



Written by

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Nick's top 25 restaurants



1. **St John**, London. For its bar, restaurant and bread.
2. **Ballymaloe**, Co Cork, Eire. The Allan's culinary beacon in a stunningly tranquil setting.
3. **The Walnut Tree Inn**, near Abergavenny, Wales, for unforgettable New Year Day lunches.
4. **The Fat Duck**, Bray where Heston Blumenthal pushes the boundaries of cooking to extremes.
5. **El Bulli**, Rosas, Spain. Where Ferran Adria does the same but with a far larger team in a restaurant overlooking the Mediterranean.
6. The small town of **Mealhada** between Porto and Lisbon. Initially discovered by lorry drivers this is the epicentre of suckling pig restaurants worldwide.
7. **Olivier Roellinger**, Cancale, northern France. Elegance, cooking inspired by the herbs and spices of the former French Empire and oysters in abundance.
8. **Taillevent**, Paris. The standard bearer - what every French restaurant in the world should seek to emulate.
9. **La Crepa**, Isola D'Elba, near Cremona, Italy. Wonderful food and wine in a 19th century building within a medieval walled town.
10. **Tomata**, Santorini. Set within a former olive oil factory, ten metres from the beach this is modern Greek food at its best.
11. **Cafe Pushkin**, Moscow. A perfect replica of a 19th Russian restaurant which is, amazingly, only four years old.

12. **Kronenhalle**, Zurich. Wonderfully robust food but the art on the walls is even more memorable.
13. **The Merchant House**, Ludlow, Shropshire. The one man show, where chef/proprietor Shaun Hill is as proficient a chef as he is a washer-up.
14. **Gidleigh Park**, Devon. A unique combination - where the food and the wine match the views over Dartmoor.
15. **Steirereck**, Vienna. Unusual Styrian food and wonderful wines in an impressive setting.
16. **L'Atelier du Robuchon**, Paris. The modern face of the restaurant which breaks down the barrier between the customer and the chef.
17. **The sushi bar at Nobu**, London. Theatre, fantastic fish and enjoyable even if you are on your own.
18. **Alle Testiere**, Venice. Definitely the smallest (10 tables!) and certainly one of the most perfect fish restaurants anywhere.
19. **Troisgros**, Roanne, France. Untouchable even after 40 years and its brasserie, Central, just round the corner is unmissable, too.
20. **Bull & Bear**, Oporto, Portugal. Inspired, cerebral cooking from a chef who initially trained as a classical pianist.
21. **Torre del Remi**, Pyrenees
22. **Gastronomica Clinica**, Albergo Arnaldo, Rubiera, Italy The most aptly named restaurant in the world which also serves the very finest bollito misto.
23. **Hotel Benazuza**, outside Seville, southern Spain. Staffed by disciples of Ferran Adria who serve the most inspired breakfast.
24. **Harry's Bar**, London
25. **Bibendum**, London. For its style, oyster bar and its initial chef, Simon Hopkinson.