of fat. Using 2 forks or large knife, shred the pork; transfer to platter. Drizzle with a few spoonfuls of drippings from aluminum pan in barbecue, if desired.

Grill tortillas until slightly charred, about 10 seconds per side. Serve pork with tortillas, Yucatecan Pickled Onions, and Habanero-Tomato Salsa.

## ACHIOTE-GRILLED TURKEY BREAST WITH TOMATOES, CHILES, AND MINT

8 SERVINGS

Turkey is native to Mexico; it was a staple in the Mayan diet. I first sampled *pavo en sac kol* at Los Almendros in Mérida. This recipe was inspired by Rick Bayless.

- 3 tablespoons achiote paste, divided
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 4½- to 5-pound whole turkey breast
- ¼ cup (scant) loosely packed stemmed dried chiles de árbol or chiles japones (about 12 to 16 chiles)
- 3 cups low-salt chicken broth, divided
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1½ pounds tomatoes
- 1 medium onion, quartered through core end
- 8 mint leaves, coarsely chopped, plus sprigs for garnish
- 3 tablespoons masa (corn tortilla mix) Coarse kosher salt

Whisk 1½ tablespoons achiote paste, 1 tablespoon oil, and 1 tablespoon water in small bowl. Place turkey in 13x9x2-inch dish. Rub achiote mixture all over turkey. Cover and chill at least 4 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled.

Place chiles in small bowl. Add enough hot water to cover by 1 inch. Let soak 30 minutes. Drain; discard soaking liquid. Place chiles in blender with remaining 1½ tablespoons achiote paste and ¼ cup chicken broth. Puree. Strain, discarding solids in strainer. **DO AHEAD** Chile broth can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; chill.

For charcoal grill, light 30 briquettes in chimney starter; heat until ash-gray. Remove top rack from grill and place 1 disposable aluminum pan on 1 side of grill. Pour briquettes onto side of grill opposite pan. Return rack to grill.

For 2-burner gas grill, remove rack; place 1 disposable aluminum pan on 1 side of grill. Return rack and light grill (medium heat) on side opposite pan.

For 3-burner gas grill, remove rack and place 1 disposable aluminum pan in center of barbecue. Return rack and light grill on both sides of pan (not under pan).

For all grills, thread garlic on skewer. Place garlic, tomatoes, and onion on grill and cook until brown in spots on all sides, about 2 minutes for garlic and 4 minutes for onion and tomatoes. Transfer to work surface. Peel and core tomatoes. Coarsely chop garlic and onion.

Place turkey on rack above pan. Close lid; insert thermometer into hole in lid. Cook turkey until instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of breast registers 160°F, about 1 hour 15 minutes, maintaining grill's internal temperature at around 350°F by opening and closing vents, adjusting gas grill's burners, or adding more hot briquettes to charcoal grill. Transfer turkey to work surface; let rest 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add garlic and onion; sauté until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add chile broth, chopped mint, and 2½ cups chicken broth. Add tomatoes 1 at a time, squeezing into pot to crush. Bring to boil; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer with lid slightly ajar for 30 minutes.

Whisk remaining ¼ cup chicken broth and masa in small bowl. Whisk 2 tablespoons masa mixture into sauce; stir until sauce thickens, about 5 minutes, adding more masa mixture if sauce is too thin. Season with coarse salt.

Cut turkey ¼ inch thick. Drizzle some of sauce over, garnish with mint sprigs, and serve, passing more sauce alongside.



## IN THIS STORY

**CASA TIKINXIC**  
Located on Playa Lancheros, Isla Mujeres (no phone; no address)

**LA PARRILLA CANCÚN**  
Avenida Yaxchilán, No. 51, Centro Cancún, Quintana Roo  
011-52-998-287-8119  
laparrilla.com.mx

**LOS ALMENDROS**  
Calle 50, No. 493, Mérida  
011-52-999-928-5459

**TAQUERÍA Y REFOQUERÍA DEL AMIGO CALLAN**  
In front of the cathedral in the town square of Hecelchakán (no phone; no address)

ACHIOTE-GRILLED TURKEY BREAST WITH TOMATOES, CHILES, AND MINT

# TACOS AL PASTOR

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

These pineapple and pork tacos are the original fusion food—a cross between Middle Eastern *shawarma* and the guajillo-rubbed grilled pork served by Mexican street vendors. The pork needs to marinate four hours.

- 1 large white onion, halved
- 1 pineapple, peeled, cut crosswise into ½-inch-thick rounds
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- ¼ cup distilled white vinegar
- ¼ cup guajillo chile powder
- 3 garlic cloves, halved
- 2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 large or 2 small chipotle chiles and 1 to 2 teaspoons adobo from canned chipotle chiles in adobo
- 1 2½- to 3-pound boneless pork loin, cut into ½-inch slices
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Corn tortillas
- Smoky Two-Chile Salsa (see recipe)
- Lime wedges

Coarsely chop 1 onion half. Coarsely chop 2 pineapple rounds, discarding core; cover and chill remaining pineapple. Place chopped onion and chopped pineapple in blender. Add orange juice and next 7 ingredients; puree marinade until smooth. Place pork in large resealable plastic bag. Add marinade and seal bag, releasing excess air. Turn to coat. Chill at least 4 hours and up to 1 day.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Grill remaining pineapple until warm and slightly charred, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Grill pork with some marinade still clinging until slightly charred and cooked through, 2 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer pineapple and pork to work surface; chop pineapple into ½-inch cubes, discarding cores. Chop pork. Transfer to platter; toss to combine.

Meanwhile, finely chop remaining onion half and place in medium bowl. Add cilantro; toss to combine. Grill tortillas until warm and slightly charred, about 10 seconds per side.

Serve pork-pineapple mixture with onion-cilantro relish, Smoky Two-Chile Salsa, and lime wedges.

**TEST-KITCHEN TIP** To make your own guajillo chile powder, finely grind about 6 large dried seeded guajillo chiles in a spice mill to yield about ¼ cup powder.

## SMOKY TWO-CHILE SALSA

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

Wear gloves when working with chiles.

- 8 large dried guajillo chiles or New Mexico chiles, stemmed, seeded, coarsely torn
- 2 cups hot water
- ½ medium onion, halved lengthwise through core end
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 to 2 chipotle chiles and 1 to 2 teaspoons adobo from canned chipotles in adobo
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- Coarse kosher salt

Place torn chiles in bowl. Add 2 cups hot water; soak at least 2 hours or overnight. Drain chiles, reserving soaking liquid.

Heat small nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic to dry skillet; cook until browned in spots,



TACOS AL PASTOR WITH SMOKY TWO-CHILE SALSA

# MEXICAN BBQ BASICS

**YUCATÁN GRILLING** is simple, but you need to know about a few special ingredients. All are available at Latin markets; many can be found at your local supermarket or specialty foods shop. You can also purchase many of the ingredients online at [mexgrocer.com](http://mexgrocer.com).

**ACHIOTE (A.K.A. ANNATTO SEEDS):**

These brick-colored seeds of a tropical shrub are rock hard. While it's possible to grind them in a spice grinder or soak them to soften, most Mexicans buy this ingredient in the form of

a rust-colored brick of achiote paste that's seasoned with oregano, cumin, and other spices.

**BANANA LEAVES:**

They give a bit of added flavor when used for wrapping *tikinixic*. In a pinch, you can use aluminum foil instead.

**CHILES:**

Dried, fresh, and powdered chiles are a big part of Mexican cuisine. Individual fresh chiles of the same variety can vary in heat. For this reason, you should check the spiciness of the ones you have by tasting a small piece before adding them to any recipe.

**CHIPOTLE CHILES IN ADOBO:** Dried, smoked jalapeños canned in a spicy tomato sauce.

**EPAZOTE:** A wild herb with pungent flavor reminiscent of cilantro. It's sold both fresh and dried.

**MASA:** This term, which literally means "dough," commonly refers to dried corn kernels cooked in lime water and then ground. *Masa* (also called *masa harina*) is used for making tortillas and tamales. It can also thicken soups, stews, and sauces.

**MEXICAN OREGANO:** It's like regular dried oregano only slightly sweeter and stronger.

**NARANJA AGRIA:** A citrus fruit with a greenish orange rind and sour juice with just a whiff of orange flavor. In these recipes, equal parts orange and lemon or lime juice are substituted for the sour orange juice.

**TOMATILLOS:** These small, round, green fruits have an almost citrusy flavor. They're more closely related to cape gooseberries than tomatoes (hence their papery husks).

about 6 minutes for garlic and 10 minutes for onion. Trim core from onion. Place onion and garlic in blender. Add drained chiles, 1 cup soaking liquid, 1 chipotle chile, 1 teaspoon adobo, cilantro, and lime juice; puree until smooth. Add remaining chipotle and 1 teaspoon adobo, if desired; puree. Transfer to bowl. Season to taste with coarse salt.

**DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 week ahead. Cover and chill.

- 2 avocados, peeled, pitted, sliced
- ½ small head of cabbage, cored, thinly sliced
- Salsa Verde (see recipe)
- Lime wedges

Stir 1 cup onion, ¼ cup cilantro, oil, 3 tablespoons lime juice, orange juice, garlic, and oregano in medium bowl. Sprinkle fish with coarse salt and pepper. Spread half of onion mixture over bottom of 11x7x2-inch glass baking dish. Arrange fish atop onion mixture. Spoon remaining onion mixture over fish. Cover and chill 30 minutes. Turn fish; cover and chill 30 minutes longer. Whisk mayonnaise, milk, and remaining 2 tablespoons lime juice in small bowl.

Brush grill grate with oil; prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Grill fish with some marinade still clinging until just opaque in center, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Grill tortillas until slightly charred, about 10 seconds per side.

Coarsely chop fish; place on platter. Serve with lime mayonnaise, tortillas, remaining 1 cup chopped onion, remaining ½ cup cilantro, avocados, cabbage, Salsa Verde, and lime wedges.

- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon (or more) sugar
- Coarse kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup low-salt chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons (or more) fresh lime juice

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Thread garlic onto skewer. Grill garlic, tomatillos, onion quarters, and chiles until dark brown spots form on all sides, about 9 minutes for onion, 6 minutes for tomatillos and chiles, and 4 minutes for garlic. Cool. Peel garlic. Trim core from onion. Scrape some of burnt skin off chiles; stem. Seed chiles for milder salsa, if desired. Coarsely chop onion, chiles, and garlic. Transfer tomatillos and all vegetables to blender. Add cilantro and ½ teaspoon sugar; puree until smooth. Season to taste with coarse salt.

Heat oil in heavy large saucepan over high heat. Carefully add tomatillo mixture (juices may splatter). Stir until slightly thickened, stirring often, about 2 minutes. Add broth and 2 tablespoons lime juice. Bring to boil; reduce heat to medium and simmer until mixture measures 2½ cups, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and more sugar and lime juice, if desired. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool slightly, then cover and chill. / ■

## GRILLED FISH TACOS

4 SERVINGS

These tacos don't come from a particular town or restaurant; rather, they incorporate elements from many different Yucatán grill masters. The preparation may look complicated, but it's actually pretty easy—because your guests assemble the tacos themselves.

- 2 cups chopped white onion, divided
- ¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro, divided
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 5 tablespoons fresh lime juice, divided
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- 1 pound tilapia, striped bass, or sturgeon fillets
- Coarse kosher salt
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon milk
- Corn tortillas

## SALSA VERDE

MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS

- 3 unpeeled garlic cloves
- 1 pound fresh tomatillos, husked, rinsed
- 1 small onion, quartered through root end
- 3 to 6 serrano chiles or 2 to 4 jalapeño chiles

Barbecue how-to guru Steven Raichlen is currently at work on a book about global grilling called *Planet Barbecue*.



# THE ITALIAN

TODAY'S MISSION:  
COOKING A FABULOUS  
DINNER FOR FRIENDS  
AT A PALAZZO-WITH-  
A-VIEW IN UMBRIA

ENTERTAINING WITH STYLE

# JOB /





Alex Palermo gears up for his dinner party: Prosciutto? Check. Fresh herbs? Check. Vespa? Check.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CEDRIC ANGELES  
TEXT BY NINA ELDER  
PRODUCED BY KARIN FITTANTE



# W

WHEN WE CAUGHT UP WITH ALEX PALERMO, HE WAS HAVING HIS PICTURE TAKEN WITH THE MOUNTED HEAD OF A WILD BOAR. / WE'D TRACKED DOWN THE LOS ANGELES-BASED RESTAURATEUR OUTSIDE A BUTCHER SHOP IN ORVIETO, A BEAUTIFUL TOWN IN SOUTHWESTERN **UMBRIA**. ALTHOUGH ALEX WAS MUGGING WITH ORVIETO'S MOST FAMOUS MEAT, HE WAS AT THE BUTCHER

**WHO**  
ALEX  
PALERMO

**OCCUPATION**

Owner of Cube restaurant in Los Angeles and four food companies: Divine Pasta Co., Pizza Romana, Cube Artisan Foods, and Sazón Latino

**PARTY PHILOSOPHY**

"Friends and family are everything to me. Lots of people see entertaining as a burden. They'd rather go out to a restaurant. That's fine, but at a dinner party at home you can relax and be yourself."

to pick up a couple of chickens to roast for a dinner party at his family's home that evening.

About every six weeks, Alex and his staff travel to Italy to keep up with the food scene and to source products for Cube, his Italian café and marketplace in L.A. The group often starts in Rome and ends up in smaller places, like Orvieto. "Rome is a great city, but my passion and love for everything Italian is rooted in the small towns," says Alex. "You can find truly artisanal ingredients. It's little farms



**OPPOSITE/**  
Before dinner,  
Alex mingles  
with guests  
outside the  
palazzo.  
**THIS PAGE/**  
Alex puts  
the finishing  
touches on the  
fava bean and  
sausage pasta  
sauce (recipe  
on page 200).



## MENU FOR 8

### STARTERS

Cheese and *salumi* platter

Pizza Bianca with Rosemary and Sea Salt

### FIRST COURSE

Fresh Pasta with Favas, Tomatoes, and Sausage

### MAIN & SIDES

Pancetta Roast Chicken with Walnut Stuffing

Peas with Onions and Guanciale

Truffled Potato Puree with Mascarpone

### DESSERT

Dark Chocolate and Pine Nut Crostata

### DRINKS

Grechetto

Sangiovese blend

Recipes begin on page 200.

and incredibly fresh products. It's not the same in large cities."

But let's get back to today's party preparations. Alex started his morning at the farmers' market, where he picked up fennel, potatoes, tomatoes, fava beans, herbs, and some peas. Next stop, the butcher. Because it's a small shop, Alex had called a few days in advance to make sure there would be chickens on hand. "It's not like shopping at an American supermarket," he says. "They don't have everything all the time." On the way back home, he bought cheese and *salumi*.

Now that the shopping expedition is over, Alex enlists the help of Cube executive chef Erin Eastland

and buyer Rachael Sheridan. "I have no problem with people in my kitchen," he says. "Everyone is welcome."

As the dishes come together, Erin, Rachael, and Alex take them upstairs to the rooftop terrace, where Alex

had set up a table earlier in the day. Eating outside would let guests enjoy the beautiful weather—and the gorgeous setting. From the terrace, there's an incredible view of the ornate facade of the *duomo* (cathedral) just across the street.

By the time guests arrive, Alex, Erin, and Rachael have most of the dishes ready and waiting upstairs. In classic Italian fashion, the meal starts with cheese and *salumi* (paired with grilled *pizza bianca*), followed by fresh pasta, then the main course (that delicious roast chicken) and sides. And if all goes well, dessert will be followed by yet another course. "I love parties where everyone lingers over dinner so long that they get hungry again," says Alex. "Then I get up, boil some water, and make more pasta."





**OPPOSITE/**  
To start the meal, Alex sets out a platter of local meats and cheeses. While out shopping, he picked up some fresh peas and cipolline onions (recipe on page 201) to go with the roast chicken.

**THIS PAGE/**  
Dinner is served on the palazzo's rooftop terrace, which has a stunning view of the cathedral across the street.



**OPPOSITE/**  
Fresh Pasta  
with Favas,  
Tomatoes,  
and Sausage  
(recipe on  
page 200)

**THIS PAGE/**  
Orvieto is  
situated on a  
3,300-foot cliff,  
which provides  
expansive  
views of the  
countryside.





**LEFT/** Alex's brother-in-law Mauro Parretti brings the roast chicken to the table. **RIGHT/** Dark Chocolate and Pine Nut Crostata



## PIZZA BIANCA WITH ROSEMARY AND SEA SALT

8 SERVINGS

*Pizza bianca* (white pizza) is a Roman dish that's more like seasoned flatbread than your typical pizza. It's great with the *salumi* and cheese.

$\frac{1}{2}$  pounds fresh pizza dough or two 10-ounce purchased fully baked thin pizza crusts (such as Boboli)

Extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary, divided

Sea salt

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Divide dough in half. Stretch and roll each piece to 10-inch round. Brush 1 side of each dough round or baked crust with oil, then sprinkle each with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon rosemary, sea salt, and pepper. Place on grill, seasoned side down. Brush tops with oil, then sprinkle each with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon rosemary, sea salt, and

pepper. Grill until just golden, about 4 minutes per side for fresh dough and 2 minutes per side for baked crusts.

Cut pizzas into wedges and serve.

**WHAT TO DRINK/** When he's in Orvieto, Alex stops by his friend Enzo Fausto's vineyard and picks up wines for dinner. For those of us not in Orvieto, Alex suggests the Arnaldo-Caprai 2006 "Grecante," Grechetto dei Colli Martani (\$20). This Umbrian white is delicious with the starters and can be poured throughout the meal.

## FRESH PASTA WITH FAVAS, TOMATOES, AND SAUSAGE

8 SERVINGS

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup finely chopped onion

2 large garlic cloves, coarsely chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried crushed red pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$  pound Italian sausages, casings removed

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry white wine

$\frac{1}{4}$  cups chopped plum tomatoes

1 cup shelled fresh fava beans (from about 1 pound), blanched 3 minutes then peeled, or double-peeled frozen, thawed

$\frac{3}{4}$  pound fresh pasta sheets, cut as desired, or dried egg fettuccine

2 tablespoons finely grated Pecorino Romano cheese plus additional for passing

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add next 3 ingredients. Sauté until onion is translucent, about 6 minutes. Add sausages; break up with fork. Sauté until brown, about 3 minutes. Add wine; simmer 1 minute, scraping up browned bits. Add tomatoes and fava beans. Sauté until tomatoes soften, about 5 minutes. Season sauce with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite. Drain, reserving  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pasta cooking liquid. Return pasta to same pot.

Add sauce to pasta. Toss over medium heat until sauce coats pasta, adding

reserved cooking liquid as needed if dry, about 2 minutes. Mix in 2 tablespoons cheese. Transfer pasta to bowl. Serve, passing additional cheese.

**MORE INFO/**In this dish, Alex uses *maltagliati* (badly cut) pasta. To make it, cut fresh pasta sheets into trapezoids. Don't worry about making each piece exactly the same size or shape. The pasta should have an irregular look.

## PANCETTA ROAST CHICKEN WITH WALNUT STUFFING

8 SERVINGS

Topping the chicken with pancetta slices before roasting adds a rich flavor.

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter, divided
- Chopped hearts, livers, and gizzards reserved from chickens (optional)
- 1 cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup small cubes peeled carrot
- 2 large fresh sage leaves, minced
- 1 large garlic clove, halved
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 1 cup small cubes crustless country bread
- ½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1 large egg, beaten to blend
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 4-pound chickens, rinsed, patted dry
- 12 thin pancetta slices
- 3 large fresh fennel bulbs, trimmed, each cut into 6 wedges

Preheat oven to 400°F. Melt ¼ cup butter in large skillet over medium heat. Add giblets (if using), onion, carrot, sage, and garlic. Sauté until carrot is tender, about 10 minutes. Add wine; simmer until evaporated, scraping up browned bits. Remove from heat. Mix in bread, walnuts, egg, Parmesan, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper.

Spoon stuffing into cavities of chickens; skewer cavities closed. Rub each chicken with 2 tablespoons butter; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Arrange in roasting pan. Lay 6 pancetta slices atop each to cover. Surround with fennel.

Roast chickens and fennel 45 minutes. Turn fennel over. Roast until chickens are golden and thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 165°F, basting with pan juices, about

30 minutes. Transfer chickens and fennel to platter. Let rest 10 minutes.

Tilt roasting pan; spoon fat from pan juices. Serve chickens with pan juices.

**INGREDIENT TIP/**Pancetta (Italian bacon) is sold in the deli case of many supermarkets and at Italian markets.

**WHAT TO DRINK/**If you'd like to add a bottle of red to the party, Alex recommends the Scacciadiavoli 2003 Rosso di Montefalco (\$15). The Sangiovese blend is made in Umbria, and its ripe flavors pair nicely with the rich ingredients (pancetta, *guanciale*, truffles, mascarpone) in this menu.

## PEAS WITH ONIONS AND GUANCIALE

8 SERVINGS

- 1 pound cipolline onions or pearl onions
- ½ pound ½- to ¾-inch-thick guanciale or pancetta slices, diced
- 2 pounds shelled fresh peas, blanched 5 minutes, or frozen peas, thawed

Blanch onions in large saucepan of boiling salted water 5 minutes. Drain, cool, and peel onions.

Sauté onions and guanciale in large skillet over medium heat until fat is rendered, guanciale is golden, and onions are brown in spots, about 10 minutes. Add peas; heat through. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl.

**INGREDIENT TIP/***Guanciale* (salt-cured pork jowl and cheek) is available at Italian markets and from salumeriabiellese.com.

## TRUFFLED POTATO PUREE WITH MASCARPONE

8 SERVINGS

- 3½ pounds medium Yukon Gold potatoes
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese
- Whole milk
- 2 teaspoons black truffle sauce or truffle oil

Cook potatoes in pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 25 minutes. Drain, cool slightly, and peel potatoes. Return warm potatoes to same pot. Add butter and mascarpone cheese;

mash until smooth. Mix in enough milk to thin to desired consistency. Mix in truffle sauce; season with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl.

**INGREDIENT TIPS/**Mascarpone cheese is sold at many supermarkets and at Italian markets. Black truffle sauce is available at specialty foods stores and from cubemarketplace.com.

## DARK CHOCOLATE AND PINE NUT CROSTATA

8 SERVINGS

### CRUST

- 1½ cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, diced, room temperature
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 large egg

### FILLING

- 10 ounces bittersweet (70% cocoa) chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted
- Lightly sweetened whipped cream

**CRUST/** Blend flour, powdered sugar, and salt in processor 5 seconds. Add butter, yolks, and egg. Blend until moist clumps form. Knead dough into ball and flatten into disk. Wrap and chill at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day.

Roll out dough on lightly floured surface to 14-inch round. Transfer to 10-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom. Cut off all but ½-inch overhang. Fold overhang in, pressing to form double-thick sides that extend ¼ inch above rim. Chill crust 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake crust 5 minutes. Using back of fork, press up sides of crust if slipping. Bake until golden, pressing up sides and piercing with fork if crust bubbles, about 25 minutes longer. Cool crust completely.

**FILLING/** Place chocolate in medium bowl. Bring cream to simmer in saucepan. Pour cream over chocolate; whisk until smooth. Whisk in honey. Pour filling into crust. Chill until set, at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.

Sprinkle tart with pine nuts. Serve with whipped cream. / ■



IN SEARCH OF THE CITY'S  
WILDLY SPICY AND SATISFYING  
FLAVORS, **BRETT MARTIN**  
UNCOVERS THE DELICIOUS BEST  
OF MALAYSIAN STREET FARE

# KUALA LUMPUR: STREET FOOD HEAVEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN-LUC BÉNARD

Locals follow the busy street Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman to culinary nirvana, the Chow Kit market.

As proud as Malaysians are of their multiculturalism (the country is roughly 60 percent Malay, 30 percent Chinese, and 8 percent Indian, with countless ethnic subdivisions within each group), they are at least as proud of the way that diversity plays out on the plate. It's a cuisine that features a bright, spicy, wildly varied mix of flavors and influences but still manages to cohere into something uniquely Malaysian.

And though laid-back "K.L." (as the capital is universally called) has emerged as an affluent, cosmopolitan city on par with Bangkok or Singapore, most citizens insist that its most serious dining still takes place at street level. There's even a kind of reverse snobbery in effect. Meena Periasamy, a 39-year-old CPA who blogs about the K.L. food scene under the name Lyrical Lemongrass, complains that she can hardly persuade her young professional friends to eat in upscale restaurants. "They'll always find something wrong, because they're looking for it," she says. "They believe everything is better on the street."

The only quarrel one could find with *Jalan-Jalan Cari Makan* is that the "walk around" part is difficult to achieve in K.L., which is spread across the Klang Valley in a sprawl more reminiscent of Los Angeles than New York. Luckily,

THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL MOTTO OF **MALAYSIA** IS *BERSEKUTU BERTAMBAH MUTU*, WHICH MEANS "UNITY IS STRENGTH." THE NATION'S UNOFFICIAL MOTTO, THE ONE YOU ACTUALLY HEAR ON THE STREETS OF KUALA LUMPUR, IS A BIT DIFFERENT, AND FAR MORE LIKELY TO STIR THE HEARTSTRINGS OF THE GROWING LEGIONS OF FOOD LOVERS WHO HAVE MADE THE MALAYSIAN CAPITAL THE CURRENT FOOD DESTINATION OF CHOICE. IT IS *JALAN-JALAN CARI MAKAN*, OR "WALK AROUND. TAKE A LOOK. EAT."





cabs are cheap, and any of the neighborhoods that follow will provide an excellent introduction to the glories of Malaysia's street-food scene.

### GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Calling the tourist heart of K.L. the Golden Triangle is less a geometric description than an evocation of the soaring, moneyed, brightly lit metropolis the city has become. Here, in the shadow of the eerily beautiful double-spired Petronas Twin Towers, is where most travelers first stay in K.L., and where they can get their first taste of eating street-side at the riot of stalls that line

Jalan Alor. If the flavors here are slightly geared to Western palates, the street nevertheless provides an excellent survey of dishes you'll find elsewhere.

The air is filled with billowing smoke from satay sizzling on charcoal grills. Piles of fresh fish sit in display cases, ready to be grilled for *ikan bakar* and served with spicy *sambal*. There are stalls selling *char kway teow* (pad-thai-like flat rice noodles stir-fried with egg, bean sprouts, shrimp, chiles, and plump cockles), *rojak* (chunks of tropical fruit, cucumber, and deep-fried dough under a sauce made with shrimp paste), refreshing *cendol* (shaved ice topped with rich palm sugar, sweet beans, and weird mung bean jellies), and *nasi* (rice) and *mee* (noodles) served in so many preparations it makes the head spin.

As they are in, say, New York, many of the best food stories in K.L. are really stories about immigration and family. So it is on a quiet corner at the edge of the Golden Triangle, where two nearly identical open-air restaurants, Soo Kee Restaurant and Soo Kee's Son, face off. The founder, Soh Hon, moved to K.L. from Guangzhou, China, prior to World War II and became famous for exceptional prawn noodles and beef noodles—the former consisting of enormous king prawns in a thick ginger-prawn sauce, the latter featuring beef so tender it seems to want to cuddle all night while watching *Must Love Dogs*. Both are served over chewy *kway teow* or rice noodles.

Hon's death, in 1984, sparked contention among his 11 children. Daughters No. 4 and No. 5, Jasmin and Jessica, took over the flagship location; Stanley (No. 10) set up shop across the way; and their siblings opened branches elsewhere in K.L. (There are nine in all.) Relations between the two downtown Soo Kees are chilly, but not hostile.

"To be angry all the time would be frustrating. So you forget," Jasmin Hon says. Luckily, the glasnost means you can move back and forth, enjoying each place's worthy tributes to a father's skill.



**CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT** / Co-owner Jessica Hon and manager Kok Ming Koh of Soo Kee Restaurant. Jalan Alor is a hot spot for late-night eats. A chef at a food stall in Chow Kit market prepares the popular breakfast dish *nasi lemak*—coconut rice topped with a fried egg, peanuts, cucumber, and dried anchovies. *Kway teow* noodles at Soo Kee. The double-spired Petronas Twin Towers in the Golden Triangle.





**ABOVE** / Lining up for fried chicken at a stall on Glutton's Street in Pudu.

## KAMPUNG BARU

"Not that long ago, the Maybank Tower was the tallest in Kuala Lumpur," Meena Periasamy said one night as we drove past the bank's squat edifice, now dwarfed by gleaming skyscrapers. "It's like Malaysia's been on a fast-forward adventure."

Nowhere is that pace of change so striking as in the Malay neighborhood of Kampung Baru, essentially a small village that has been swallowed whole by the sprawling city. The streets of "K.G." Baru (Malaysians would abbreviate the word "I," if given the chance) are lined with low zinc-roofed houses and stalls serving Malay specialties from all over the Malay Peninsula. It's a good place to sample one of the most universal Malaysian dishes: *nasi lemak*. Traditionally served for breakfast, its most basic form is a mound of coconut rice topped with a fried or hard-boiled egg, peanuts, cucumber, dried anchovies, and spicy *sambal*. In the morning, triangular paper or banana-leaf packets of these staples are sold all over K.L., a nutritionally complete breakfast for the equivalent of 30 cents.

At Nasi Lemak Mak Wanjor, counterwomen in colorful head scarves ladle on your choice of further toppings: fried chicken, beef *rendang*, stewed cuttlefish, and cockles. Westerners who think that sounds a bit heavy for breakfast will be pleased to learn that Mak Wanjor recently began reopening from 4:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., in part to accommodate young people who stop by on the way home from clubbing in the Golden Triangle.

## PUDU

Things take a decidedly porky turn in the area known as Pudu, anchored by a bustling wet market. It is here, in a collection of stalls on the corner of Jalan Pudu and Wai Sik Kai—a side street known, poetically, as "Glutton's Street"—that you find a cart serving Hakka *mee*. This specialty of



## IN THIS STORY

**BANGSAR FISH HEAD CORNER**  
Lorong Ara Kiri 3,  
Lucky Garden  
(no phone)

**CHUN KEE HAKKA MEE**  
Jalan Sayur, off of  
Jalan Pudu (no phone;  
no address)

**CURRY MEE STALL**  
Restoran Hong Seng,  
Jalan 17/29, Section 17  
Petaling Jaya, Selangor  
(no phone)

**NASI LEMAK MAK WANJOR**  
8, Jalan Raja Muda  
Musa Kampung Baru  
(no phone)

**PAK NGAH BIHUN SUP**  
Bazaar Baru Chow  
Kit, Jalan Chow Kit,  
off of Jalan Tuanku  
Abdul Rahman (no  
phone; no address)

**RAJU RESTAURANT**  
No. 27, Jalan Chantek  
Petaling Jaya, Selangor  
011-603-7956-1361

**RESTAURANT WONG KEE**  
No. 30, Jalan Nyonya  
011-603-2145-2512

**SOO KEE RESTAURANT**  
14, Medan Imbi  
011-603-2148-1324

immigrants from southern China consists of ramen-like egg noodles topped with sliced roast pork, fried minced pork, and a heap of crunchy pork cracklings, for good measure. Those who enjoy their lunch with a healthy side of euphemism will order theirs “dry,” as opposed to “wet” (in soup), and with “white sauce”—that is, lard oil.

I was brought to Pudu by Robyn Eckhardt, an American expat and enthusiastic eater who, with her photographer husband, David Hagerman, has entertainingly and encyclopedically chronicled K.L. street eats on the blog *EatingAsia*. “Malaysians take their noodles very seriously,” she said. “Easily as seriously as Italians do.” Indeed, between the perfectly al dente noodles, each strand slicked with oil but somehow ungreasy, and the deep, rich flavor of the meat, this is a pasta any Bolognese chef would be proud to serve.

The Hakka mee stall on Glutton’s Street often sells out by noon, but by that time you should be several blocks away, at Wong Kee, where you’ll wait patiently alongside a silent group of knowing eaters for the stroke of 12:30 p.m. At

that hour, and not a moment before, cooks begin ferrying glistening pork bellies to the kitchen from an alley around the corner, where they’ve been cooking all morning in a blackened steel drum. The meat is expertly hacked into succulent, bite-size napoleons of flesh, fat, flesh, and fat again, each topped with a perfect cap of crispy skin. I saw a man cut his with a spoon.

### **BAZAAR BARU CHOW KIT**

It is a minor culinary tragedy that K.L. sits just north of the equator, a latitude that ensures that the city’s array of steaming soups will never be enjoyed as they should be: on a cold winter day. That goes for a special Chinese *congee* (you pick a fresh fish from a cooler, then watch as the cook creates a quick clay pot stock with the head and a splash of rice wine); murky, deeply spiced mutton soup, a *mamak* (Indian-Muslim) specialty; and *assam laksa*, the glorious sour and spicy noodle soup imported from Penang.

It goes especially for *bihun sup*, made at a food stall at the center of the raucous Bazaar Baru Chow Kit market. You

smell this soup long before you see it: It teases the nose as you navigate between Indian spice shops; tables laid with plates of bright red chiles; and stall upon stall of fresh fish, roasted pork, live frogs, and luminous green bushels of herbs and greens. Reaching the source, you find a giant burbling stockpot filled with beef bones, tripe, cinnamon, anise, cardamom, and other spices.

Sadly, instead of sipping the broth while staring out at falling snow, you'll more likely be reminded of one important rule of K.L. street dining: Carry tissues. A pack of Kleenex is vital not only for wiping your hands but also for mopping your face of inevitable streams of sweat. Stalls here rarely offer napkins, and if they do, they're of what I came to think of as the "amazing disappearing" variety, dissolving instantly upon contact with human skin.

**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT** / Roasted pork hanging in the kitchen of Restaurant Wong Kee. *Yong tau foo*, a Chinese Hakka dish of bean curd and vegetables stuffed with fish paste. Fish head curry at Fish Head Corner in Bangsar. Steven Kong with his wife, Oi Ling Ho, at their curry stall in Petaling Jaya. Limes, chiles, and vegetables at the Chow Kit market. A bowl of *curry mee* from Kong's stall.

## BANGSAR

Located to the southwest of downtown K.L., Bangsar is most often described as an expat enclave or a glitzy nightspot. But while the neighborhood does offer its share of international restaurants and overpriced bars, it also boasts another identity: eater's haven. It's hard, for instance, to find anything bourgeois about the Bangsar Fish Head Corner. There, predictably, is where you'll find a fine example of fish head curry, a straightforward name for a straightforward dish.

The head in question—usually that of a red snapper—arrives toothy and undisguised, except by a thick curry



### CHAR KWAY TEOW 2 SERVINGS

*A popular Malaysian street food dish, char kway teow literally translates as "fried flat noodles." The recipe also includes shrimp, sausage, and mung bean sprouts.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 8 ounces $\frac{1}{3}$ - to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide fresh flat rice noodles* | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup thinly sliced Chinese sweet sausage (lop chong)*       |
| 6 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil   | 2 large eggs, whisked to blend   |
| 1 large garlic clove, chopped   | $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons chili-garlic sauce**                             |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (or more) black sweet soy sauce*                    | 2 cups fresh mung bean sprouts (about 5 ounces)                          |
| 10 uncooked medium shrimp, peeled, deveined, tails left intact                | 6 green onions (dark green parts only), cut into thin 2-inch-long strips |

gravy filled with tomato and tamarind. You pick at the head with chopsticks or fingers (always of the right hand); the fatty flesh of the cheek and eye sockets are particularly prized. Squeamish diners may find the restaurant's other signature offering downright ordinary in comparison: whole baby squid tossed in chili and tapioca flour and flash-fried. It gives off a thrilling explosion of scalding, briny juice when first bitten.

### PETALING JAYA

Truly devoted seekers of street food will roam even farther afield, outside of K.L.'s official borders, to the suburb of Petaling Jaya ("P.J.," inevitably).

With shady courtyard seating and a constant flow of family customers, Raju's is considered the place to go for *roti canai*, another of Malaysia's most popular morning dishes. The fast-food-style uniforms may be disconcerting, but the cooks are grill geniuses, spinning flour, water, eggs, and ghee into perfectly flaky, charred *roti*. The steaming flatbreads are then served on an open banana leaf alongside a selection of toppings in silver containers: *daal*, vegetable curry, coconut chutney, and onion *sambal*. When finished scooping up toppings with the bread,

you fold your banana leaf toward yourself to express satisfaction.

Elsewhere in P.J., you'll find what is perhaps the most bewitching soup in K.L. It goes by the deceptively simple name of *curry mee*. Steven Kong, trained as an engineer, opened his noodle stall after he retired, mostly as a labor of love. In one big pot, he nurses a clear, fragrant broth of anchovies and ginger. A smaller pot contains a thick sludge of bright, rich curry. Kong combines the two over thick "rat tail" noodles, then adds some (or, if you follow my advice, all) of the following: tightly wrapped shrimp wontons; pork cracklings; deep-fried tofu; cuttlefish; shrimp; Chinese long beans; cockles; and whatever else was fresh at the market when Kong arrived at three o'clock that morning.

What is this dish? (Other than the obvious: delicious.) Is it Indian? Not quite, despite the curry. Chinese? No, although the wontons qualify. Malay? The pork says no, but the coconut and lemongrass say yes. The answer, of course, is "Malaysian." Unity is indeed strength. /■

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*Brett Martin is a correspondent for GQ and has written for many publications, including Vanity Fair and The New York Times.*



Soak noodles in large bowl of warm (not hot) water 5 minutes. Using fingers, separate noodles and drain well. Heat lard in large wok or skillet over high heat until lard is very hot and smoking. Add garlic; stir 5 seconds. Add noodles and 1½ tablespoons soy sauce and

stir-fry vigorously 20 seconds. Using slotted spoon, quickly transfer noodle mixture from wok to medium bowl. Add shrimp and sausage to wok; stir-fry 30 seconds. Add eggs and chili-garlic sauce and stir-fry vigorously 20 seconds. Return noodle mixture to wok, then add

bean sprouts and green onions and stir-fry 20 seconds. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide mixture between 2 plates; drizzle lightly with more soy sauce, if desired, and serve. \*/ Fresh flat rice noodles and Chinese sweet sausage (slender, firm, preserved sausage) are

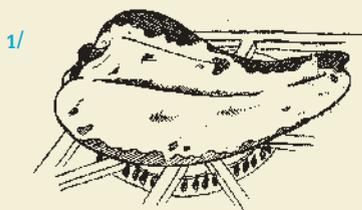
available in the refrigerated section of Southeast Asian and Asian markets. Black sweet soy sauce is available at Southeast Asian and Asian markets where other soy sauces are sold. \*\*/ Available in the Asian foods section of many supermarkets and at Asian markets.

# PREP SCHOOL

TECHNIQUES,  
TIPS, TRICKS, AND  
MORE FROM THE  
BON APPÉTIT  
TEST KITCHEN

## THE TECHNIQUE/ the right way to roast peppers

The Carne Asada on page 186 and the Salsa Verde on page 191 call for poblano and serrano chiles that get charred on the grill. But don't stop with spicy peppers. Charred sweet bell peppers (we often call them roasted peppers) taste great in sandwiches, with *carnitas*, on an antipasto platter, in pasta, or tossed with chopped herbs and a dash of vinegar as a side dish. Here are two easy methods for roasting chiles—sweet or spicy.

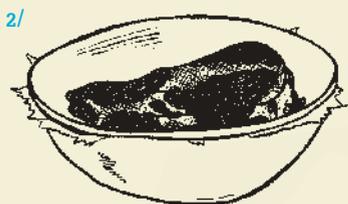


### ON THE GRILL OR STOVETOP

1/ Set the whole pepper on the grill or on a grate over a gas flame. Grill until blackened and blistered on all sides, using tongs to move it around as needed.

2/ Transfer the pepper to a bowl or a plastic bag. Cover the bowl or seal the bag and let steam for 15 minutes to loosen skin.

3/ Using a paring knife and your fingertips, peel off the blackened skin. Remove the seeds and ribs.



3/



from  
YUCATAN  
HEAT  
p. 182

No Grill?  
No Gas Flame?  
No Problem.

### IN THE BROILER

1/ Slice off the top and bottom of the pepper; slit it down one side. Remove the seeds and core; flatten into a rectangle.

2/ Set the flattened pepper, skin side up, on a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil. Broil until blackened and blistered on the skin side.

3/ Transfer to a bowl or a plastic bag. Cover or seal and let steam for 15 minutes.

4/ Using a paring knife and your hands, peel off the blackened skin.



## THE TOOL/ TONGS

For the pepper-charring method at left, use a pair of sturdy, spring-loaded tongs, a virtual extension of a cook's hands. Use the tongs when browning meat, sautéing vegetables, portioning pasta, and tossing salad. And don't forget an extra-long, 16-inch pair for grilling. Details to look for: a tabbed lever that locks the tongs closed when they're not in use; action that's springy, not stiff; and (if you're prone to leaving tongs on the stove or in the pan) a rubber or silicone strip on the sides, which keeps the tongs cool to the touch. Many versions are available at restaurant supply stores or online. Try Oxo's rubber-sided 12-inch Locking Tongs. \$12; [oxo.com](http://oxo.com) / »

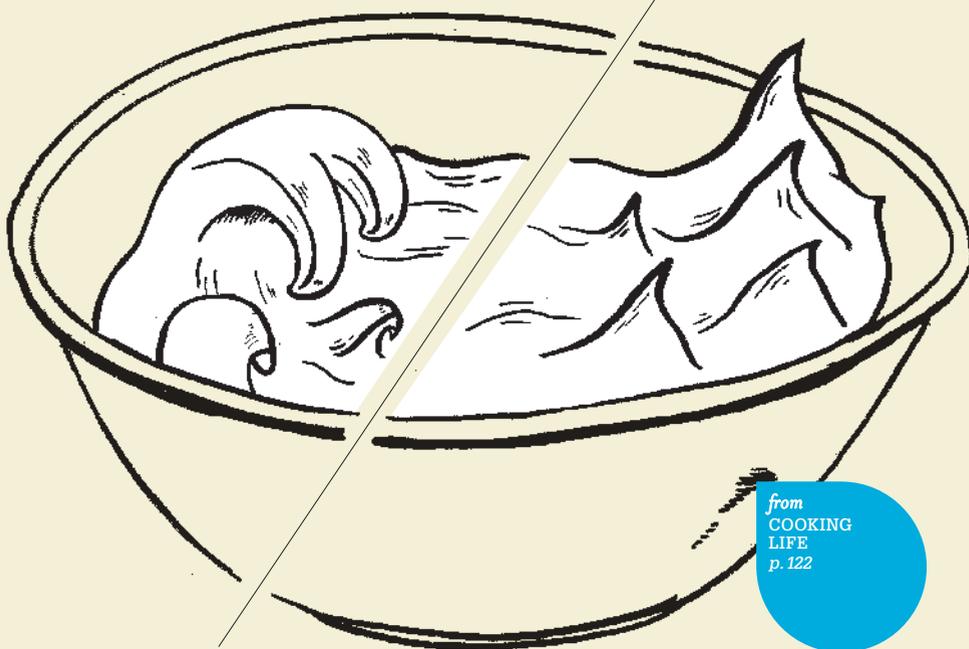
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN/

## soft peaks and stiff peaks

The Classic Cheese Soufflé on page 125 gets its heavenly lightness thanks to egg whites that are beaten to stiff peaks—a stage that comes seconds after soft peaks form. To tell the difference, stop the mixer and lift the beater out of the bowl.

**SOFT PEAK:**  
defined, but  
bows over.

**STIFF PEAK:**  
stands pertly.



THE TERM/

### umami

(oo-MAH-mee)

What do tomatoes, cured ham, Parmesan, soy sauce, fish sauce, and sautéed mushrooms have in common? A meaty, round flavor that's known as umami. Also called the fifth taste—part of the bitter, sour, salty, sweet clan—umami happens in large part because of an amino acid called glutamate (made commercially, it's known as MSG) that's present in ripened, cured, aged, fermented, and browned foods. The best translation for this Japanese word? Delicious. On second thought, make that yummy.

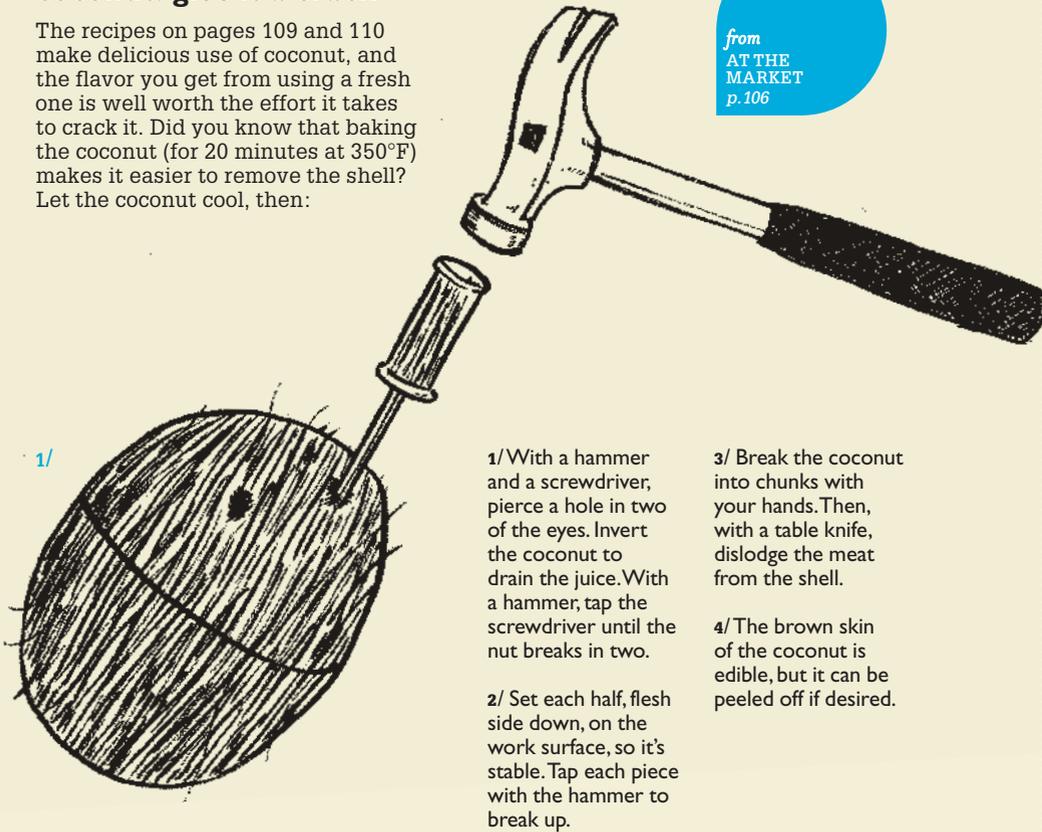
# SOAK

FOR ANY RECIPE THAT CALLS FOR CHOPPED OR SLICED RAW ONION (INCLUDING THE SALSAS IN THE STORY ON PAGE 182), **TAKE THE ZING OUT** BY SOAKING THE CHOPPED ONION IN ICE WATER FOR 15 MINUTES. THE SOAKING SLOWS DOWN THE COMPOUNDS THAT GIVE ONIONS THEIR PUNGENCY.

**THE TRICK/  
coconut: give it a crack**

The recipes on pages 109 and 110 make delicious use of coconut, and the flavor you get from using a fresh one is well worth the effort it takes to crack it. Did you know that baking the coconut (for 20 minutes at 350°F) makes it easier to remove the shell? Let the coconut cool, then:

from  
AT THE  
MARKET  
p. 106



1/

1/ With a hammer and a screwdriver, pierce a hole in two of the eyes. Invert the coconut to drain the juice. With a hammer, tap the screwdriver until the nut breaks in two.

2/ Set each half, flesh side down, on the work surface, so it's stable. Tap each piece with the hammer to break up.

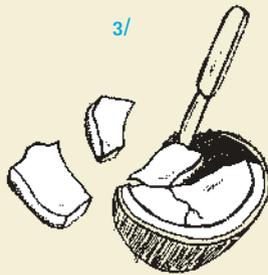
3/ Break the coconut into chunks with your hands. Then, with a table knife, dislodge the meat from the shell.

4/ The brown skin of the coconut is edible, but it can be peeled off if desired.

2/



3/



4/



**HOW TO  
HANDLE/**

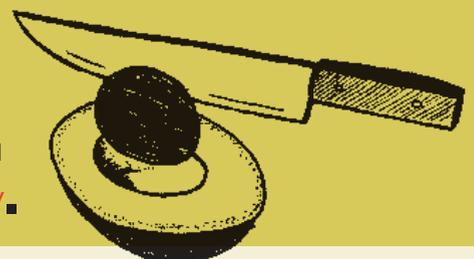
**FAVAS**

The Fresh Pasta with Favas, Tomatoes, and Sausage from "The Italian Job" on page 192 gets its earthy-green flavor from fava beans. Frozen, peeled ones are available at some supermarkets and Middle Eastern markets. But if you're using fresh fava beans, know that peeling them takes a few extra steps. (It's worth the trouble, we promise.) First, shuck the beans from the pod. Next, blanch them for two minutes in boiling salted water. Dunk the blanched beans in ice water so they'll stop cooking. To peel, just pop them out of their jackets.

**TRY THIS/**

**to remove an avocado pit**

The Grilled Fish Tacos on page 191 and the Carne Asada on page 186 both call for avocado. Here's a neat way to remove the pit: Insert the blade of a sharp chef's knife securely into the pit, then twist the knife to lift the whole pit out. / ■



MEXICAN BARBECUE  
COOKING CLUB MENU



MENU IDEAS  
FROM THE  
RECIPES IN THIS  
ISSUE AND ON  
BONAPPETIT  
.COM

THE  
bon appétit  
COOKING  
CLUB

.....

No.

VII

**MEXICAN BARBECUE**

Guacamole with Fresh Corn  
and Chipotle\*

TO DRINK: Pineapple-Chile  
Margaritas\*

Yucatecan-Style Grilled  
Mahi-Mahi...186

Yucatecan Pickled  
Onions...187

Habanero-Tomato Salsa...187  
Roasted Pepper, Cucumber,  
and Tomato Salad...179

Mexican Rice\*

TO DRINK: Beer  
Coconut Cake with  
Mascarpone Frosting...110

*This month, The Bon Appétit  
Cooking Club goes virtual. Log on  
to [bonappetit.com/cookingclub](http://bonappetit.com/cookingclub) to  
find the recipes for this Mexican  
menu, plus everything else you need  
(shopping lists, timelines, drink  
pairings) to get the party started.*

**MOTHER'S DAY**

Skewered Rosemary  
Shrimp with Mint  
Pesto\*

TO DRINK: Champagne

Veal Chops with  
Asparagus and  
Morels 156

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Mushroom-Leek Soup  
with Brie Croutons\*

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TO DRINK: Cabernet  
Sauvignon

La Bete Noir\*

**WEEKNIGHT**

Bacon and Swiss Chard  
Pasta 89

Romaine with Parmesan  
Vinaigrette 99

TO DRINK: Beaujolais

Chocolate-Orange  
Ice Cream Sundaes\*

1/3 PAGE VERTICAL LEFT

SOURCEBOOK /

**TRAVEL PLANNER**

**Drinks**/p. 58  
**ICEBERGS**/ 1 Notts Avenue,  
Bondi Beach, Sydney;  
011-61-2-9365-9000; idrb.com  
**ST. JOHN**/ 26 St. John  
Street, London;  
011-44-20-7251-0848;  
stjohnrestaurant.co.uk

**Buzz**/pp. 70-74

**VETRI**/ 1312 Spruce Street,  
Philadelphia; 215-732-3478;  
vetrirstorante.com

**The Italian Job**/ pp. 192-201

**CUBE**/ 615 North La Brea  
Avenue, Los Angeles;  
323-939-1148;  
cubemarketplace.com

**Feedback: Takashi**

**Murakami**/ p. 218  
**Mifune**/ 5-1-6 Negishidai,  
Asaka, Saitama, Japan;  
011-81-48-465-4214

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SINGLE  
SQUARE  
LOWER  
LEFT



SPICED PEARS WITH CARAMEL SAUCE p. 180



CHICKEN-FRIED SKIRT STEAK WITH COUNTRY GRAVY p. 89



COCONUT CAKE WITH MASCARPONE FROSTING p. 110

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LC/ LOW CALORIE  
CH/ LOW CHOLESTEROL  
LF/ LOW FAT  
HF/ HIGH FIBER  
LSF/ LOW SATURATED FAT  
V/ VEGETARIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA LIMER (FAR LEFT); LISA HUBBARD (FAR RIGHT); NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS BY SANDRA FRANK, ED.D., R.D.

# TAKASHI MURAKAMI

artist

He is known the world over for art that playfully traverses the line between highbrow and mass-market, and his oeuvre ranges from a best-selling line of Louis Vuitton handbags to 20-foot-long hand-painted murals and his trademark cartoon icons. A Murakami career retrospective is currently on a four-stop world tour, with upcoming shows in Spain and Germany. Here, the Tokyo-based artist talks about how he feeds his creativity.



**SELF-PORTRAIT** / Artist Takashi Murakami looks right at home in one of his own eye-popping works. Joining him are popular characters Kaikai and Kiki in a field of his iconic smiling daisies.

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**What is your favorite meal to prepare?**

I am so busy right now that I have absolutely no time to cook. But before, when I used to live in a small, prefab house, I would cook everything from sunny-side-up eggs to hamburgers to ramen on a portable stove with a frying pan I used for ten years.

**Is there a food that you indulge in when you know you shouldn't?**

The fatty meat on grilled fish. I always finish off the entire thing.

**What food always reminds you of home?**

Curry and rice.

**What's the perfect snack?**

Frito-Lay Cheetos. When I was still in high school, I ate more than three bags a day. This snack is rather habit-forming, and I couldn't stop eating them.

**What was your most memorable meal?**

One was when I was in the depths of poverty, and a gallery owner from Osaka took me to a high-class sushi restaurant in Tokyo's Ginza district. It was the first time I had a mind-blowing meal.

The second was a lunch that I had with an artist friend living in Milan. He took me to Turin on a late Sunday

afternoon. Everything was wonderful, and I cried at the tiramisù.

**When you are out at a restaurant or bar, what's your drink of choice?**

Gin and tonic or potato *shochu* [distilled spirit].

**What's your favorite restaurant and what do you order there?**

Mifune, in Asaka, Saitama, Japan. The restaurant serves Japanese-style meals, and I get the *saba* [mackerel] meal with *natto* [fermented soybean] topping.

**What three things are always in your refrigerator?**

Organic mayonnaise, Bull-Dog Chuno Sauce, and soy sauce from Japanese-grown soybeans.

**Do you have a comfort food?**

*Natto* and miso soup with deep-fried tofu.

**What are you having for dinner tonight?**

I just got back to Japan after a long time, so I will eat grilled fish. I'm thinking that *sanma* [mackerel pike] with shredded daikon [Japanese white radish] sounds good.

~INTERVIEW BY ERIC STEINMAN