

The 10 Best New Restaurants in America

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Once again, we ate our way across the country in search of the best new restaurants. These 10 fantastic spots--from casual places with communal tables to high-end, white-tablecloth affairs--prove that the American restaurant scene is alive and well, and more delicious than ever.



Line cook Pauline Drumm (left), chef de cuisine Derek Hanson (middle), and line cook Adam Hungale (right) keep the kitchen moving at Laurelhurst Market in Portland, Oregon.

Laurelhurst Market - Portland, Oregon

3155 East Burnside Street, 503-206-3097, laurelhurstmarket.com

The Story: Part steakhouse, part butcher shop, 100 percent ode to all things meat--this is "The Year in Food 2010" distilled into a single restaurant. A chalkboard--with a cow diagram and "cuts available tonight" menu--hangs near the open kitchen in the industrial space. All the good steakhouse cliches (fun, raucous) without all the bad ones (super-expensive, boys' club).

The Team: Owners Benjamin Dyer and Jason Owens and chef-owner David Kreifels (all partners in supper club Simpatuca Dining Hall).

Must Order: Meat! More specifically, beef. Try cuts like culotte (a.k.a. baseball steak), rib eye, or hanger steak. Throw in a side of Millennium Farms creamed corn for good measure.

What's in a Name: It's a nod to both the neighborhood where the restaurant is located and the name of the mini mart that used to inhabit the space.

The Recipe: [Rib-Eye Steak with Blue Cheese Butter and Walla Walla Onion Rings](#)

Miller Union - Atlanta

999 Brady Avenue, 678-733-8550, millerunion.com

The Story: Miller Union takes the southern meat-and-three tradition and tweaks it. Gone are the steam tables, Formica tables, and dusty decor. In their place are farm-fresh meats and veggies, a modern farmhouse feel in a warehouse space, and a light but satisfying menu.

The Team: Chef Steven Satterfield, a master of vegetable cookery and former executive sous-chef at Atlanta favorite Watershed, owns the restaurant with general manager Neal McCarthy.

Must Order: Griddled chicken made with heritage breed Poulet Rouge; the seasonal vegetable plate.

What's in a Name: The restaurant is built on the site of the Miller Union Stock Yards, which closed in the 1970s.

The Recipe: [Crispy Chicken with Green Beans, Black-Eyed Peas, and Bell Peppers](#)

Menton - Boston

354 Congress Street, 617-737-0099, mentonboston.com

The Story: If chef Barbara Lynch ever ran for mayor of Boston, it would be a landslide. Yes, she and her four restaurants, butcher store, cocktail bar, and demonstration kitchen/cookbook store are that popular. Her latest restaurant makes it clear that fine dining is in fact not dead in America.

The Team: Chef Lynch runs the show but executive chef Colin Lynch (no relation) does the heavy lifting. Wine director Cat Silirie is one of the country's best sommeliers.

Must Order: There are two menu options--the seven-course chef's tasting menu and the four-course prix fixe. Shellfish is the star.

What's in a Name: Lynch describes her cooking as a marriage of French technique and Italian sensibility. Menton is a picturesque town in southern France near the Italian border.

The Recipe: [Shellfish with Butter Broth and Honey Emulsion](#)



New York's Marea.

Marea - New York

240 Central Park South, 212-582-5100, marea-nyc.com

The Story: Glitzy, high-end, expensive--not exactly the adjectives you want attached to a restaurant that's opening in the midst of a recession. But proving that rigatoni with shrimp and calamari (or any of Marea's life-changing pastas for that matter) trumps even a shrinking bank account, this Central Park South spot quickly became the best new restaurant in New York (and, arguably, America).

The Team: Chef Michael White (a midwestern boy who mastered Italian cooking) and restaurateur Chris Cannon also own two other not-too-shabby Manhattan standouts, Convivio and Alto.

Must Order: Pick a pasta, any pasta--all the fresh shapes are made in-house. Crudo (think Italian sushi) showcases White's mastery of all things fish.

What's in a Name: Italian for "tide."

The Recipe: [Rigatoni with Shrimp, Calamari, and Basil](#)

Anchovies & Olives - Seattle

1550 15th Avenue, 206-838-8080, anchoviesandolives.com

The Story: In a city full of outstanding seafood restaurants, Anchovies & Olives is arguably the best. "Less is more" seems to be the theme here--from the 40-seat space (with a beautiful open kitchen) to the pared-down menu that's divided into two sections: crudo and plates (entrees). What's more, nothing is priced over \$16.

The Team: Chef Ethan Stowell and wife Angela (they also run Tavolata and How to Cook a Wolf) and chef de cuisine Charles Walpole.

Must Order: Mackerel with shallot and walnut agrodolce, seared prawns with salsa verde, and geoduck crudo.

What's in a Name: Originally the title for Stowell's cookbook, which is now called *Ethan Stowell's New Italian Kitchen*. Publishers didn't like it; Stowell did.

The Recipe: [Oil-Poached Swordfish with White Corn, Guanciale, and Chive Oil](#)

Hatfield's - Los Angeles

6703 Melrose Avenue, 323-935-2977, hatfieldsrestaurant.com

The Story: Los Angeles needs more stylish fine-dining restaurants like Hatfield's--family-owned spots where the food (not the Hollywood crowd) is the top priority. The new, more spacious location has a glass-enclosed kitchen, full bar, and smart design, including a centerpiece light fixture that is shaped like the molecular structure of honey.

The Team: Husband-and-wife chefs Quinn and Karen Hatfield met while working at Wolfgang Puck's Spago.

Must Order: If the croque-madame (yellowtail sashimi, prosciutto, quail egg, brioche) were taken off the menu, customers would revolt, says Quinn.

What's in a Name: Short. Simple. And to the point.

The Recipe: [Summer Vegetable Ragout with Exotic Curry Sauce](#)



The space housing

Fort Worth's Ellerbe Fine Foods used to be a gas station.

Ellerbe Fine Foods - Fort Worth

1501 West Magnolia Avenue, 817-926-3663, ellerbefinefoods.com

The Story: Ever wonder what it would be like to have a charming southern grandma who invited you over to her cozy little house for Sunday supper? Ellerbe Fine Foods offers you the opportunity to enjoy a similar experience--from the warm feel of the dining room (in a former service station, no less) to their everyone-is-family philosophy. And with apologies to all you southerners, the upscale country cooking is probably much better than grandma's.

The Team: Co-owners Molly McCook (she's the chef) and Richard King (he works the dining room) grew up together in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Must Order: Riffs on southern classics are best. Two to try--New Orleans-style barbecue shrimp and Maw Maw's bread pudding.

What's in a Name: McCook learned to cook from her grandma, who lived on Ellerbe Court Road in Shreveport.

The Recipe: [Heirloom Tomato Salad with Buttermilk Dressing and Blue Cheese](#)

Bar La Grassa - Minneapolis

800 North Washington Avenue, 612-333-3837, barlagrassa.com

The Story: Trendy ingredients come and go, but pasta is forever. This temple to the Italian carb of choice is a bustling spot that features a 24-seat pasta bar (it's where the serious eaters like to sit, says chef Isaac Becker) and a long list of dishes made from both dried and fresh pasta.

The Team: Becker and his wife Nancy St. Pierre, who runs front-of-the-house. **Must Order:** No matter what the season, customers love the gnocchi with cauliflower and orange. We'd suggest ordering the crab ravioli, too.

What's in a Name: La Grassa means "The Fat" in Italian and refers to the legendary cuisine of Bologna.

The Recipe: [Paccheri Pasta with Braised Chicken and Saffron Cream](#)

Frances - San Francisco

3870 17th Street, 415-621-3870, frances-sf.com

The Story: This is the neighborhood restaurant we all wish we lived around the corner from--50 seats, comfy banquettes, prime people-watching from the window bar seats, small but smart menu, and friendly staff.

The Team: James Beard Award-nominated chef Melissa Perello cooked at Charles Nob Hill and Fifth Floor before taking a few years off to plan Frances.

Must Order: Applewood-smoked bacon beignets, chickpea fritters, and pork trotters--all under the Bouchees ("mouthfuls") category on the menu.

What's in a Name: Frances was Perello's grandmother, who taught Perello how to cook--and how to make her [famous peanut brittle](#)--during summer visits to Wichita Falls, Texas.

The Recipe: [Sauteed Duck Breasts with White Bean Ragout and Escarole](#)



Father-and-son team Jimmy Bannos Sr. (left) and Jimmy Bannos Jr. (right) of the Purple Pig in Chicago.

The Purple Pig - Chicago

500 North Michigan Avenue, 312-464-1744, thepurplepigchicago.com

The Story: This Mediterranean-inspired hot spot brings daring favorites like roasted bone marrow, pork-neck-bone rillettes, and pig's ear to the Magnificent Mile. Communal tables, small plates, long hours, and a huge L-shaped bar (with excellent beer and wine lists) make this one of Chicago's most delicious--and easygoing--foodie destinations.

The Team: Jimmy Bannos Jr. heads the kitchen, with support from veteran chefs and co-owners Jimmy Bannos Sr. and Scott Harris.

Must Order: Milk-braised pork shoulder, porchetta panini, and pig's tail braised in balsamic. Crispy chicken-thigh kebabs do the original white meat proud.

What's in a Name: The owners must have known they were going to sell a lot of pork and wine. Legend has it that if a pig drinks red wine, it will turn purple.

The Recipe: [Pork Blade Steaks with Nduja and Honey and Arugula Salad](#)

All photos by Elinor Carucci

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