

Hot right now: New York mini scenes

New York sets the food fashions for the rest of the world. But what's trendiest right now in the city that never sleeps (but eats, eats, eats)?

Burgers

Like the Little Black Dress of the food world, burgers *never* go out of fashion in NYC. They're tailored to suit all tastes – many with fat percentages carefully engineered by blending cuts including rib-eye, chuck, sirloin and rib-cap – but you really just need three addresses. Go fast food at **Shake Shack** (shakeshack.com; around £4.50), boho bar-style at **Corner Bistro** (cornerbistro.com; around £5) or upscale at **Minetta Tavern** (minettatavern.com; around £17), where the 'Black Label' is grilled in butter and served with caramelised onions.

Bagels

Russ & Daughters (russanddaughters.com) has been doling out smoked

fish and chewy, tasty bagels to Lower East Side residents since 1914, and this is still the only deli you need on your hit list. Taste your way through the smoked salmons before filling your glossy pumpnickel halo (around £7); add cream cheese and pickles (obviously). For afters, cinnamon *babka* is a sweet, swirly yeast cake that is so New York.

Food trucks

Food trucks are all over NYC. You'll soon spot the likes of **Wafels & Dinges** (wafelsanddinges.com) serving up Belgian waffles with a biscuity sauce kerbside, or **Smorgasburg** (smorgasburg.com) in Brooklyn – a weekend market where the best bites include Red Hook's creamy lobster rolls, and Japanese tacos from Takumi. Eat on the waterfront, with Manhattan skyline views. Mains around £5.



Soul food

NYC is 2,000km north of New Orleans, but that hasn't stopped the city slaving for Southern soul food. King of the scene is chef Marcus Samuelsson. Try his 'dirty rice and shrimp' (aged basmati and the fattest prawns, with curry leaves) at **Red Rooster** in Harlem (redroosterharlem.com; mains around £16). Fans include Barack Obama.

Puddings

Focus on Manhattan for a cross-section of the best sugar highs: the latest and greatest are hip **Momofuku Milk Bar's** butterscotch crack pie (milkbarstore.com; £3.30 a slice), **Bouchon Bakery's** TKOs – a grown-up take on Oreos (bouchonbakery.com; £2), and the now globally renowned 'cronuts' (a croissant-doughnut hybrid) from **Dominique Ansel Bakery** (dominiqueansel.com; £3.40).

● **Virgin Holidays** (virginholidays.co.uk) has five nights at **Element by Westin Times Square West** from £1,190pp, B&B, including Heathrow-JFK flights.



The best UK food festivals



● **Aldeburgh** The reedy banks of Snape Maltings in Suffolk become foodie HQ each September, with talks from writers such as Lucas Hollweg, Radio 4-hosted debates and dozens of local producers (aldeburghfoodanddrink.co.uk; £8).

● **Abergavenny** Food stalls and top chefs transform this Black Mountains market town during its September knees-up. Make a weekend of it with talks, walks, wild food, and dancing at the castle (abergavennyfoodfestival.com; from £7).

● **Dalemain Marmalade Festival** Yes, a festival dedicated to Paddington's favourite

spread takes place at Cumbria's Dalemain Mansion every March. Pop in for thoughtful talks, bread-making workshops, and the World Marmalade Awards (dalemainmarmaladeawards.co.uk; £4.50).

● **Taste of London** Graze your way around the capital's top restaurants at this Regent's Park shindig each June, as hot-right-now restaurants (Duck & Waffle and Lima, say) offer bargain samplers of signature dishes (tastefestivals.com; £26).

● **Wild Boar Week** The Medieval Sussex town of Rye is perfect weekend-break territory, especially in late October, when it goes all Dark Ages, with boar, pheasant and mead banquets at local restaurants, and hunts in the nearby woods (wildboar.org.uk; prices vary).



Best pizza
Naples? Pah. NYC's 'SoHo Square', from Prince St Pizza in NoLiTa, has flawless tomato sauce and an airy crust (princestpizza.com; £2.25/slice). Its famed margherita's so good, it's trademarked.



CHEF'S TIP

Francesco Mazzei, chef-patron of L'Anima (lanima.co.uk)

BEST EATS IN CALABRIA

“Sun-faded Cerchiara di Calabria, my beautiful hometown, is renowned for its huge loaves: they're baked in the oven for four hours and stay fresh for two weeks. I buy mine at bakery **Panificio Monti Teresa** (33 Ctr Piana di Cerchiara). I used to work in my uncle's *galateria*, **Artigianale Pasticceria Barbarossa** (Via Nazionale 116), in buzzy, beachside Villapiana Lido. It's one of the best in Calabria – try the orange granita. In Altomonte, **Hotel Barbieri** (barbierigroup.it) is family-run, and serves great local produce in a superb setting overlooking the Medieval village.”

The secret restaurants in Florence

● **Trattoria Mario** (Via Rosina 2r; trattoria-mario.com). There's no menu displayed outside this lunch-only tratt, steps from Florence's market square, but the inevitable queue of people hints at the delights within. Seating is communal; no bookings or credit cards are taken; and popular dishes on the felt-tipped menu sell out fast – try rosemary-infused *tagliata* (sliced rare sirloin), or the juicy *lombata di vitello* (veal chop). For around £21, you'll get three courses of fabulous Tuscan home cooking with wine.

● **Caffè La Terrazza** (Piazza della Repubblica 1). Take the lift to the fourth floor of the decidedly unremarkable La Rinascente department store, then climb the stairs to the rooftop cafe. Steep prices are justified by spectacular

views of the *duomo* (pictured). It's open until 9pm – perfect for a sunset Negroni. Mains around £17.

● **Cibrèo Trattoria** (Via de' Macci 122r; edizioniteatro delsalecibreofirenze.it). Ristorante Cibrèo is one of the city's most upscale eateries, with prices to match. Head next door to the no-reservations trattoria, known locally as Cibrèino, and you'll be rewarded with flavour-packed seasonal dishes from the same kitchen for a third of the price. The *baccala mantecato* (Venetian dried cod) is not to be missed. Mains around £11.

● **Vueling** (vueling.com) flies from Heathrow to Florence for £99 return. Doubles at Casa Howard Guest House (casahoward.com) start from £135, room only.



Best airport food
LA's finest Mexican, **Border Grill**, just opened at LAX: expect exemplary Margaritas and piquant pork-rib tacos (bordergrill.com; around £9). >

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CHEF'S TIP
Yotam Ottolenghi, chef and restaurateur (ottolenghi.co.uk)

BEST EATS IN ISRAEL

Find Jerusalem's culinary highs by wandering its alleys, following cooking smells and stopping wherever you see a crowd. Restaurant-wise, **Rachmo** (5 Ha'Eshkol St) is a great no-frills place for *kubbe* (beef dumpling) soup. A bit out of town but well worth the effort is **Majda** (00 972 2 579 7108; open Wed-Sat), in the Judean hills. Antipasti and *meze* are served from Michal and Yaakov's village home – worth the cab (along Highway 1 from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, exit at Ein Rafa, follow directions to the village, then red-lettered Hebrew signs to Majda).

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Best midnight feast | Just try beating (or even eating) **Le Sandwich Américain** – a hot baguette of steak, *frites* and Gruyère, with mayo and ketchup, served to Niçois clubbers at **Le Maxi** (4 Rue de l'Opéra, Nice; £3.40).

The secret Belgian hotspots

The other country for rail getaways isn't just about chocolate and chips. Here are the highlights from the home of Poirot...

- Tucked away among the wholesale butchers and pound shops of Brussels' Anderlecht district, local haunt **La Paix** is all polished brass and monochrome tiles. Meat is the thing here, with vast, tender steaks to share, but find space for chef David Martin's brilliant ways with home-grown vegetables, too (Rue Ropsy-Chaudron 49; lapaix1892.com; mains around £35).

- A miniature ferry (£1) chugs you over to the alpine-style, wooden **Le Chalet Robinson**, marooned on an island populated by tame rabbits, in Brussels' Soignes forest. It's the kind of place Sunday lunch was invented for, with well-executed Belgian comfort food, and a deadly salted-caramel waffle (Sentier de l'Embarcadère 1;

www.chaletrobinson.be; mains around £22).

- The undiscovered, discreet charm of ancient Namur, an hour from Brussels by train, is exemplified by simple, intimate restaurant **L'Agathopède**, which takes its name from a secret 19th-century fraternity. Chef Carl Gillain serves clever and assured, but never fiddly, food. Expect the surprisingly delectable local *petit gris* snails to feature (Ave de la Plante 23; theroyalsnail.com; three-course menu £43; pictured).

- The **crêpe stall** at Bruxelles-Midi food-and-flowers market has no name or address (it's on the Avenue Fonsny side of the Brussels railway station), but follow the crowds and you'll discover a



chaotic, jolly outfit serving freshly made, flaky *msemen* (Moroccan pancakes stuffed with soft cheese and honey), to be taken with hot mint tea (Sundays only; £2-£4).

- **Eurostar** (eurostar.com) has *St Pancras-Brussels* returns, plus two nights at *Hotel Bloom!* from £160pp, room only.



Night vision: the **Maison du Roi** on Brussels' Grand Place is home to the **Museum of the City**

The world's best street food

- **Pineapple on Mont Choisy beach, Mauritius**
Prepare to get messy – £1 bags of pineapple in chilli salt and tamarind syrup from Crayola-hued bicycle carts pop with every spicy bite, dripping juice onto the white sands via your chin and fingers. Nothing a quick dip won't sort out.

- **Jerk chicken, Jamaica**
Drive up (50km or so) from Black River beach, then pull over when you see smoke spilling across the road from All Seasons Jerk Centre (Spur Tree Hill, Manchester). Juicy chicken loaded with wood-smoke flavour and scotch-bonnet heat comes in scrunched-up foil for less than a fiver.

- **Xiao long bao, Shanghai**
Take tangy-spicy-sweet *xiao long bao* – a scoop of herby pork and jelly wrapped in delicate dough – dip in vinegar and scoff in a single bite (or risk spraying fellow diners with broth). Try hole-in-the-wall Loushi Tangbao Guan (601 Nanchang Lu; 60p).

- **Som tam papaya salad, Bangkok**
Think salad's for wimps? Pull up a plastic pew at Hai Somtam (2/4-5 Convent Rd); white-masked cooks pound papaya with garlic, chillies, limes and fish sauce into radioactive heat. Need soothing? The bill's only £1.40.

- **Japadogs, Vancouver**
Set yourself up for Van's outdoor pursuits with a *japadog* – a fusion beef or pork wiener topped with fried *soba* noodles, *bonito* flakes and *wasabi* mayo. They're sold from stands and trailers city-wide (see japadog.com for locations; around £3).

- **Acarajé, Salvador**
Exercise caution with Salvador's favourite snack: a black-eyed pea fritter served with piquant prawn paste and hot chilli garnish. Buy it for pennies from women in white Candomblé-vooodoo robes, at stalls in the Baroque centre or the balmy Atlantic Bay beaches.

- **Steamed pork buns, London**
Squidgy steamed buns, stuffed with tender Blythburgh pork, hoisin sauce and spring onions: meet the dinky, Cantonese-inspired *yum bun*. Follow the scent of roasting pork to Kerb market at King's Cross (yum bun.co.uk; £3.50).

- **Pigeon breast, Scotland**
Hedgerows and farms provide the ingredients; Catherine Kilgour and Rob Wright transform them into something delicious – flash-fried pigeon, stag burger, venison tagine – and serve it from a 1961 Land Rover at spots across Scotland's Lothians (wildroverfood.com; mains around £6).

- **Bifana, Lisbon**
This is no ordinary pork bap. It's smoky paprika pork, simmered in white *vino*, dressed up in a pillowy bun to take away – sustenance for pounding Lisbon's cobbled streets. Try Beira Gare (Rua 1 de Dezembro 116; around £1.80).

- **Pani puri, Chowpatty Beach, Mumbai**
Get this tangy, crispy beach snack in your mouth pronto. Once the vendor pours tamarind water over the spicy potato-and-chilli mix, he's piled on a light chickpea-flour shell – mere seconds stand between triumph and shirt-stained disaster (around 10p).

- **Suckling pig, Bali**
No-frills Ibu Oka (Jalan Suweta/Tegal Sari 2), near the market in Ubud, Bali's cultural heartland, serves the island's best *babi guling* (or suckling pig): £3 gets you a take-out paper cone piled with pork, shards of crackling, rice and spicy veg.

- **Souvlakia, Athens**
McDonald's poor Greek performance must be down to *souvlakia* – tender, charcoal-grilled lamb wrapped tightly in warm *pita* bread with onion, tomato and *tzatziki*. Try the stalls on Monastiraki Square, or Thanasis (Mitropoleos St; £7).

- **Doubles, Port of Spain, Trinidad**
Trinis put their car boots to great use

as makeshift roadside 'double' stalls (best in St James district). Copy the locals and tear strips off the flatbread wrap to transport the chickpea, tamarind and mango curry mouthwards (around 60p).

- **Cecina, Mexico**
Bacon sarnies don't come close. *Cecina* (spice-rubbed, sun-dried pork), served on tortillas with black beans, onions and avocado, emerges from the smoky



sizzle of Mercado 20 de Noviembre (Calle 20 de Noviembre; £1), near Oaxaca's Colonial main square.

- **Nyonya laksa, Singapore**
Whiffs of mint and lime drift between the multi-coloured buildings of East Coast Rd, stirred up from the staple spicy coonutty-curry broth. Dig in with a spoon to unearth plump cockles and shrimps. Best place to start? 328katong laksa.com.sg; £2.50. >





The **best** French food city

If even Parisians admit Lyon is the go-to town for gourmets, its finest *must* be France's *crème de la crème*. Try its...

Best posh dinner: Stunning city-wide views – including both the Rhône and Saône rivers – accompany technically brilliant dishes such as *assiette* of suckling pig at **Tetedoie** (tetedoie.com; mains around £36), on Fourvière hill.

Best bistro lunch: Order the superb *pâté en croute* at **Daniel et Denise** (daniel-et-denise.fr; mains around £17), a typical Lyonnais *bouchon* (bistro) with red-and-white checked tablecloths and bentwood chairs.

Best market: Join the boho locals on tree-lined **Boulevard de la Croix-Rousse** as they shop for regional specialities: soft and creamy St-Marcellin cheese, or garlicky Jésus de Lyon sausage. Not as smart as the more famous Les Halles, but *much* cheaper.

Best dish: Landlocked Lyon's signature recipe is *quenelles de brochet*, feather-light pike dumplings in rich crayfish sauce. Try them at top *bouchon* **Café des Fédérations** (lesfedeslyon.com; set menu £21).

● **Eurostar** (eurostar.com) has *St Pancras-Lyon* returns from £109. *Doubles at Cour des Loges* (courdesloges.com) from £169, room only.



Hot right now: London

The capital's food scene is on fire at the moment; here's this year's stand-outs and where best to find them

The food scene adapts then adapts, turning dishes from Japan or the Deep South into something uniquely London. The new wave of lively, affordable *ramen* restaurants, such as **Bone Daddies** (right; bonedaddiesramen.com; £10 per bowl), pimps up its wheat-noodle soups with richer, stronger flavours than its counterparts in Japan. Its sibling, **Flesh & Buns** (fleshandbuns.com; mains around £15) serves this season's fashionable dish – Chinese-style steamed *hirata* buns packed with meaty fillings. The renegade vibe at these two hipster hang-outs is in tune with many of the capital's 'dude food' canteens, epitomised by **Pitt Cue Co** (pittcue.co.uk; mains around £9; top). Here, ribs are barbecued and smoked, and served in huge portions. The drink of choice? London-brewed craft beer, of course. Try the best of these artisan-made ales at one of three branches of the **Craft Beer Company** (thecraftbeerco.com). And to see regeneration in progress, head to Granary Square, north of King's Cross station: on weekdays, **King's Boulevard** is home to excellent lunchtime street-food vans. Or, for something more refined, head for the **Grain Store** (grainstore.com; mains around £15).



CHEF'S TIP

Thomasina Miers, founder of Wahaca (wahaca.co.uk)

SECRET EATS IN MEXICO

“Everyone in Mexico City's heard of the **El Bajío** chain of restaurants, but only true foodies know that the original one, in the industrial district of Azzcapotzalco, is where the city's best cooking is found. Dishes are mainly from Michoacán and Veracruz – and are as authentic and delicious as you could hope. Overseen by Carmen Ramírez Degollado, it's been around for over 40 years. If anyone wants to taste *real* Mexican cooking, this is the place to go (restauranteelbajio.com.mx; mains around £5).”

Best buffet
Vegas still does all-you-can-eats with Elvis in mind. The £25 steal at Planet Hollywood's Spice Market yields sushi, pizza, ribs – and 20 types of cupcake (planet-hollywood-resort.com). >



The **secret** best restaurant in the world, Girona

Girona boasts El Celler de Can Roca, the planet's best (and headline-hogging) restaurant – luckily that leaves the sensational modern Catalan cuisine by Pere **Massana** (restaurantmassana.com) for those in the know. Order the nine-course gourmet menu (£104 with wine) for its

seductive liquid mushroom fritter and lacquered Iberian pork. It has just one Michelin star, but it's a supernova. And you won't wait a year for a table.
● **Ryanair** (ryanair.com) has *Bristol flights* from £62 return. *Doubles at Ciutat de Girona* (faderson.com) from £81, room only.