

# A to Z

## For All Ethnicity

An alphabetical trip around the world, right here in one city *By Laura Reiley*

**W**E'VE GOT IT ALL. YOU think that's hyperbole or just some empty San Francisco boosterism? Trolling the many distinctive small neighborhoods that make up this city, visitors uncover culinary finds from all over the globe.

Fabulous Chinese? We've got it. Tibetan? Yep. Senegalese? Do you even need to ask? Here's how we sing our ABCs.

**A** is for Afghani—**Helmand**, 430 Broadway, 362-0641. It's a little like Indian cuisine, gussied up with other exotic Asian and Middle Eastern flavorings.

**B** is for Bolivian—**Peña Pacha Mama**, 1630 Powell St., 646-0018. Go for Andean groundnut soup, crusted eggplant in spicy sauce and the Andean band, Sukay.

**C** is for Cambodian—**Angkor Wat**, 4217 Geary Blvd., 221-7887. Some say it's the first Cambodian restaurant in the U.S., like a melding of Thai food and the best flavors of Vietnam.

**D** is for Dim Sum—**Yank Sing**, 101 Spear St., 957-9300. Visit one of the city's largest, swankiest bastions of Chinese dumplings and noodle dishes.

**E** is for Ethiopian—**Axum Café**, 689 Haight St., 252-7912. Savory stews eaten with your hands and spongy injira bread.

**F** is for French—**Cafe Claude**, 7 Claude Lane, 392-3515. Vive the archetypal croque monsieur eaten in a charming European-style alleyway.

**G** is for Greek—**Kokkari Estiatorio**, 200 Jackson, 981-0983. The kitchen is overseen by a, gulp, Frenchman, but Jean Alberti still has a way with moussaka, oregano-redolent lamb chops and grilled octopus salad.

**H** is for Hakka—**Ton Kiang #2**, 5821 Geary Blvd., 386-8530. Food of the nomadic people who settled outside of Hong Kong and Macao, it's pickled veg-



**M** is for Mediterranean at **Aziza**, and that means braised lamb shank with honey & kumquat sauce, caramelized dried fruits and roasted almonds. They even come around and wash your hands before dinner.

etables and claypot dishes like rock cod with tofu.

**I** is for Istrian—**Albona**, 545 Francisco St., 441-1040. If Italy is the boot, the Istrian peninsula is where the boot meets the flouncy skirt, near Croatia, which means sweet caponata and roasted pork loin stuffed with sauerkraut, apples and prunes.

**J** is for Japanese—**Ebisu**, 1283 9th Ave., 566-1770. Packed to the gills with fans of sashimi specials and ethereal tempura.

**K** is for Korean—**Brother's Restaurant**, 4128 Geary Blvd., 387-7991. It's the city's legendary locale for hearty soups, served in cast-iron bowls with rice, fra-

grant Korean barbecue and lots of tangy-hot kimchee.

**L** is for Lebanese—**Pasha Restaurant**, 1516 Broadway, 885-4477. Think: *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, with harem dancers and savory mezzah.

**M** is for Moroccan—**Aziza**, 5800 Geary Blvd., 752-2222. Traditional North African couscous-and-stew fare.

**N** is for Northern Italian—**Acquerello**, 1722 Sacramento St., 567-5432. Its continued success is owed to Giancarlo Paterlini's award-winning Italian wine list and Suzette Gresham-Tognetti's regional culinary treasures like Parmesan budino, rabbit pappardelle and filet of beef atop sweet caponata.

## ETHNIC DINING

**O** is for Old World Celtic/European—**O'Reilly's Irish Pub Restaurant**, 622 Green St., 989-6222. We're talking corned beef and cabbage, lamb stew, cottage pie, trout on brown bread and a traditional Irish breakfast that goes until 4 pm daily.

**P** is for Polish—**Old Krakow**, 385 W. Portal Ave., 564-4848. A cozy art cafe that serves up cabbage rolls, potato dumplings and other rib-sticking fare.

**Q** is for Qatar—OK, maybe it's not Qatar (pronounced KA-ter) per se, that little peninsula that extends into the Persian Gulf—but **Maykadeh Persian Cuisine**, 470 Green St., 362-8286, is as close as it gets. Look for lamb's tongue, stuffed grape leaves and fresh pita.

**R** is for Russian—**Russian Renaissance**, 5241 Geary Blvd., 752-8558. People come as much for the traditional Russian murals and food as for the hip cocktail lounge.

**S** is for Senegalese—**Bissap-Baobab**, 3388 19th St., 643-3558. A tiny purveyor of delicious West African mefe, which is a peanut-based stew.

**T** is for Tibetan—**Lhasa Moon**, 2420 Lombard St., 674-9898. Momos are reminiscent of Chinese dumplings, filled with vegetables, beef, or chicken, and stews come stocked with hearty lentils or lamb with hand-rolled pasta noodles.

**U** is for Undecided—**Carta**, 1772 Market St., 863-3516. A changing menu explores global geography with a different country featured each month.

**V** is for Vietnamese—**Three Seasons**, 3317 Steiner St., 567-9989. Vietnamese favorites such as lemongrass chicken, shaking beef, mango beef, yellow curry chicken and spicy and sour shrimp soup.

**W** is for West Indies—**King Jamaican**, 1279 Fulton St., 567-1294. Only a few tables dot this Caribbean queen, where you can find ginger beer and a wide assortment of exotic fare such as fresh salmon stuffed with crab, curry goat, fried plantains and a spicy five-bean soup. All meats are organic, kosher, halal and cooked in coconut milk.

**X** is for Xanadu—**Millennium**, 246 McAllister St., 487-9800. All right, it's a stretch, but the food of the new millennium is planet-friendly and all vegan, all the time.

**Y** is for Yucatan—**Maya**, 303 Second Street, 543-2928. *Bon Appétit*, *Gourmet*, et al have hailed dishes like grilled pork tenderloin served with a pipian sauce of pumpkin seed and tamarind.

**Z** is for Zimbabwean—**Joubert's**, 4115 Judah Ave., 753-5448. As much Dutch as Zulu, South African and Zimbabwean, Joubert's serves up gorgeous African flavors in a broad vegetarian cuisine. 