

# Twenty-five of the World's Best Restaurants

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and prepared by the staff of  
**International Living**

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# Introduction

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Eating out is about more than simply enjoying your favorite foods, particularly when you're exploring some new corner of the world. At times like these, you want to find the quirky local haunt, the underground hot spot...or perhaps you just need to know where to find a comforting cup of hot chocolate, an uplifting slice of pie, and wireless Internet access.

The following selection of bests was created with you, the world explorer, in mind. We could have easily given you coordinates for the local McDonalds and Pizza Huts, but we think we know you a bit better than that. From Ireland's best oysters to Japan's most tender eel, here's our best to you.

Happy exploring!



Kathleen Peddicord  
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## 1. ANTIGUA

### *Antigua's best place to look like a big-shot*

Where can you get fancy fare like seafood salad poached in vermouth, tuna with roasted crab and fennel, and squid ink pasta for about \$12? **Coco's**, *tel. (1268)460-2626*, which resembles a typical West Indian home, is the kind of place that makes you feel guilty after you've paid your bill. Well, look at it this way: at least you can impress your friends now by leaving an enormous tip!

## 2. ARGENTINA

### *Buenos Aires' "Waiter, I think you've made a mistake" dinner*

Quiz: I've just had a cocktail, appetizer, salad, thick fillet mignon steak, dessert, and a split of wine; the bill comes to \$17.50. Where am I? The answer—and the only possible answer—is, **Cabanas de Lilas**, *Puerto Madera sector*. Puerto Madera has been compared to New York's South Street Seaport, a row of sidewalk cafes and restaurants along a seaside promenade. The only difference here is that the prices will have you pinching yourself every time you pay a bill.

## 3. AUSTRALIA

### *Melbourne's best place to focus on your food*

**Flower Drum**, *17 Market Lane; tel. (61)3-9662-3655*, is by far the best choice for Cantonese food. The staff here will gladly keep you occupied with outstanding cuisine as well as service. The only distraction from your dining bliss may be your chatty date because this place has no windows! With no intrusion from the outside world, you'll be able to focus on the delicious matter at hand...

## 4. BELIZE

### *Belize's friendliest prices*

**Macy's**, 18 Bishop Street, serves great Creole food at friendly prices. This is a tiny, local hang, and some of the fare is on the daring side: armadillo, and wild pig are specialties here. On the other hand, diners can choose from well-prepared fish dishes, a perfectly spiced curried chicken, and other seasonal varieties.

## 5. BRAZIL

### *Rio's best dining above the clouds*

**Le St. Honore**, Meridien Hotel; tel. (55)21-275-9922, offers fine gourmet dining and one of the city's best views. Located on the 37th floor of the Meridien Hotel, this place not only has a panoramic view of the city—its menu is under the supervision of multi-Michelin star recipient Paul Bocuse. Need we say more?

## 6. CANADA

### *Montreal: linen tablecloth dining at this price?*

As the candles flicker, waiters attend you in black tie, and you dine by the fireside, you'll wonder how dinner for two can be so reasonably priced. **Restaurant du Vieux Port**, 39 St. Paul Est; tel. (514)866-3175, housed in a building that bunked sailors in the 1880s, specializes in traditional French cuisine. The grilled lamb, served with mashed potatoes and veggies, practically melts on the tongue. When the check arrives, accompanied by French truffles, you'll want to hug the waiter—not recommended here, but you'll have money left over for a nice tip.

## 7. CHILE

### *Chile's most moveable feast*

You'll ask yourself whether you're feeling tipsy or really moving at **Camino de Luna**, tel. (56)63213-788. A floating restaurant, this place offers a great champagne brunch for under \$10. The buffet-style feast—consisting of fresh seafood, local specialties, and rich desserts—is an extravagance you can afford and shouldn't miss. Just don't overdo it with the champagne unless you're wearing a life jacket!

## 8. CHINA

### *Beijing's imperial best*

The chefs at **Fang Shan**, *Beihai Park*; tel. (86)10-6401-1879, strive to recreate dishes enjoyed by royal families of the past. Well, if anyone can do it, it's these guys—they are said to have studied with the last empress' chefs. In fact, the steamed breads and filled pastries served here were originally developed specifically for Empress Dowager Cixi. To fully experience a sense of imperial dining, reserve a table with a view of North Lake and order a banquet-style set meal.

## 9. COSTA RICA

### *Cahuita's best place to run ashore*

Gilligan never had it so good! At the **Cahuita National Park Restaurant**, tel. (506)581-515, ext. 201, you'll feel like your ship has ground ashore. Situated right on the beach, this lemonade stand of a place is basically a platform with a straw roof, wooden tables, and folding chairs. But looks can be deceiving: the food here is excellent, the view dramatic, and the service friendly. All of this, with tropical island music playing in the background, will make you wish you were stranded.

## 10. DENMARK

### *Copenhagen's most addictive soup*

A former fish shop (circa 1789), **Krog's Fiskerestaurant**, *Gammel Strand* 38; tel. (45)3315-8915, still offers the freshest seafood in Copenhagen. The restaurant boasts a canal-side dining terrace offering some of the city's best views as well as a generously stocked wine cellar. Meat dishes are available and very good, but this place is all about fish. A few must-tries include mussels steamed in white wine, poached salmon/trout with saffron sauce, as well as a lobster soup we simply can't get enough of...

## 11. ECUADOR

### *Quito's cheap-skate's heaven*

**Restaurant Milanesa**, near the corner of *Andalusia* and *Salazar*, is one of many *almuerzitos* (little lunch restaurants) indigenous to Quito. No need for menus here: the waiter simply asks if you want the *almuerzo* (a local dish of the day) and that's that. You'll pay about \$1.15 for a typical *almuerzo* of beef and vegetable soup, tripe and potato stew with rice, a salad, a tangerine, and pineapple juice. Back home, that would probably get you the tangerine...

## 12. FRANCE

### *Paris' best getting-to-know-you, getting-to-know-all-about-you spot*

You're in a small, upstairs room with only three tables, all set for two (with grand, antique silver platters and cutlery). The object of your affection is seated opposite you, gazing dreamily into your eyes. While you may drop \$200 for the experience, you'll have about 3 hours to get to know one another, and the food—as well as the service—are top-notch. **Lapérouse**, 51 *Quai des Grands-Augustins*, 75006 Paris; tel. (33)01-432-668 04; *Métro St Michel*, has been around since 1770 and frequented by

the likes of Victor Hugo as well as many a hungry philosopher. The intoxicating soufflé au chocolat is sure to make any date more amorous by night's end...

### 13. GERMANY

#### *Frankfurt's best place to sing for your supper*

At **Weinhaus Bruckenkeller**, *Schutzenstrasse 6*; tel. (49)69-284-238, the strolling musicians will not only entertain you—they'll do their best to get you into the act. With an impressive menu of traditional German food, the beautiful setting in an arched cellar, and a choice of more than 180 fine wines, what's not to sing about?

### 14. GREECE

#### *Best-hidden Greek gem*

You won't find many tourists at the old **Xynos Taverna**, *Angelou Géronta 4, Athens*; tel. (30)210-322-1065, because it's tucked away in a quiet courtyard, just minutes from the bustle of Kydathineion Street. Named after the feisty, octogenarian owner, this place offers the warmth of genuine Greek hospitality, some of the best food in town, and wine tapped directly from the barrel. Traditional Greek guitar music, performed live, will make you want to stay all night. Thing is, the owner really wouldn't mind...

### 15. HONDURAS

#### *French Harbour's crab-lover's choice*

**Gio's**, *1 Gio's French Harbour*; tel./fax (504)45-1536, specializes in king crab, but also serves seafood and great steaks. Cooked to perfection and served with lemon butter, this mega-crab may be the best you'll ever taste. As the process is not to be rushed, order an appetizer and a cocktail as you wait for the main attraction. Note: this place also does a great seafood platter not mentioned on the menu.

## 16. IRELAND

### *Galway's tastiest aphrodisiac*

**Paddy Burke's Oyster Tavern**, *Clarinbridge; tel. (353)93-962-26*, named after the man who founded the world famous Galway Oyster Festival, serves the juiciest shellfish in the west. That's because rich oyster beds lie a stone's throw away from the place. You can buy those squishy fellas by the dozen or sit down for a proper meal with all the trimmings. For those uninitiated, be warned: oysters are said to be a rather potent aphrodisiac. As such, be sure to choose your dining partner appropriately. Here's a quick Oysters 101 refresher: Hold the shell horizontally, squeeze a drop of lemon juice inside, squash the oyster on your tongue, and then gulp the liquid down. Yummm!

## 17. ITALY

### *Rome's best café: and now for some name-dropping...*

Hector Berlioz, Mark Twain (in fact, a statue of Twain decorates the café), Hans Christian Andersen, James Fenimore Cooper, Sir Walter Scott, Henry James, Lord Alfred Tennyson, Richard Wagner, Benjamin Franklin, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Orson Welles, and Federico Fellini—big breath—all loved **Antico Caffè Greco**, *Via Condotti 86, 00186 Roma; tel. (39)06-679-1700*. Still not convinced? Wow, you're a tough sell! Okay, this café is one of the oldest in the world and was declared a bloomin' national monument by the Italian government in 1953. "Whatever," you say? Well, if the homemade ice cream and Rome's best cappuccino don't sell you on this incredible coffeehouse, we give up!

## 18. JAPAN

### *Tokyo's most tender eel*

There are two entrances at **Chikuyo Tei**, *8-chome*, tel. (81)3-3542-0787, one for standard Japanese food and the other for eel. Note: There are no booby prizes here—regardless of which door you choose, you'll have a wonderful experience. Should you choose the eel door, you'll be ushered into a delightful room, similar to a teahouse, and seated on tatami mats. Choices include unagi-odonburi (fried eel without sweet soy sauce) and eel liver soup. Here's a trade secret: for the tenderest eel, steam before frying.

## 19. MEXICO

### *Cabo's most motivated waiters*

Perched high above the Cabo San Lucas harbor, the lighthouse extension of the **Puerto Viejo Restaurant**, *Cabo San Lucas Marina at Plaza Las Glorias*; tel. (624)144-4221; e-mail: [puertoviejo@negosoluciones.com](mailto:puertoviejo@negosoluciones.com), boasts the best view of any restaurant in the area. The food is excellent and the 119-step climb (no kidding!) to your table will work up a rather panoramic appetite. The shrimp and coconut dish is a perfect light bite on a hot day. Remember to tip your waiter handsomely. All those steps to fill a water glass? That's dedication.

## 20. NICARAGUA

### *Nicaragua's biggest pancakes and best expat chat*

The pancakes at Granada's **Nica Buffet**, *on Calle Morazan across from Casa Pellas*, outsize their large plates and come in every imaginable variety: banana, strawberry, and chocolate chip to name a few. What's more, nothing on the menu will set you back more than about \$3. Fresh-squeezed juices—orange, melon, papaya, and pineapple—will give you a healthy jolt and prepare you for the day ahead. Those jonesing for a chat with a fellow expat won't be disappointed—this place serves as a morning hang for the city's expat community.

## 21. PANAMA

### *Fresh-as-it-gets seafood best*

Located on the second floor of the local seafood market, **Restaurante Mercado del Marisco**, *Balboa Avenue*; tel. (507)262-8879, specializes in seafood. There is no shortage of good seafood restaurants in Panama but—short of catching, gutting, and grilling your own on a campfire—this is as fresh as it gets. As you savor your sea bass, you can watch the boats unload a catch.

## 22. ST. MARTIN

### *Best beachfront dining*

**Rainbow**, tel. (590)590-875-580; website: [www.rainbow-cafe.com](http://www.rainbow-cafe.com), specializes in classic French cuisine. Located along restaurant row in Grand Case, this elegant place is situated in a grand house with balconies overlooking a beautiful beach. The crab cakes are highly recommended and the endive salad, with walnuts and blue cheese, is as fresh as the sea breeze.

## 23. UNITED KINGDOM

### *London's classiest curry*

With its opulent trappings, the **Bombay Brasserie**, *140 Courtfield Close, Courtfield Road, London SW7 4UH*; tel. (0871) 075-8752, will have you feeling as if you've walked onto a movie set. Because London's sophisto-curry set have surely programmed this upscale joint into their speed dial, it's best to reserve well in advance—particularly if you'd like to dine in the rather magical conservatory. If you find it hard to rouse yourself after a gin sling in the oh-so-soft Raj-style furnishings, try the Hyderabadi *Bhuna Gosht* (lamb with green chili)—it's sure to turbo-charge your tastebuds and get your blood flowing. The Goan fish curry, aromatic chicken dishes, and bean curries are all highly recommended milder options.

## 24. UNITED STATES

### *Phoenix's best sunset dining*

1,800 feet above the desert floor, **Etienne's Different Pointe of View**, *Pointe Tapatio Resort, 11111 N. Seventh St.*; 602-866-6350, offers a 360-degree view of the city and surrounding terrain. As such, sunset dining is highly recommended, particularly if you've never experienced an Arizona sunset. The fish dishes, such as the Chilean sea bass and the ahi with strawberry and chile vinaigrette, are excellent as are the innovative side dishes, such as pequillo peppers, cranberry beans, and stuffed red chile. This perch is a bit pricey but, to feel this much like a god on Mt. Olympus, it's worth it.

## 25. VENEZUELA

### *Caracas' best place to hang with the locals*

**El Porton**, *avenida Pichincha*, has a folk-art feel and features local entertainment on the weekends. You won't see many tourists at this casual local hang, known for its unique recipes. If you've never tried goat or rabbit, this is the place to give it a go—at El Porton, these are gourmet specialties.