

Food, Glorious FOOD!

FROM EXTRAVAGANT TASTING MENUS WORTH SPENDING THE NIGHT FOR TO HANDS-ON COOKING CLASSES IN EXOTIC LOCALES, THESE RESORTS KNOW THAT THE WAY TO THE SPIRIT IS THROUGH THE STOMACH **BY AMBER GIBSON**

*FOUR
SEASONS
RESORT
THE NAM HAI*
Hoi An, Vietnam

According to a late 2017 report from the Portland, OR-based World Food Travel Association, an astonishing 93% of tourists are considered “food travelers,” which means they took part in a food- or beverage-related experience *other* than dining out in the past year—whether it was visiting a cooking school, taking a wine tour, or shopping in a gourmet store. So, in honor of ye food experience-hungry trekkers, we offer bucket list experiences, near and far, designed to sate the appetites of those with exceptional taste.

Don't be surprised to find yourself donning a conical farmer's hat if you check into this Four Seasons resort. A day here learning about Vietnamese food begins with an interactive visit to an organic vegetable garden, rice paddy, or fishing village to meet local producers and gain a deeper appreciation of ingredients central to Vietnamese cuisine. The resort has a robust organic garden, too, employing 10 full-time gardeners and growing three dozen kinds of vegetables and herbs, including lemongrass, eggplant, chilies, and ginger.

All of this beautiful produce creates vibrant flavors in dishes like prawn rice paper rolls, chicken and cabbage salad, and beef pho, with fish sauce the common denominator. The culinary programming is truly world class, with different themed courses each day, including Junior Cooking Academy for kids. Chef Tran Van Sen is a benevolent and patient teacher, and the marble counters at the academy are decorated with inlaid porcelain. After working all morning, enjoy a four-course lunch feast that you prepared yourself, with gifts from the kitchen to take home. Then head to the Heart of the Earth Spa for a relaxing

afternoon. Many of its treatments employ the same ingredients from the garden to rejuvenate body and spirit.

Villas are constructed like Vietnamese Hue garden houses. The bed is on a platform in the middle of the room, adjacent to a tatami-style writing desk and eggshell lacquered bathtub. Since Four Seasons took over management last year, many changes have been made, including a new beach bar, new yoga pavilion with aerial yoga classes, and pops of bright color in villas for a contemporary touch.

Rates start at \$590. Block Ha My Dong B, Dien Duong Ward, Dien Ban Town, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, fourseasons.com/hoian



ONE&ONLY PALMILLA

Los Cabos, Mexico

Los Cabos is the hottest luxury destination in Mexico, with tons of new resorts popping up, but this is still the best. Perched on the edge of a peninsula, the views here are unparalleled. Originally built in 1956 with just 15 rooms, it welcomed stars like Lucille Ball and John Wayne back when you could only arrive by yacht or private plane, and rooms and suites remain true to authentic hacienda style, including patterned ceramic sinks and studded pine doors.

The new Catch, Cook, Cocktail program takes guests deep sea fishing on the Sea of Cortez in the One&Only yacht. After reeling in local marlin or yellowfin tuna, prepare the catch with vivacious Moroccan Chef Larbi Dahrouch, who runs Agua by Larbi, the hotel's signature restaurant, serving a mixture of Mexican and Middle Eastern flavors. Larbi will teach you about chilies, molé, and ceviche to enjoy with margaritas and palomas, while you listen to the crashing waves.

There's also an intimate herb garden used for private cooking classes and tequila tastings, and the resort often hosts renowned guest chefs, like three-star Michelin Chef Christopher Kostow of The Restaurant at Meadowood in Napa Valley. So, indulge in Kaluga caviar, prime steaks, lamb chops, and roasted local fish. The next night, visit Agua by Larbi for Moroccan favorites like lamb tajine and local sea bass while watching the sunset in a private cliffside booth.

Rates start at \$860. Carr Transpeninsular, 23400 San José del Cabo, oneandonlyresorts.com/palmilla



SINGLETHREAD

Healdsburg, California

A chef marries a farmer and they decide to open a five-room bed and breakfast. This could describe many quaint, rustic inns, but Kyle and Katina Connaughton are not your typical chef and farmer. The couple is a culinary powerhouse, having cooked, farmed, and gardened in both Japan and Europe (Kyle is also a veteran of the experimental kitchen at The Fat Duck in Berkshire, England).

The resort's restaurant garnered two Michelin stars within a year after opening, and dinner begins on the rooftop with champagne and canapés. When it's time to meander downstairs to your table, prepare to be dazzled. An array of colorful microseasonal snacks will have any gourmand feeling like a kid in Candyland, and Chef Connaughton's 11-course menu is determined by the produce Katina harvests each day (there are 72 seasons, not four, in this world) and he treats these precious ingredients with Japanese technique and introspection. Even desserts, like hojicha ice cream with puffed amaranth and apricot compote, have a light touch.

To fully experience SingleThread, stay for two nights and order in-room donabe dinner the second. This symphony of seafood includes a sashimi plate and culminates in a Hokkaido-style seafood and farm vegetable miso nabe hotpot. Housemade tofu and meat, including American wagyu, are also available.

Attention to detail extends to the décor, artwork, and elegant donabe earthenware pots, bowls, and cups made by eighth-generation master Japanese potters. You'll wistfully look back on this dinner, and the extravagant breakfast in bed that follows, every time you order room service again.

Rates start at \$1,000 per night, including breakfast. Dinner at SingleThread is \$295 and the in-room donabe dinner is \$150 per person. 131 North Street, Healdsburg, singlethreadfarms.com

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TAJ CAMPTON PLACE

San Francisco, California

This landmark hotel in Union Square is more than 100 years old, but Executive Chef Srijith Gopinathan's Cal-Indian cuisine at Michelin-starred Campton Place is decidedly modern, pioneering a new brand of fusion and making a strong case for the future of Indian food in fine dining. The elegant European dining room belies the contemporary, global flavors to come.

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and veteran of Raymond Blanc and Gary Jones's Michelin-starred Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons in the UK, Gopinathan became, in 2016, the first Indian chef in the country to achieve two Michelin stars, having introducing diners to dishes like poriyal—a quick, dry Swiss chard stir-fry, though his version comes with collard coulis to accompany dainty guinea hen. His seven-course tasting menu is titled “Spice Route,” and presents generous sprinklings of turmeric, cumin, ginger, and paprika flavoring tender meats and rich stewed vegetables. An extensive wine list spans the globe, and includes an excellent by-the-glass selection.

India's vegetarian dishes are vast and varied, reflective of a country with more non-meat eaters than the rest of the world put together. It only makes sense, then, that Campton Place offers an intriguing vegetarian tasting menu, highlighting Northern California's incredible array of produce, much of which can be found at nearby Ferry Plaza Farmers Market. Dishes like young jack fruit with shishito peppers and raita foam or a cauliflower kheema (traditionally a minced meat curry) with pickled carrots and korma showcase Gopinathan's Southern Indian heritage and creativity.

A new partnership with Brooks Brothers offers on-demand formalwear and personalized shopping experiences for guests, so both men and women are sure to look their best while dining at Campton Place or any of the other incredible restaurants in town. For those arriving on late flights, 24-hour in-room dining is available. Breakfast in bed is especially sumptuous, with specialties like a masala omelet and lobster knuckle frittata.

Rates start at \$280. Spice Route tasting menu is \$155 with wine pairings for \$115. The vegetarian menu is \$140. 340 Stockton Street, San Francisco, tajcamptonplace.com





THE INN AT LITTLE WASHINGTON

Washington, Virginia

Great hotels often have wonderful restaurants, but every once in a while, one is so fantastical that it becomes the main attraction, and you book a room because you are simply too full of great food and wine to do anything more than stumble upstairs to your room.

There's no denying that The Inn at Little Washington is this unique breed of restaurant and hotel, located 90 minutes west of the nation's capital. Chef Patrick O'Connell has run the inn for 40 years and claims that he still feels like he's been hosting a never-ending house party, with truffled popcorn, sinful tins of caviar, and special guest Faira, the mooing cheese cart cow.

The self-taught chef and restaurateur is full of theatrics, and has been referred to as "the Pope of American Cuisine," albeit with a




dalmatian-decked apron in lieu of a cassock.

O'Connell has won no less than five James Beard Awards and was one of the James Beard Foundation's original inductees into "Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America." His restaurant also received the first perfect score ever from Zagat, and, since the Michelin guide first came to Washington D.C., The Inn at Little Washington has been awarded two stars, the highest honor in the region.

Arrive early the day you check in to enjoy tea in the garden. (Many of the herbal varieties, including citrus mint, lavender, tulsi, hyssop and lemon verbena, are grown right in the garden.) Then take a walk across the street to see the vegetable garden, beehives, and livestock, and feel free to pet the Norwegian dwarf goats, llama, and sheep.

Book a room in the Norman House; the three renovated rooms here are the newest accommodations at the inn, and the Garden Suite is exquisite, with a soaking tub and enormous terrace.

Rates start at \$520 per night on weekdays, \$545 on weekends. Dinner is \$218 with wine pairings for \$125. 309 Middle Street, Washington, Virginia, theinnatlittlewashington.com 

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