

Title:

London - For The Connoisseur

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532

Summary:

London - the grand resonance of its very name suggests history and might. Its opportunities for entertainment by day and night go on and on and on.

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Article Body:

London - the grand resonance of its very name suggests history and might. Its opportunities for entertainment by day and night go on and on and on. It's a city that exhilarates and intimidates, stimulates and irritates in equal measure, a grubby Monopoly board studded with stellar sights.

It is a cosmopolitan mix of Third and First Worlds, chauffeurs and beggars, the stubbornly traditional and the proudly ultramodern. But somehow - between Her Majesty and Boy George, Bow Bells and Big Ben, the Millennium Dome and the 2012 Olympics - it all goes together.

Eating out in London lets you deliver your personal verdicts with fresh updates every day. London is overflowing with exciting places to drink, eat and dance the night away. Eating out in the capital is no longer just about food, it is an art form of the highest order.

To appreciate London's culinary rise, it helps to recall that at one time it was understood that the British ate to live while the French lived to eat. Change was slow in coming after the Second World War, when steamed pudding and boiled sprouts were still eaten daily by tweed-and-flannel-clothed Britons. When people thought of British cuisine, fish-and-chips came to mind, a dish that tasted best wrapped in newspaper. Then there was always shepherd' pie, ubiquitously available in pubs.

Culinary London has transformed itself while the capital has been become a key world finance center and benefited from globalization. New menus evolve constantly as chefs outdo each other, creating hot spots that are all about the buzz of being there. Master chefs from continental Europe such as Anton

Mosimann, Nico Ladenis, and the Roux brothers showed the way, but it was Sir Terence Conran who brought mega-restaurants to the masses. He starting the revolution with Quaglino's, in 1993, his 480-seat Mezzo restaurant was the biggest in Europe when it opened, and he topped that again with Bluebird in 1997, which came complete with grocery store, fishmonger, florist, and food market.

Another driving ambition belongs to super chef-turned-mogul Marco Pierre White. His restaurant empire is everywhere: the Criterion, Mirabelle, and L'Escargot are all under his wing. The gifted Gordon Ramsay, his onetime proteg`, is making up ground.

The rest of the top-end haute cuisine scene is in skilled hands. Michel Roux commands at Le Gavroche, White has led that London legend, L'Escargot, back toward the top, and Tom Aikens is steaming up the charts at his eponymous place in Chelsea. There are, of course, many more stars of the celebrity variety like Jamie Oliver, who are everywhere.

London has emerged as one of the great food capitals of the world. Both its veteran and upstart chefs have fanned out around the globe for culinary inspiration and returned with innovative dishes, flavors, and ideas that London diners have never seen before. These chefs are pioneering a style called "Modern British," which is forever changing and innovative, yet familiar in many ways.

Traditional British cooking has made a comeback, too. The dishes that British mums have been forever feeding their families are fashionable again. The British soul food like bangers and mash, Norfolk dumplings, nursery puddings, cottage pie all has made a comeback.