

On the Road

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE *Bay Area*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALANNA HALE

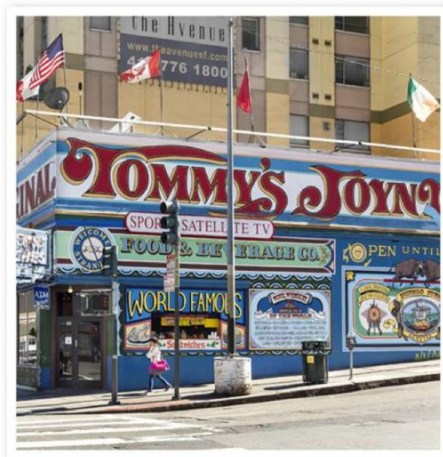
Save this list!
The biggest
names in town
tell us where
every food lover
should go.





Ask someone from the Bay Area where to grab a bite and you'll usually end up with a list so long, it would take months to try every place. If you ask a local chef, the list gets even longer. For decades, this region has been one of America's best places to eat, and people who live here never seem able to pick a favorite. We thought it was high time to edit the choices, so we asked star chefs and other insiders for their absolute top spots. Follow these tips and you're guaranteed to eat as well as they do.

★ WHERE TO EAT ★



GUY FIERI

Tommy's Joynt

Guy became a fan of this 70-year-old San Francisco institution while filming an episode of *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* several years ago—and it's about as authentic a dive as you can find. "It's my late-night go-to when I'm in the city for a concert or a game," he says. Order an overstuffed corned beef sandwich from the carving station (a bargain at \$9), then belly up to the bar to drink a local beer with neighborhood characters. tommysjoynt.com



AYESHA CURRY

Tosca Cafe

Dining at Tosca in San Francisco's North Beach is like stepping back in time. This Italian restaurant opened as a bar 98 years ago and still looks like its original self—in the best way: dim lighting, gilt-framed paintings, checkerboard floors. Visit on a Saturday night and you might find the Ayesha's Home Kitchen host eating the bucatini with tomato and guanciale. Try the roast chicken for two, which is served on toasted bread spread with ricotta. It takes the kitchen about an hour to prepare, but it's worth the wait. toscacafesf.com

★ WHERE TO EAT ★



CHRIS COSENTINO COCKSCOMB

Aster

Cosentino is a master of nose-to-tail cooking (which he shows off at his restaurant Cockscomb), and he has found a comrade in Brett Cooper, the chef and owner of San Francisco's Michelin-starred Aster. Follow Cosentino's lead and start your meal with sourdough bread with butter, then try the standout dry-aged beef tartare or the duck, which comes with a sprinkling of edible flowers. astersf.com



MATTHEW ACCARRINO SPQR

Andytown Coffee Roasters

Accarrino's post as executive chef at the modern Italian restaurant SPQR has him in the kitchen late most nights. When he needs a caffeine jolt, he stops at Andytown, a mini coffee chain with three locations in San Francisco's Sunset District. Try the Snowy Plover, espresso mixed with sparkling water and topped with whipped cream, and pair it with baked goods like scones, Irish soda bread and corn muffins. andytownsf.com



CHARLIE HALLOWELL PIZZAIOLO

Cosecha

You might not expect a restaurant with communal tables in an old Oakland market to churn out high-end Mexican food, but Cosecha does just that. Hallowell, who owns three restaurants in the area, pops in for the crispy shrimp tacos. On cool-weather days, start with the posole, made with tender chicken and green chiles. cosechacafe.com



PAUL EINBUND THE MORRIS

Trou Normand

Cocktails are an art form for Einbund, a sommelier and restaurant owner, and he knows he'll always get a great one from the bartenders at Trou Normand. The place specializes in 1920s-inspired drinks, many of which are made with small-batch brandies. Although there's a menu, you're better off requesting a custom creation. Einbund gives bonus points for the charcuterie: He says it's some of the best in San Francisco. trounormandsf.com



★ WHERE TO EAT ★



JACKSON YU OMAKASE

Roi Palace

Whenever sushi whiz Yu, who co-owns the Michelin-starred Omakase, visits this dim sum mecca, the chefs make a special menu for him. But the standard offerings here are great, especially the steamed pork buns and xiao long bao (soup dumplings). On weekend mornings expect to see families lined up for a table; if you have to wait, you can join the local kids and gaze at live fish in giant tanks. koipalace.com



TRACI DES JARDINS JARDINIÈRE

The Progress

The owner of a San Francisco restaurant empire, Des Jardins knows the city's dining scene better than anyone—so when she recommends a place, listen! At The Progress, inside a converted theater, the cocktails are strong, the food is served family-style and the waiters couldn't be friendlier. The \$62 prix fixe menu includes four seasonal dishes; choose one with avocado, which the chefs source from a nearby farm. theprogress-sf.com



JESSICA CARREIRA AND DAVID COSTA ADEGA

Smoking Pig BBQ

Carreira and Costa received a Michelin star for their authentic Portuguese food, but when they host visitors from out of town, they head out for good ol' American barbecue at San Jose's Smoking Pig BBQ. They start with bacon-wrapped, cheese-and-sausage-stuffed jalapeños called Wolf Turds. You should also try some Louisiana-style hot links, slow-smoked brisket and a Southern dessert or two. smokingpigbbq.net



CRAIG STOLL LOCANDA

Tacos Cala

Stoll spends his days making some of San Francisco's most sought-after pastas and pizzas, but his dream lunch spot is a taqueria tucked in the back of a Mexican restaurant called Cala. The standing-room-only space doles out hearty carnitas, fish, chicken and vegetarian tacos on corn tortillas that are made fresh every 15 minutes. Pair them with horchata or one of the seasonal aguas frescas. calarestaurant.com



★ WHERE TO EAT ★



MICHAEL MINA

MICHAEL MINA, SAN FRANCISCO

Deli Board

At the Deli Board, it's not unusual to find crowds of tattooed motorcycle mechanics, young tech geeks—and award-winning chef and mega-restaurateur Mina. He deems the monster-size sandwiches at this lunch spot the best in San Francisco. The menu changes daily but always features twists on Jewish deli classics like pastrami on a garlic roll and turkey with cream cheese. deliboardsf.com



GAYLE PIRIE AND JOHN CLARK

FOREIGN CINEMA

Hog Island Oyster Co.

This husband-and-wife duo screens movies nightly at their Mission District restaurant, so they know the value of a good show. And they love Hog Island Oyster Co., where pros shuck and grill oysters in front of gawking crowds at San Francisco's Ferry Building. If you have the time, head to Marin County and grab lunch at the oyster farm. Just plan ahead: Tables there book up four months in advance! hogislandoysters.com



TANYA HOLLAND BROWN SUGAR KITCHEN

The Cook and Her Farmer

Soul-food expert Holland, whose own restaurant is in West Oakland, admits that this farm-to-table café is a bit off the beaten track—but that's all the more reason to visit. Owned by cookbook-writer Romney Steele (the cook) and her partner, oyster expert Steven Day (the farmer), the restaurant features seafood with Southern spin: fisherman's stew, mussels, and oyster po'boys. thecookandherfarmer.com



SUE CONLEY COWGIRL CREAMERY

The Ramen Bar

When Conley, owner of the Bay Area's beloved Cowgirl Creamery, shops the farmers' market at San Francisco's Ferry Plaza, she often drops by this ramen joint for an early lunch. The hearty soups and refreshing poke bowls are a great way to kick off the day. If you go, make sure to try the milk chocolate namelaka, a mousse-like dessert topped with black sesame cake crumbles. theramenbar.com



★ WHAT TO DO ★

Here's how to spend your time between meals.



◀ Hike Fort Funston

At Fort Funston, on the southwestern coast of San Francisco, you can hang-glide off 200-foot cliffs—or, if you prefer more down-to-earth adventures, explore an old military bunker, then hike the steep path down to the beach, where you'll find sand dunes and locals with their dogs. (No leashes required!)



◀ Stroll through Old Oakland and Rockridge

As one of the Bay Area's most diverse and culturally rich cities, Oakland has become a magnet for chefs and shop owners. Check out their goods in areas like Old Oakland and Rockridge, home to stylish boutiques, up-and-coming restaurants and stunning historic architecture.

▶ Shop the farmers' markets

Because of its extended growing season, Northern California has the best farmers' markets. Many are held on Saturdays, with some of the biggest crowds at the Ferry Plaza in San Francisco. Find organic farmers, cheese makers, beekeepers and bakers; you might even see notable local chefs. ferrybuildingmarketplace.com



▶ Sample Japanese specialties in San Jose

San Jose's small but mighty Japantown is home to the San Jose Tofu Co. (408-292-7026), one of the few shops in the US where experts still make tofu by hand. Pick some up, then head down the street to Shuei-Do Manju Shop (408-294-4148) for chewy, sweet manju and mochi.



◀ Join the Presidio Picnic

Every Sunday afternoon from March into October, families flock to the Presidio (a former army base that's now a national park) for communal picnics. Bring your own bites or buy some from more than two dozen food trucks. presidio.gov



◀ Explore Golden Gate Bridge Park

No doubt you've heard of Golden Gate Park, but you might not realize just how many attractions it contains: the California Academy of Sciences, polo fields, one of the world's tallest windmills and Park Chalet beer garden, to name a few. sfrecpark.org; parkchalet.com

★ WHERE TO STAY ★



Claremont Club & Spa

This iconic 1915 hotel on the Oakland-Berkeley border has updated rooms, 22 acres of gardens, an award-winning restaurant and a fascinating history: The property once held a private castle and was even gambled away in a checkers game! From \$239, fairmont.com



Cornell Hotel de France

Set atop a hill in San Francisco's Union Square, this quirky family-run hotel nods to everything French: Each of the six floors features artwork by a single French artist (Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse) and the in-house restaurant is dedicated to Joan of Arc. From \$240; cornellhotel.com



Axiom Hotel

You can't beat the location of this boutique hotel: It's just steps from the city's fabled cable car line. If you have a few minutes to spare, browse through the San Francisco-themed books that line the shelves in the lobby. From \$189; axiomhotel.com



Hotel Valencia Santana Row

Located in a high-end shopping district in San Jose, this Mediterranean-style hotel has lots of quiet outdoor spaces, including a pool and a hot tub. At night be sure to catch the sunset from the hotel's rooftop bar, Cielo. From \$189; hotelvalencia-santanarow.com