



Best of San Francisco 2010: Eat + Drink

Whiskey jerky, lamb belly, yakimono and goat curry. Buns, subs and rums. California Chard with the essence of Burgundy. Oven-fresh bread with a whiff of Ocean Beach. Open wide.

And check out our [Big Eat 2010](#) for a list of the 100 things we think you need to try in SF before you die.

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Best \$1 Wine

Everything about neighborhood restaurant darling Frances is sweet: The chef (Melissa Perello), the menu (15 dishes in total), the wedge of a space. But it's the creative wine list assembled by celebrated beverage director Paul Einbund—who last brought his clever charm to Coi—that turns Frances into something more. Order the house wine, blended by Einbund with Dave Corey from Core Wine Company, and a carafe of white or red, etched with ounce markers, will be set in front of you. For \$1 an ounce, drink what you will and waste not, want not.

Best Bar Within a Bar

Work your way through creaky, crowded Dalva and sneak downstairs to the Hideout, the lounge that debuted last December. Open every night but Sunday, it has a selection of cocktails including a Tarragon Collins and an array of American whiskeys. A portrait of the late Farrah Fawcett keeps an eye on the 40 or so patrons boothed in the deep-red walls. Private parties can be arranged.

Best Home-Baked Bread

Last year, when Outerlands husband and wife team David Muller and Lana Porcello opened their little restaurant so far out on Judah you can practically feel the ocean spray on your face, Muller didn't have any formal baking experience. But he had learned well from his surfing buddy Chad Robertson of Tartine. For Muller's rustic pain au levain recipe, he uses a neutral sourdough and Central Milling Co. flour, resulting in the kind of bread you want to slice thick and slather with good butter and homemade jam. Luckily, the loaves that aren't used for the restaurant are sold to-go for \$5.



Best Reason to Join a Club

Two hundred bottles of rum on the wall—all for the tasting. That is if you can soldier through Smuggler's Cove Rumbustion Society. It's free to join the club at this intimate, pirate ship-themed cocktail bar in Hayes Valley, where membership gets you invited to taste one-ounce pours of a diverse selection of curated rums while tracking your progress on their website. If you're still standing by the end you achieve Master of the Cove status, wherein you'll be allowed to sample rare, vintage rums from a private vault and set sail on a distillery trip with the owner Martin Cate. You'll even have your moniker inscribed inside the bar to mark your rum-tasting territory.



Best Empanadas

The fact that owner and baker Joseph Ahearne's mother was Miss Argentina in 1959 might have something to do with why the empanadas she taught him to make are worthy of a crown. El Porteño makes these traditional little hand pies with flaky, tender all-butter pastry and fills them with everything from grass-fed, Prather Ranch beef with raisins and hard-boiled eggs, to our favorite, Fulton Valley Farms chicken with green olives. Up until now, El Porteño has been only available at farmers markets, but they just opened in the new 331 Cortland marketplace in Bernal Heights.

Best Sub Shop

Sometimes you just need a killer, unpretentious sandwich and for that, we come to **The Sandwich Spot**. Take the advice of the super-friendly, high-school football-esque team working here when they tell you to get the “bomb sauce” on their signature sandwiches such as “The Naughty Nannie” and “The Marina Meatballer.” We love the “Johnny Donson,” made with turkey, prosciutto, avocado and melted Swiss. Run by Hank Minkey and friends, the shop opened in spring and has the Marina crowd lining up. With a beer-and-wine liquor license on the way, it’s about to get even better.

Best Semi-Homemade Korean BBQ

In the tidy and organized **First Korean Market**, walk straight to the back where a Korean barbecue party in the making awaits. There, a pristine selection of banchan (small plates of pickled vegetables and such)—including a few different kim chees, as well as salads of seaweed, soy bean sprouts and dried fish—are presented salad-bar style. Fill containers with as much as you need, then pick up some of the marinated spicy pork or kalbi, a head of perky red-leaf lettuce in the produce section, some red chili paste and sticky rice. All you need now is beer. Lots of it.

Best Buns

Baker-owner Mutsumi Takehara of Bernal Heights’ Sandbox Bakery has a way with buns, particularly when it involves her Japanese-inspired goods, made with everything from red bean paste to curry. Takehara, who was pastry chef at the Slanted Door for 10 years, got it very right when she came up with her Negi-Miso kashi-pan made from pillowy challah dough, stuffed with green onions and miso and brushed with sesame oil. Add a cup of De La Paz coffee and you’re guaranteed a very good morning.

Best Way to Learn About Wine

You’d think SF would be a hub for consumer wine education, but so far, it hasn’t been. The San Francisco Wine Center is set on changing that. As of this spring, the SoMa facility—which opened in 2008 primarily as a place for collectors to store their wine—has just started offering a serious roster of classes as a collaboration between co-owner Brian McGonigle and master sommelier Catherine Fallis. Upcoming guest speakers include Jancis Robinson, Allen Meadows and Evan Goldstein. The likes of Andrea Immer Robinson, Leslie Sbrocco, Jason Alexander, Rajat Parr, Christie Dufault and Rebecca Chapa are also on the instructor lineup. Bottoms up.

Best Reason to Lard Out



Never a town to settle for just plain old pork, SF has embraced the Mangalitsa as the pig to know—at least for now. Otherwise known as the Woolly Pig, the lard-type (versus meat-type) heritage breed came all the way from Austria and, after being raised in the US for two years, was finally introduced to the San Francisco market last fall. Michael Mina buys both shoulder and tenderloin, Lafitte restaurant makes it into guanciale. The rendered leaf lard is popular with bakers, but the jowl bacon is a winner. Hardcore home cooks have placed their orders; so should you.

Best Reason to Revisit Chardonnay

Too much booze, butter and oak have long been the complaints lobbed by Eurocentric wine drinkers at California Chards, but the days of the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) revolt might be waning with winemakers like Lioco in the mix. Theirs are unoaked, fermented on wild yeasts and bottled without filtration. Try their clean and lively 2008 Sonoma County Chardonnay to start. Imagine you're in Burgundy and open your heart. You'll find Lioco at restaurants like Nopalito and Delfina or for sale at the Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant.

Best Lick

We're sweet on one scoop—the lemon cookie ice cream from Three Twins. The shop in the Lower Haight can't keep the perfect combination of lemon ice cream studded with chunks of vanilla sandwich cookies in stock. But with the completion of a Petaluma factory, the company is rolling out pints to Whole Foods, meaning lemon cookie will be coming to our freezer soon—we hope.

Best Indian on Wheels

The FiDi is not known for its lively lunch options but since the Curry Up Now truck started parking at 225 Bush the suits have something to get fired up about. Run by Peninsula-based Akash Kapoor, who grew up near Calcutta, and his wife, Rana, the truck serves a rotating menu of rustic dishes such as a sumptuous goat curry, a great kathi roll (made with pickled onions, chutney and chicken), and the Green Goan, a bit of a hybrid wrapped in a Mexican flour tortilla. Tip: Preorder online or stop by later in the afternoon if you don't want to have to wait. Curry Up Now is securing parking spots all over the city so keep your eyes peeled.



Best Jerky

Out West, whiskey and jerky made a man. Now, they come together in an organic jerky made by locally-based Sundrygoods and sold at two bars, Rye and 15 Romolo. The Prather Ranch beef is slow-dried in an oven instead of a dehydrator and flavor options include one made with vanilla and whiskey, another with cocoa nibs and, our favorite, clove and tangerine. It should be noted that the jerky is also sold at Four Barrel, so should you want a real breakfast of champions, pull on your cowboy boots, and try the Turkish Coffee jerky chased with an espresso.

Best Way to Belly Up

Pork belly? Been there, done that. Moving on: Chef Alex Ong of Betelnut takes Marin Sun Farm's goat or lamb belly (depending on availability) and marinates it in chilies, star anise, coriander, cumin, turmeric and ginger; braises it for hours; pan-sears it; and serves it with a bracing jalapeño vinegar and fried shallots. One bite and words need not be spoken.



Best Restaurant Trend

Maybe it's wishful thinking, but in SF, 2010 might just be the year of the izakaya—Japan's version of a pub. Proof? Out in the Avenues, Izakaya Sozai serves yakitori, including perfect meatballs, a refreshing daikon salad and a silky hamachi carpaccio with a sweet mustard-miso sauce. In the Mission, funky little Nombe cooks up the likes of beef heart with katsuo bushi and agemono potatoes with wild nori, as well as warming pork spare ribs with a black bean chili broth, tangy glazed chicken wings and much more. Open late, it's also become a haunt for tired chefs who could use a glass—or five—to unwind at the night's end.

Most Refreshing Read

In a sea of sugary, overly rich cookbook-cum-memoirs, *Cheesemonger: A Life on the Wedge* (Chelsea Green Publishing), written by Rainbow Grocery cheese buyer Gordon Edgar, provides a deliciously bracing palate cleanser. The reformed punk writes an often-hilarious story of his romp through the cheese department of one of the country's biggest co-ops and the amazing cheeses that he encounters. From it, we learn the ins and outs of cheese for sure, but even more about Edgar as a person. And from all accounts, he's a very likable instructor.

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