



Food Journeys of a Lifetime: 500 Extraordinary Places to Eat Around the Globe

By National Geographic

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For pure pleasure, few experiences are as satisfying as a chance to explore the world's great culinary traditions and landmarks—and here, in the latest title of our popular series of illustrated travel gift books, you'll find a fabulous itinerary of foods, dishes, markets, and restaurants worth traveling far and wide to savor.

On the menu is the best of the best from all over the globe: Tokyo's freshest sushi; the spiciest Creole favorites in New Orleans; the finest vintages of the great French wineries; the juiciest cuts of beef in Argentina; and much, much more. You'll sample the sophisticated dishes of fabled chefs and five-star restaurants, of course, but you'll also discover the simpler pleasures of the side-street cafés that cater to local people and the classic specialties that give each region a distinctive flavor.

Every cuisine tells a unique story about its countryside, climate, and culture, and in these pages you'll meet the men and women who transform nature's bounty into a thousand gustatory delights. Hundreds of appetizing full-color illustrations evoke an extraordinary range of tastes and cooking techniques; a wide selection of recipes invites you to create as well as consume; sidebars give a wealth of entertaining information about additional sites to visit as well as the cultural importance of the featured food; while lively top ten lists cover topics from chocolate factories to champagne bars, from historic food markets to wedding feasts, harvest celebrations, and festive occasions of every kind. In addition, detailed practical travel information provides all the ingredients you'll need to cook up a truly delicious experience for even the most demanding of traveling gourmets.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

DAN WESTERGREN took up photography after being taught how to develop film by an indulgent science teacher in the eighth grade. That early experience instilled in him a reverence for the classic, timeless feel of a wonderful photograph, a reverence that he continues to feel even with his job as Director of Photography for National Geographic Travel. In addition to photo editing for National Geographic Traveler magazine and Natgeo.com/travel he has photographed a variety of stories, including expeditions up Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn in the European Alps. Westergren also went on and photographed an expedition to ski the last degree to the North Pole. Over the years, he's shot some of the world's most intriguing people, places and experiences.

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Top Ten New Year's Celebratory Feasts Around the World

Forget-the-Year Parties, Japan

Bonenkai, or forget-the-year, parties are occasions for workmates or groups of friends to celebrate the previous year's successes and drown its failures. They usually take place in izakaya, taverns serving smallish Japanese dishes alongside drinks, or restaurants. Rigid protocol applies, at least until everyone is drunk; empty glasses are taboo.

Planning: Bonenkai parties take place throughout December; many people attend several. www.jnto.go.jp

New Year, or Spring Festival, China

On the eve of this 4,000-year-old lunar festival, families gather for a lavish reunion dinner. Common components are a chicken, symbolizing wholeness; black moss, indicating wealth; sticky cake, boding a sweet new year; and "longevity" noodles, eaten uncut. Dinner usually ends with a whole steamed fish, which is left unfinished to augur a new year of plenty.

Planning: Chinese New Year falls on varying dates in January and February. Wear red: it's a lucky color. www.chinaodysseytours.com

Feast of the First Morning, Vietnam

An ancestor-worship festival, Tet Nguyen Dan (Feast of the First Morning) is also an occasion to entertain friends and family—and start the year auspiciously. Since even cooks relax for Tet, dishes are prepared ahead and include kho (a tangy stew flavored with caramel and fish sauce), banh chung (sticky pork and mung-bean rice cakes), and cu kieu (pickled spring onions).

Planning: Tet usually corresponds with Chinese New Year. Shops and markets close for up to three weeks. www.footprintsvietnam.com

White Month, Mongolia

Mongolia's three-day lunar New Year festival, Tsagaan Sar (White Month), is celebrated at the junction of winter and spring. Bituuleg (New Year's Eve dinner) stars a cooked sheep's rump, accompanied by steamed meat dumplings, lamb patties, and flat biscuits, washed down with fermented mare's milk and milk vodka.

Planning: The date varies from year to year. Mongolians prepare enough food for all-comers. Guests should bring presents. Packaged tours are available. www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn

New Year's Eve, Russia

Feasting lavishly is at the core of Russia's biggest festival as many Russians believe the new year will continue as it started. The evening proceeds with a succession of toasts made with vodka or Sovetskoye Shampanskoye (Soviet champagne). Typical dishes include caviar, smoked salmon, goose, and suckling pig. Many Russians also celebrate the Julian Old New Year on January 13-14.

Planning: Many restaurants arrange package tours. www.russia-travel.com

New Day, Iran

The 3,000-year-old Noruz (New Day) is a Zoroastrian, pre- Islamic festival that remains Iranians' top holiday. Core to the rituals is the haft sin (seven s's) spread—usually chosen from sabze (green shoots), samanu (wheat pudding), sib (apples), sohan (honey-and-nut brittle), senjed (jujube), sangak (flatbread), siyahdane (sesame seeds), sir (garlic), somaq (sumac), and serke (vinegar). But it is all display. On the eve itself, Iranians usually eat sabzi polo mahi, steamed rice with green herbs and fish.

Planning: Noruz corresponds with the vernal equinox (usually March 21). www.itto.org

New Year's Eve, Piedmont, Italy

A large dinner (cenone) is common throughout northern Italy for New Year's Eve, but few places take it to the same extremes as Piedmont, birthplace of the Slow Food movement. Expect a dozen antipasti, boiled homemade sausages with lentils, at least three other main courses, and several desserts, including panettone and hazelnut cake.

Planning: For an authentic rural experience, enjoy home-cooked food in a family atmosphere at a farmhouse. www.piedmont.worldweb.com

New Year's Eve, Spain

Spaniards devour a grape with each midnight chime. Most people celebrate at home, but large public festivities in Barcelona's Plaza Catalunya see people assemble with grapes and cava (sparkling white wine) before a night's clubbing.

Planning: Peeled, unseeded grapes are easier to swallow rapidly. www.barcelonaturisme.com

New Year's Eve, the Netherlands

Although restrained in their consumption of pastries for most of the year, Netherlanders abandon all prudence on New Year's Eve, when dinner ends with deep-fried appelflappen (apple turnovers), appelbeignets (battered apple rings), and oliebollen (doughnuts). They usually toast the new year with champagne.

Planning: Some restaurants and hotels organize special dinners as part of a package, often including accomodation. www.holland.com

Hogmanay, Scotland

On New Year's Eve, called Hogmanay in Scotland, most rituals, such as first-footing (visiting) friends and neighbors after midnight, are home-based. Key among the food traditions is a Scottish steak pie, often ordered in advance from butchers, alongside black bun and clootie dumpling—both rich fruitcakes—and shortbread.

Planning: In Edinburgh, the Hogmanay Food Fair or upscale butchers, such as John Saunderson, are good places to stock up on goodies. www.edinburgh.org, www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk

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