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Old South Plantations The True Story



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restaurants you just can't miss:

San Francisco

By Richard Sterling

The best food, the best prices and the best service – with no snooty waiters – has always been the guiding principle of restaurants in San Francisco.

The common man is king here, but he just happens to possess a refined palate. So, whether it's high-dollar elegance, Bohemian élan, or just plain good food in undemanding surroundings, you'll find that the locals (and visitors) are offered a wide choice of some 2,000 restaurants, ranging from Chinese, Italian and Spanish cuisine to Californian fare of both the chic and the 'comfort food' varieties. In addition to the San Francisco restaurants described here, we've included a few special places across the Bay in Sausalito, Berkeley and the nearby East Berkeley Hills.



Campton Place is a study in serenity



Chef/owner Gregoire Jaquet at work in his amazing takeaway

at very good prices. Situated on a corner with ample windows, Alma also provides a view of the life of the Mission District. Casual. 1101 Valencia Street, tel: 001 (415) 401 8959.

INEXPENSIVE: Main Courses from \$10

Gregoire The best takeaway in the Bay Area offers classic French cookery on the go. The menu, which changes almost weekly, may include grilled artichoke with aioli, steak with a wine reduction sauce, ethereal potato puffs, and impeccably-fresh salads. There is seating for three inside and for six along the sidewalk, but most customers drop in to collect the cleverly-packaged goods and then scurry away home or to their hotel or picnic site. As Gregoire is only half a block from the renowned University of California, you can combine good food with a tour of the campus, or a visit to area museums. 2109 Cedar Street, Berkeley, tel: 001 (510) 883 1893.

Lefty O'Doul's Tired of fancy food? Just want to just tuck into something undemanding, filling and rewarding? Then head for this big, bustling *hofbrau*, located in the middle of downtown and named after a beloved local baseball player. Among the offerings – roast beef, roast turkey, baked ham, sausage and mash and/or a pudding. At these prices, it's a steal. 333 Geary Boulevard, tel: 001 (415) 982 8900.

Mon Kiang Hakka cuisine is the peasant cookery of the region around Hong Kong. Preparations are simple but it's hearty and delicious, making the most of humble ingredients. There are few Hakka restaurants in Hong Kong and fewer still abroad. This unassuming little place is a rare gem. Special dishes include aromatic salt-baked chicken, pork-stuffed tofu steamed or fried, and bountiful tureens of seafood soup. Casual. 683 Broadway, tel: 001 (415) 421 2015.

Richard Sterling is a San Francisco area food and travel writer. His latest book is: *The Fire Never Dies: One Man's Raucous Romp Down the Road of Food, Passion and Adventure.*

TRAVELNOTES



Getting there: San Francisco is served from the UK by British Airways, United Airlines, Virgin Atlantic Airways and by KLM/Northwest over Amsterdam.

Getting around: A rental car is often an impediment as San Francisco is so hilly and it's difficult to park. Many places can be reached by foot or by public transport, including the