

by JOSHUA LURIE-TERRELL with assistance from ADELE E. CLARKE

THIS GUIDE has been produced specifically for the following organizations, all of whom are meeting this summer in San Francisco:

- » American Sociological Association
- » Association of Black Sociologists
- » Association for the Sociology of Religion
- » Society for the Study of Social Problems
- » Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction
- » Sociologists for Women in Society

MANY OF THE restaurants and bars recommended owe their presence in this guide to the educated and experienced palates of a number of ASA members and other Bay Area natives and transplants.

Special thanks go to Adele Clarke, of course, who was primary source for and investigator of every one of these places that I myself have not been to, and to Susan Garfin, Janet Aštner, Michael Burawoy, Abi Weissman, Brenda Hofer, Brian Grossman, Eliot Friedson, Elli Lurie, Geoffrey Hunt, John Choi, Joshua Gamson, Judie Wexler, Karen Hossfeld, Kevin Wehr, Kim Ričhman, Airin Martinez, Račhel Harvey, Robert Staples, Sheigla Murphy, Stephen Murray, Ursula Castellano, Vanessa Barker, Dean Dorn, David Lee, Virginia Oleson, Paul Terrell, Chiamin Corii Liau, Lynn Fabbro and the beautiful and charming Jineui Hong-Terrell.

Please try to eat and drink responsibly and tip your servers, bartenders and taxi drivers well.

<i>Key</i>
\$ up to \$8 per person
\$\$ \$8 - \$15 per person
\$\$\$ \$15 - \$25 per person
\$\$\$\$ expensive
\$\$\$\$+.... very, very expensive

IN THIS SHORT GUIDE, I've tried to give a short run-down of the food & drink possibilities in several of San Francisco's more interesting neighborhoods, with a special emphasis on restaurants and bars within walking distance (or a short cab ride) of the ASA venues at Union Square. Hopefully, whether you are looking for a meal that you'll remember for 20 years or one just to provide a bottom for the evening's pubcrawl, these pages will give you plenty of options for a night out. Unfortunately, I have had to neglect certain neighborhoods because I am not as familiar with them as I should be: JAPANTOWN is mostly subsumed by a number of large buildings that have incorporated the area's many gift shops, markets, restaurants and bars into their first two or three floors, and has a number of good places to eat and the KABUKI 8 movie theater, built on what was once the largest nightclub in the city (and don't miss the KINOKUNIYA BOOKSTORE – 1581 Webster, inside the Kinokuniya Building, right next door); and the tourist areas of PIER 39 and FISHERMAN'S WHARF, which can be fun for a short period of time if you have a child with you.

One note on the FISHERMAN'S WHARF area, which I will hereafter ignore: the red brick CANNERY shopping complex, home to the GHIRARDELLI chocolate store and a number of pleasant cafés and shops, is a really excellent example of the sort of urban infill projects that have revitalized some of the city's warehouse districts (another great example of this are the lofts and galleries below Mission, along DeHaro Street, near the excellent and very much worth-visiting gallery at the CENTER FOR THE BOOK at 16th and DeHaro). The retasking of the mazelike CANNERY complex was planned by the great Bay Area architect Joseph Esherick, who, along with Charles Moore and William Turnbull and a few others in the 1960s, deserves the credit for what has become – through the mixing of the modernist Sea Ranch aesthetic with the area craftsman/prairie blend already made popular by Bernard Maybeck and the other great architects of the Bay Area in the 1920s – the architectural style colloquially known as “Northern Californian.” While the Cannery is not on its surface obviously similar to the more obviously Northern Californian projects like UC Santa Cruz's Kresge College or the homes at the Sea Ranch, it is certainly reminiscent of the Craftsman aesthetic in the almost absurd level of detail that Esherick layered into every nook and cranny of the complex. If you are in the area, it's certainly worth a walk-through, especially on the weekends when the place is bustling.

The city is full of a literally mind-numbing volume of bars to, well, numb your mind – and anything else. The tremendous number of establishments devoted to serving and consuming alcohol has caused an unbelievable level of specialization, to an extreme not often observed in the wild. From goth lesbian semiotic bars to those designed specifically for latino crossdressing symbolic interactionists to saloons catering to acres of

black-clad critical theorists, San Francisco is certainly known for a sort of retail lifestyle speculation. You will find the edgiest and most diverse bars in the Castro and Mission districts, which also house most of the city's most popular dance clubs, and plain old dives throughout North Beach, Chinatown and parts of SOMA (south of Market). The Haight, Sunset and Richmond (where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the bars are Irish pubs, for an some reason) districts are all home to some great bars, although you can find a neighborhood corner pub in almost any San Francisco neighborhood.

GOLDEN GATE PARK, the jewel of the city, has a number of great museums and a wonderful aquarium, formal and informal gardens (including STRYBING ARBORETUM & the BOTANIC GARDEN), music venues, lakes and interesting nooks and crannies and runs all the way out to OCEAN BEACH, where you can see fields of tulips and a number of old dutch windmills. A small herd of buffalo also roams one part of the park, near a castle that William Randolph Hearst brought back, stone by stone, from Europe but never finished rebuilding. Wander through the over one million trees in our (larger than) Central Park, rent a boat at STOWE LAKE, visit the CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS and ride the restored merry-go-round.

If you intend to do much traveling throughout the city, you might want to invest in a San Francisco Citypass, which gives 7 days of unlimited travel on the MUNI streetcar, the cable cars and all public buses. The citypass will also give free admission at many public attractions, such as the MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, the (unfortunately temporarily closed for renovation) ACADEMY OF SCIENCES & STEINHART AQUARIUM, the wonderful children's science museum, the EXPLORATORIUM (which is also plenty of fun for adults), and the entirety of GOLDEN GATE PARK. Passes run about \$70 but are often discounted to less than half that when bought online or through a discount outlet; ask your hotel concierge, at a MUNI ticket booth or use Google to find the best price.

Public art is everywhere in San Francisco. The DIEGO RIVERA MURALS are worth making a pilgrimage to (the Pan-American Unity mural is located at the City College of San Francisco's Ocean Avenue campus – call 415.239.3127 for directions, hours and tour information; the other is in the Art Institute's Rivera Gallery, just off the main courtyard, at 800 Chestnut). The mural on the Women's Building (18th and Valencia at Guerrero in the Mission district) is the best contemporary mural in the city. And if you're in the Marina area, visit the WAVE ORGAN, an interesting piece of public art, out at the very end of the breakwater on the west end of the Marina Green. There are plenty of things to do and see in the city – but try not to be too distracted from the various ASA sessions and special events, or next time they'll hold the meeting somewhere much less distracting.

UNION SQUARE AND OTHER DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

UNION SQUARE is the retail heart of the city, and is within walking distance of all the restaurants and bars of the Tenderloin, SOMA, the Market Street corridor, the small art galleries and cafes of the below-Market alleys, Chinatown, North Beach and the new development along the Embarcadero, all the way out to the new ballpark. San Francisco is hilly, though, and those of you without calves of iron may prefer some of the convenient and inexpensive public transportation possibilities (bus, BART and MUNI) and the not-ubiquitous San Francisco taxicab. In this section I've listed places on and just off the Square, as well as a few other restaurants along the Market Street corridor and out near the ballpark that don't quite fit into the other neighborhoods.

GRAND CAFÉ (501 Geary Street, 415-292-0101 – \$\$\$) is within a short walk of Union Square. The food is a sort of melange of California and traditional French dishes with an emphasis on salad, and the very attractive dining room is decorated in an inauthentically understated art nouveau style.

POSTRIO (545 Post, 415.776.7825 – \$\$\$) is not inexpensive, but Wolfgang Puck's 1989 foray into American/Italian contemporary is still quite good (but not excellent, which it was in the '90s). The dining room has a number of Rauschenbergs and Rosenquists and work by various other Pop-era artists. Reservations are still essential, although you can often get them the same day or a day in advance. Their bar, open late, serves some pretty good (and fancy) pizza.

TANTO (120 Cyril Magnin at O'Farrell, 415.989.9760 – \$\$\$) is my favorite Japanese restaurant in the city. The menu and style of the place changes drastically with each season, and when I was there last the late-winter menu included such dishes as Salmon-ball clay pot, Ganmodoki (fried patties of tofu, grated yam, kikurage and ginkgo, served over dashi with hot mustard), and kabocha (sweet stewed Japanese pumpkin with bits of chopped mitsuba, in a thickened potato-starch broth). I have never had anything that was not very close to perfect here.

ZUNI CAFÉ (1658 Market, 415.552.2522 – \$\$\$) is an energetic but entertaining walk along Market or a short cab ride from Union Square. Opened nearly 25 years ago, Zuni has remained one of the most popular restaurants in the area, for both its food and people-watching. One of the two or three best oyster/raw bars in the city, Zuni also has a very pleasant bar, although reports of mediocre service have surfaced in recent months. Try the cured anchovy appetizer and then stuff yourself with beautiful, fresh, icy-cold raw oysters.

BOULEVARD (1 Mission at Steuart, 415.543.6084 – \$\$\$\$) sits at the very end of Mission overlooking the Bay and has, if you can get window table, very pleasant views. The food is expensive, the kitchen is known for absolutely amazing and original presentation, and the belle époque dining room is beautiful. A healthy walk or short taxi/bus/BART ride from Union Square.

FARALLON (450 Post, 415.956.6969 – \$\$\$) is quite simply the most beautiful room of any restaurant in the city and one of the strongest proponents of what is now called “coastal cuisine.” The entire restaurant is fashioned after some kind of undersea garden and no detail has been overlooked to turn it into a comfortably surreal experience. The food is quite good, although not great, and I would suggest sticking to the seafood that they are known for; the pheasant I had here two years ago was good but didn’t compare to the fowl at POSTRIO OF FRINGALE.

DOTTIE’S TRUE BLUE CAFÉ (522 Jones btw Geary & O’Farrell, 415.885.2767 – \$\$) serves the best breakfast on or near Union Square. It is small, and since it recently found its way into Zagat, a line does run out the door a ways on weekends, but the dishes are huge, flavorful and delicious. Their bakery items (and jalapeño jelly) are particularly good.

A few blocks from Union Square, CORTEZ (550 Geary at Jones, 415.292.6369 – \$\$\$), owned by Pascal Rigo (owner of a dozen cafés, bakeries and restaurants around the city, this new addition to the Hotel Adagio serves mostly Mediterranean small plates – a sort of French, Greek and Spanish fusion in tapas. The housemade gnocchi is very good and filling, the date- and mint-encrusted lamb is rich and delicious, and the sauteed rapini is wonderful. Save room for Greek yogurt sherbet.

PLOUF (located in a small alley with a number of other good restaurants at 40 Belden Place, just off Bush, 415.986.6491 – \$\$\$) serves giant steaming boules of moules in a number of different delicious broths. The mussels poulette are especially tasty. A very short stroll from Union Square.

Next door, B44 (44 Belden Place, 415.986.6287 – \$\$\$) serves what a friend tells me is the best Spanish food – and certainly the best tapas – in the city. Try the squid ink paella, fish cheeks, caramelized slivers of garlic or the grilled shrimp literally bathed in olive oil.

21ST AMENDMENT BREWERY & CAFÉ (563 2nd Street at Bryant, 415.369.0900 – \$\$\$) is just a block from the new-ish Pacific Bell Stadium and should not be trifled with just before or after a game, unless waiting in long lines of drunken ball fans gets you off. Their beers are, by and large, better than decent and the food seems pretty consistent – pork chops, sweet potato straws, a burger and sea bass (and the watermelon beer!) were all good,

well- and quickly-prepared on a recent visit. The menu seems much more well-integrated with the beer than at most brewpubs.

YANK SING (two locations: 49 Stevenson Alley, between Market/Mission and 1st/2nd, 415.541.4949, and 101 Spear, inside 1 Rincon Center, which is open only for lunch, 415.957.9300 – \$\$\$) is the best of San Francisco's mid-to high-end dim sum restaurants. Everything – from the jasmine tea served in the “museum quality” glass teapots to the fried softshell crab – is so beautiful you almost don't want to eat or drink it. But you will.

HARBOR VILLAGE (located on the second level of Embarcadero 4, just off Market Street, 415.781.8833 – \$\$) is the largest of San Francisco's dim sum palaces. While not, in my opinion, up to par with Yank Sing, the food here is certainly good and the prices much more apropos for a large meal. The tofu-wrapped shrimp rolls are one of my favorite dishes, as are the custards, but I can't honestly say I've had anything not good here. An easy walk or short cab ride (ask for Embarcadero 4) from the hotel.

MACARTHUR PARK (607 Front Street, 415.398.5700 – \$\$\$) serves eclectic American food and has a pleasant and lively bar in a giant, post-warehouse room. The giant stacks of onion rings are delicious. Good for large groups.

THE SLANTED DOOR (now at their new location in the NE corner of the Ferry Building, right where Market Street runs into the bay, reservations required, 415.861.8032 – \$\$\$\$) serves what many consider the best Vietnamese food in the city at their new location right on the water, a not-especially-long walk from Union Square. Can be expensive, especially for the wines, but is well worth a visit. Many traditional Vietnamese dishes, but known best for their contemporary and very original recipes. This is not a simple pho house, of which there are many excellent examples in the city, but a much more unique and special place; I've been here twice and both meals have been wonderful; both times I and my companion had the dinner prix fixe, which is an affordable way of trying a little of everything.

The new **FERRY BUILDING** also has a number of other interesting eating spots worth a visit – a walk down to the end of Market for oysters, caviar, seaweed salad and sushi can be a refreshing break from the conference. **HOG ISLAND OYSTER CO.** (415.391.7117 – \$\$), the only farm-owned oyster restaurant in the country, may not compare to **SWAN OYSTER DEPOT** (see the Tenderloin/Polk Gulch section) for range but the quality of the bivalves is high and the prices are good. Their own homegrown Sweetwaters are especially delicious. The oyster stew, beurre blanc and clam chowder are all good, and the space – on the bay side of the building – is bright and cheery. Visit **TAYLOR'S REFRESHER** (866.328.3663 – \$\$), also in the Ferry Building, for delicious burgers and shakes. Taylor's has been an area

institution since the original stand opened in St. Helena in the early '50s; they've added an ahi burger and a few more upscale items at the new San Francisco iteration but everything remains as good as always. See Clæs Oldenburg's recent 60-foot CUPID'S SPAN, a short walk south, between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge. The grassy strip here is a great place to picnic. On the way back to the conference hotel, stop to marvel at the angular VAILLANCOURT FOUNTAIN at JUSTIN HERMAN PLAZA, often reviled by locals as the ugliest piece of sculpture in the state. I actually like it myself, especially during the rare times that the water is turned on.

The unfortunately now-touristy TONGA ROOM (950 Mason at California in the Fairmont Hotel, 415.772.5278 – \$\$\$) is one of the strangest places in San Francisco to get a drink – at least, one of the strangest places where people keep their clothes on. Sip faux-Polynesian cocktails served by waitresses in sarongs while listening to the off-key band play a sort of midwestern idea of Hawaiian music from a raft floating in an indoor lake. The happy-hour “dim sum” (not really) is actually pretty tasty when you're pretty drunk.

THE TOP OF THE MARK (1 Nob Hill at California; walk, take bus #1 or the cable car, 415.392.3434 – \$\$\$\$) is the quintessential San Francisco high society cocktail lounge. On the 19th floor of the Mark Hopkins Hotel (remember Vertigo?), the amazing view tends to attract tourists from Nebraska and the easily impressed, but I still think they make a perfect vodka martini. It is a calm and pleasant place, especially before the dress code and cover charge go into effect at the beginning of the evening rush.

Those of you needing a fix of foreign news and/or some fancy smokes will find that and more at CAFÉ DE LA PRESSE newsstand (352 Grant, 415.249.0900 – \$\$\$). Their dining room is good, too, and frequently features live music.

SOUTH OF MARKET

THE STUD (339 9th at Harrison, 415.863.6623 – \$) is full, at most hours, of cute boys, indistinguishably-gendered explorers of all types, and drunken singing transsexuals from at least two sides of the aisle. Good loud music, cheap drinks that will, well, get you drunk. Always an experience.

FRINGALE (570 4th St., 415.543.0573 – \$\$\$) is not far from the Union Square neighborhood in SOMA (South of Market), a short cab ride or a very healthy walk distant. While they claim to serve classical French cuisine, the food seems much more contemporary. Everything I've had here has been very good. The veal sweetbread cassoulet is delicious, as are their various charcuterie-based dishes. Great dessert menu as well.

SFMOMA, our Museum of Modern Art (151 3rd, btw Mission & Howard, 415.357.4000) is one of the world's foremost collections of modern and contemporary art. The museum's café is also quite good. The building itself, by architect Mario Botta, still fuels friction between detractors and proponents, more than a decade after it opened.

The gallery space/nightclub at the 111 MINNA STREET GALLERY (guess the address; 415.974.1719 – \$\$) not only has a lot of interesting visual art exhibitions and small film festival-type events, it's also the best of the San Francisco disco emporiums. Good drinks for the club set: martinis, cosmos, perfect margaritas; a pleasant VIP room and great DJs.

Down an alley just off Minna Street is VARNISH (77 Natoma, 415.222.6131 – \$), a shiny and pretty new-ish art gallery (and beer/wine bar) owned by a cooperative of welders & sculptors.

THE TENDERLOIN & ENVIRONS

The POLK STREET (sometimes called Polk Gulch) neighborhood on the edge of THE TENDERLOIN becomes more interesting – and much sketchier – late at night. When the sex clubs, adult video & toystores open, the boutiques and banks close, and the kids come out to play ... Visit GOOD VIBRATIONS (1620 Polk at Sacramento, 415.345.0400.) for a gift to bring home to yourself and/or your SO, the GRUBSTEAK (see below) for a great patty melt or bacalao at 3 AM, or ACORN BOOKS (1436 Polk), home to a great and not inexpensive selection of American first editions, books on the social sciences and a strong language and linguistics section.

Ten years ago you'd want to travel in a group or give off an aura of unapproachable toughness when walking through this neighborhood after dark; however, the eternal march of gentrification is taking its toll and while it is not the safest nighttime neighborhood in the city, it's doubtful that you'll get knifed on the street. Just use your brain and be aware of your surroundings whenever traveling anywhere new.

THE GRUBSTEAK (1525 Pine at Polk, 415.673.8268 – \$\$), is nothing but a counter and several booths in a decomposing train car. Excellent burgers, blue-plate specials (the meatloaf is always good) and really excels with their "Portuguese Corner" menu. Open 5 PM – 4 AM every night for dinner, and for breakfast on weekends.

SHALIMAR (532 Jones Street at O'Farrell, 415.928.0333 – \$\$) serves very inexpensive and mouth-watering Indian/Pakistani cuisine. The naan & masalas are extraordinary, but buy your SF-made Anchor Steam Ale at the corner market, as Shalimar is strictly BYOB.

CHUTNEY (511 Jones, 415.931.5541 – \$\$), like Shalimar above, serves savory and inexpensive Indian food and breads. Like its neighbor, grab your drink from the fridge, order at the counter & wait two minutes for your meal. The lamb curry is good, the tikka masala even better and the biryani creamy and flavorful. The free chai tea is pretty good, too.

GOLDEN ERA (572 O'Farrell, 415.673.3136 – \$\$) serves from a huge menu of inexpensive and carefully-prepared vegetarian Chinese dishes. Good for groups, and the variety of flavors should even satisfy carnivores.

TAI CHI (2031 Polk at Pacific, 415.441.6758 – \$\$) serves excellent Hunan food at very low prices. The vegetables are always fresh and the lunches are just about the cheapest good food in the area.

One of San Francisco's better seafood restaurants for a number of years, CRUSTACEAN (1475 Polk, 415.776.2722 – \$\$\$\$) serves delicious roast crab during Dungeness season (November - June) and a still good but not as great (and sometimes more expensive) variety the rest of the year. They do enforce their bizarre "no jeans" dress policy (odd for a place where you eat crab with your fingers) quite diligently, so dress appropriately before beginning the walk west. Stick to the salt & pepper crab and the fantastic garlic noodles; the rest of the menu is good, but not as great as you might expect given the high prices.

The bright and beautiful room at ACQUERELLO (1722 Sacramento at Polk, 415.567.5432 – \$\$\$\$+) is a little out of place in this neighborhood. The very contemporary northern Italian is a treat and the one meal I've had here was quite memorable.

SWAN OYSTER DEPOT (1517 Polk, 415.673.1101 – \$\$\$) serves, in their tiny space and few counter stools, the best live oysters, roe and other slimy & delicious oceanic treats in the city. You'll be rubbing shoulders with bikers, mayors, actors and cops in this circa 1912 neighborhood institution. They recently had some beautiful shad roe for about \$13 a pair, fried up with eggs for breakfast. Their Boston clam chowder is wonderful, as is their wine list. Not often open for dinner, but late lunches can last until 6 or so.

EDINBURGH CASTLE (950 Geary, 415.885.4074 – \$\$) is the finest of SF's many British pubs. This is "where all the dot com failure yuppies who have been forced into the Tenderloin by reduced means congregate to drink single malt" and also has, according to a friend, "the cutest doorman in the city."

TURTLE TOWER (631 Larkin at Eddy, 415.409.3333 – \$\$) has some of the best pho in the city. The cold rolls are good and fresh. Open only to 6 PM, and definitely worth a visit at lunch if you're in the mood for soup.

BAMBUDDHA LOUNGE (601 Eddy at Larkin, 415.885.5088 – \$\$) shares Phoenix Hotel's swimming pool area, and it is pleasant to sit out on a warm San Francisco evening (i.e., June 15 to August 15) with your fancy cocktail and thai beef salad or 5-spice duck coconut pancakes. The space used to be Miss Pearl's Jam House, and the crowd from the Phoenix (home to touring bands and, inexplicably, many people who could afford a much nicer hotel) usually keeps it open until quite late. The Monkey Cocotini tastes like a Girl Scout cookie but will mess you up *real* good.

OLIVE (743 Larkin at O'Farrell, 415.776.9814 – \$\$) serves delicious baked brie which you can enjoy with your cocktails and the good and plentiful free olives. Fun drinks here – try the Larkin Lovely (dark rum, lemon, ginger ale) or a watermelon martini.

THE HEMLOCK TAVERN (1131 Polk, 415.923.0923 – \$) is a long-time local favorite with a small stage where a band you've never heard of might play once in a long while. An enclosed patio keeps the smokers from rioting. Lots of trendy grunge-hipsteriness at this divey spot.

NORTH BEACH

NORTH BEACH is the neighborhood founded by Italian immigrants and made famous to this generation by that of the Beats. There are lots of decent Italian restaurants and a few that are very special, several terrific bakeries and cafes, and CITY LIGHTS BOOKS (261 Columbus at Broadway, just across the alley from VESUVIO), owned by poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

It's a short walk from Columbus street up Telegraph Hill to COIT TOWER, a gorgeous 210-foot hilltop memorial to the firefighters who fought (and died in) the fire of 1906. The art deco tower, completed in 1933, is worth a visit for the view and the Diego Rivera-inspired WPA murals inside. Take the 39-Coit bus from Washington square, or just walk up the steps at the end of Filbert street.

BUCA GIOVANNI (800 Greenwich, 415.776.7766 – \$\$) is one of the many traditional "San Francisco Italian" restaurants in North Beach, an area that is fun for walking, shopping and people-watching. Food at Buca may be pedestrian and the service confused but the space is loud and friendly, the menu complete and the servings large and satisfying.

ROSE PISTOLA (532 Columbus, 415.399.0499 – \$\$\$\$) is arguably the best and most consistent of the Italian restaurants North Beach, and is substantially more upscale (and less touristy) than its neighbors. The food is both more classically Italian and, contradictorily, more adventurous than what is served at any of the other two dozen Italian restaurants along Columbus.

CAFÉ PRAGUE (548 Pacific, 415.433.3811 – \$\$\$) serves the best Czech food in the city. The space is quaint and romantic, and the food always filling. Described as “home cooking with a sophisticated edge,” a meal here will run about \$40 for two, including a couple of glasses of wine.

L’OSTERIA DEL FORNO (519 Columbus, 415.982.1124 – \$\$) is a tiny little wine bar, straight out of the Tuscan countryside, serving inexpensive and good food. The cauliflower gratin and thin-sliced, air-cured beef drizzled with truffle oil are delicious, as is the tender roast pork in a milk braise.

GIRA POLLI (659 Union at Columbus, 415.434.4472 – \$\$) is a longtime personal favorite. The only things to order here are roasted chicken, risottos & a few vegetable sides. While they have squeezed in a few tables, it’s just as nice to pick up a takeout meal to devour in the park. The chicken special is \$12.95 and includes a wonderful rosemary chicken, palermo potatoes, veggies, salad & a roll and could easily be shared by two.

Two of the best bakeries in the neighborhood are LIGURIA BAKERY (1700 Stockton, 415.421.3786 – \$) and STELLA PASTRY (446 Columbus, 415.986.2914 – \$), which makes an almost orgasmic sacripantina cake.

For a quick focaccia sandwich, you will find none better than those sold at the BOHEMIAN CIGAR STORE CAFÉ (566 Columbus, 415.362.0536 – \$).

BUBBLE LOUNGE (714 Montgomery Street, 415.434.4204 – \$\$) is usually full all evening and night. This upscale North Beach/Financial District champagne bar is a good place for a snack and a drink after a meal at one of the more formal restaurants in the neighborhood. The bar upstairs is a bit quieter and more comfortable. The sushi and caviar are passable and the beautiful people are, as always, beautiful.

ROSEWOOD (732 Broadway, btw Stockton & Powell, 415.951.4886 – \$\$) is a beautiful space where the beautiful people come to drink beautiful cocktails. The room belongs in a fashion magazine photoshoot, but the mellow D&B, jungle and electronica that the DJs spin is good music, it’s not often too busy to have a conversation, and the bartenders are friendly.

SAVOY TIVOLI (1434 Grant, 415.362.7023 – \$) is a long-time (c. 1907) local saloon. Friendly people and cheap drinks.

CHINATOWN

CHINATOWN should not need an introduction. Most of what I know about food I learned in weekend dim sum brunches and late night Cantonese dinners here; such is the burden of growing up in the Bay Area. There are dozens of places to eat in the neighborhood, which starts at the CHINATOWN GATES above Union Square and blankets the hill above, running into North Beach on its northern side. This is also the neighborhood to buy your ultra-cheapo tourist “I left my Heart in San Francisco” and “Alcatraz Escapee” T-shirts, Chinese calligraphy supplies & fake jade jewelry.

WOEY LUEY GUEY (699 Jackson at Grant, no telephone – \$\$) is a Chinatown institution for the food but not the décor. Try the shredded duck yee foo won ton soup, the Cantonese deep-fried whole chicken, the salt & pepper shrimp, and the deep-fried flounder (the crispy bones on the side are wonderful). When this place opened more than 30 years ago, it served mostly “Chinese-American” dishes – egg foo yung and stuff like that, inauthentic but unthreatening. The new owners have a much more traditionally Cantonese menu, and it is a huge improvement.

SAM LOK (655 Jackson at Kearney, 415.981.8988 – \$\$) will clear those sinuses – permanently – with some very spicy traditional Szechuan dishes. A good antidote for the usual Cantonese boredom of most San Francisco Chinese restaurants. If you have Mr. Wong as your waiter, allow him to steer you toward what is especially good that day (but don’t miss the “water-boiled beef,” which is better than it sounds, or the diced rabbit with peanuts).

JAI YUN (923 Pacific, 415.981.7438 – \$\$) combines the light delicacy of Nanjing cuisine with the international preparations and flavors of Shanghai, and the end result is interesting, clean and very different. Abalone in egg whites, rice wine chicken, jellyfish salad, lotus root, beef tendon coldcut, cilantro salad with chinese pine nuts, and mustard green with chives and shark’s fin were all wonderful on a friend’s recent visit. Sublime gourmet Chinese in a very plain setting. Advance reservations only and BYOB.

MON KIANG (683 Broadway at Stockton, 415.421.2015 – \$) is one of the best examples Hakka cuisine – which relies on pickling and salting to preserve produce – in the city. The waiters are especially friendly and may or may not recommend my favorite dish here, the oyster pancake (not on the menu). The salt-baked chicken over rice was about \$4 and quite tasty.

YUET LEE (1300 Stockton, 415.982.6020 – \$\$) serves frog legs (and everything else on the menu) at two in the morning and seems to be open long after the bars close every night of the week. Great service and a pleasant, if often slightly drunk, crowd.

LI PO'S (916 Grant, 415.982.0072 – \$) David Lynch ambience has, unfortunately, become more popular with tourists lately. Visit the dark red room in the back and watch life pass the alcoholics by.

MR. BING'S (201 Columbus, 415.362.1545 – \$) is a small room with a v-shaped bar that takes up most available space. Try not to order a fancy drink; let the on-the-verge-of-overdone dive bar ambience point your beverage orders to nothing fancier than straight liquors, beers or – if you're feeling adventurous – a G&T.

SAM WO'S (813 Washington, 415.982.0596 – \$) is a cheap, late-night bar hidden at the top of three flights of stairs (greasy food is served on the 2nd). It is about as grungy as a bar can get in the city and still keep its license – although I'm not sure if they've ever had one here. Unfortunately, lovably obnoxious former owner Edsel Ford Fung died more than 10 years ago, so you won't have anyone but the local drunks to cuss at you, and you'll have to throw yourself out at the end of the evening. Chopsticks and cash only.

THE MISSION

Known primarily as the hub of Latino cuisine and culture in the city, THE MISSION is the spiritual, if not geographic, home to San Francisco's large and growing Latin American population, with the number of Central American immigrants – specifically those from El Salvador and Nicaragua – growing very quickly. Luckily, these people choose to bring their food (and sometimes not much else!) with them, and the entire city benefits. Several MUNI metro lines and buses run from Market street (and the MUNI station closest to Union Square) into the Mission. Parking in this area can be difficult; there is a parking lot on 21st between Valencia and Mission.

While you are here, visit ST. PETER'S (on Alabama near 24th), a beautiful 1886 all-redwood church (recently restored after a 1997 fire) with some very pretty gothic trompe l'oeil painting inside. Murals decorate the other church buildings around the corner on Florida Street. Also visit the TROLL WINDOW (on 18th, between Valencia and Mission) to see the current display and THE LAB (2948 16th btw Mission & Capp, 415.864.8855) for sometimes very bizarre experimental work by established and new local artists.

THE ROXIE (3117 16th near Valencia, 415.863.1087) is the Mission's lone art house, with foreign and independent films changing every few days.

San Franciscans take their burritos very, very seriously. EL TORO TAQUERIA (598 Valencia, at 17th, 415.431.3351 – \$), sells monstrous concoctions for about \$5 each. Instead of the usual meat- or veg-filled burrito, wait an extra few minutes for the seasoned red snapper or their carne asada. Cash only.

Many reviews of ZANTE'S PIZZA (3489 Mission, 415.821.3949 – \$) point out that this odd little place is perfect for those who “cannot decide on what to eat: Indian or pizza.” Their vegetarian Indian pizza, which may sound disgusting, is actually deliciously subtle – and inexpensive. Open 'til 11 PM.

ANGKOR BOREI (3471 Mission btw Cortland & 30th, 415.550.8417 – \$\$) serves large plates of delicious Cambodian food and has an extensive vegetarian menu. It also proves the theory that if a Cambodian restaurant is full of Cambodians, you can trust that the meal will be excellent. Reservations are often necessary on weekends.

DELFINA (3621 18th, 415.552.4055 – \$\$\$\$) is not good for groups, but does serve very reliable and interesting modern Italian in an extremely pleasant room. Better, in my opinion, than ROSE PISTOLA or ACQUERELLO, and less expensive than the latter. Consider BYOB & paying the small corkage fee, as their wine list is pretty spendy and can push a 2-person tab well over \$100.

TI COUZ (3108 16th near Valencia, 415.252.7373 – \$\$) is my favorite of the many good creperies in San Francisco. This small Breton restaurant has been fashioned after a Brittany farmhouse (Ti Couz means “The Old House” in Breton), and the food is certainly as good as I've eaten in that region. The crepes and cheese & charcuterie plates are simple and neatly prepared, and the cider is served in boules just like back home in Gwened and Gernew.

MINAKO ORGANIC SUSHI (2154 Mission at 17th, 415.864.1888 – \$\$\$) is one of the best vegetarian/vegan restaurants in the city. They also serve some seafood, but their “shogun” multi-course vegan kaiseki meals cost about \$25 per person – the servings are large and beautifully presented. The regular kaiseki, which includes a number of fish and shellfish dishes, is under \$30 per person and a good value. The friendly service makes up for the slow procession of dishes; there is often only one person in the kitchen.

FOREIGN CINEMA (2534 Mission, 415.648.7600 – \$\$\$) shows films from somewhere other than here on an huge blank wall in the rear courtyard as you sink your teeth into various terrines, some excellent duck preparations and/or a very good beet salad. The menu is large and constantly changing; the front room is stark but warmed by an often-lit fireplace.

PANCHITAS #2 (3091 16th, 415.431.4232 – \$) is one of the best of the myriad Salvadoran fast food joints in the neighborhood – their pupusas are wonderful and the tropical juices are refreshing on a hot day.

The best of the city's nuevo Latino restaurants, ALMA (1101 Valencia at 22nd, 415.401.8959 – \$\$\$) serves fantastic ceviche, chipi chipi and other seafood. Since 2001, one of the strongest destination restaurants in the Mission.

The best taco trucks in the neighborhood are run by EL TONAYENSE (their taqueria is at 24th and Shotwell, but the trucks are at Harrison & 19th, Harrison & 22nd, and Shotwell & 16th – \$). The organ meats, al pastor pork and carne asada are delicious and cheap. Open every day for lunch and dinner. It can sometimes be difficult to convince people to eat from the trucks but I've had dozens of great meals from these over the years and have never had so much as the slightest indigestion.

EMILY'S SPAGHETTI SHACK (18 Virginia – \$\$) serves plates of you-know-what with huge meatballs (and a few more sophisticated items) and, to drink, ice cold forties kept cool in champagne buckets. A little gimmicky but the room & staff are fun and the food is good and filling.

MITCHELL'S ICE CREAM (688 San Jose at 29th, 415.648.2300 – \$) serves flavors influenced by the neighborhood: corn, lychee, papaya, Mexican chocolate.

THE ELBO ROOM (647 Valencia btw 17th & 18th, 415.552.7788 – \$) is one of my favorite bars in a neighborhood with almost too many. The house band, Vivendo de Pao, plays a sort of noisy and tremendously danceable Brazilian samba-funk on Tuesdays, and the cozier bar downstairs serves fantastic bloody marys every night.

THE ATTIC (3336 24th at Mission, 415.643.3376 – \$) is the tightest fit of all the hole-in-the-wall Mission bars. Cheap drinks, tough bartenders & recovering club kids at all hours.

The bar formerly known as an “art community,” ODEON sits at a fabled intersection (3223 Mission at Valencia, 415.550.6994 – \$) that many locals swear does not actually exist (the intersection, that is; these streets run parallel through the Mission but do eventually meet). It's the most eccentric bar in the city: on any given night the it may be full of bottle rockets, clown porn and lots and lots of booze. Drinks run the gamut from Pabst martinis to dishwasher and prices can range from 10% of current wallet holdings to a striptease on the bar. Basically it's a po-mo freakshow and burning man in a bar – a good place for “doing deviance.”

On Sunday afternoons, fill up at the curbside BBQ at TREAT STREET (3050 24th at Treat, 415.824.5954 – \$), a friendly motorcycle bar (which is apparently not a contradiction).

The most popular of the city's Latino transvestite bars is ESTA NOCHE (3079 16th at Mission, 415.861.5757 – \$\$), with drag shows nightly.

The city's least-pretentious hipster bar, ZEITGEIST (199 Valencia at Duboce, 415.255.7505 – \$) is popular with the local bike messengers, bikers, and lots

and lots and lots of other people. The back patio is popular and always full. Jukebox is mostly unreconstructed noisy punk.

LIMON (3316 18th Street, 415.252.0918 – \$\$\$) serves a very meat-centric Peruvian cuisine, some authentic and some fusion. The nuanced and delicate empanadas (beef, eggs, raisins in a crunchy crust), the immense pork chop entree, served on a bed of bacon, cabbage and mushrooms, and the fantastic fruit ice creams, imported from Peru – all good. Be sure to try the ceviche, which some people say is the best in the city. Not good if you're in a hurry; the wait can be a killer.

THE MARINA

THE MARINA DISTRICT is most of the area immediately south of Marina Boulevard, an affluent residential area adjacent to a bayside marina. MARINA GREEN, a stretch of grass running along the edge of the Bay, is a favorite place for jogging, strolling, picnicking, and kite-flying. Nearby to the east is FORT MASON CENTER (entrance at Marina Blvd. & Buchanan, 415.979.3010), home to the annual Printers Fair in April, the celebrated vegetarian restaurant GREENS, and a few interesting shops, art museums and the offices of a number of local nonprofits, and the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library's bookstore. The nearby PALACE OF FINE ARTS, a stunning Greco-Romanesque structure, was built in 1915 for the Panama Pacific International Exposition and sits adjacent to the EXPLORATORIUM, a large hands-on science museum for kids but also quite entertaining to adults of a sufficient level of either insobriety or immaturity.

ISA (3324 Steiner, 415.567.9588 – \$\$\$) serves French-influenced tapas in a calm, quiet setting. Try to sit on the tent-covered outdoor patio, where heat lamps will keep you warm even on a cold and damp San Francisco night. A wide range of excellent & interestingly-prepared small dishes; the service has always been attentive but unobtrusive. Approx. \$40 per person without wine.

THREE SEASONS (3317 Steiner, 415.567.9989 – \$\$\$), just down the street from ISA, serves traditional Vietnamese dishes family-style with small plates for sharing, and is excellent for a group of 3-8. Their beer and wine list is extensive, and while the service can be sketchy, the food is always wonderful and fresh. Approx. \$25 per person w/o wine or beer.

The best from a too-short list of good Greek restaurants in San Francisco, KOKKARI ESTIATORIO (200 Jackson Street, 415.981.0983 – \$\$\$) has a small menu where everything is prepared with lots of attention to detail. Try the Arnisia Paidakia (grilled lambchops), Ortikia (roast quail), creamy moussaka and the perfect octopus salad.

Vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike may want to make a pilgrimage to the restaurant that began the inexplicable trend toward very high-end non-meat menus: the famous GREENS (415.771.6222 – \$\$\$) in Building A at Fort Mason. Run by the mind-reading monks of the Tassajara monastery (who unfortunately treat dedicated carnivores with a sort of Zen hostility) and retreat, this famous vegetarian restaurant has terrific views of the Bay. Reservations recommended if not always required.

HAYES VALLEY

The HAYES VALLEY neighborhood – sometimes called San Francisco’s Nolita or Silver Lake – is full of galleries, boutiques (mostly specializing in clothing, shoes and mid-century modern furniture & design objects – check out FRIEND at 401 Hayes at Grove) and restaurants. Hayes Valley has at its center Hayes Street, just west of Van Ness, behind the Ballet & Symphony halls. 50 years ago and further back, the Hayes Street corridor was full of hookers, johns & dealers and consumers of a wide variety of other sin; now it is just one more ultra-chic San Francisco neighborhood. As you walk through all of these areas, just remember that the cost of upscaling this and other downtown neighborhoods has and continues to be the further ghettoization of San Francisco, as the working poor and fixed-income seniors and disabled are forced out into more dangerous neighborhoods like Hunters Point and Bayview by skyrocketing rents.

The HAYES STREET GRILL (320 Hayes; 415.863.5545 – \$\$\$) serves some of the best seafood in the city – certainly better than anything you’ll find in the touristy Fisherman’s Wharf area. The menu changes several times a day depending on fresh fish deliveries, and the meat selection is wide and never uninteresting.

FRJTZ (579 Hayes, 415.864.7654 – \$) is a wonderful and almost too-cute creperie with pleasant seating in the rear courtyard, some interesting niches inside and terrific Belgian frites served in paper cones. The beer selection is good too.

CAFFE DELLE STELLE (395 Hayes Street; 415.252.1110; reservations only needed on evenings the ballet or symphony has an event a block away – \$\$\$) is the best Italian on this side of town, with lots of interesting & inventive pasta and fish dishes and a small selection of meat and poultry. The sweet gnocchi in a cream & honey sauce is my favorite thing here; the cannelloni is also fantastic as is the fried calamari/artichoke heart/lemon/broccoli appetizer. Most entrees run from \$9 to \$15, and their wine list is short but good and not expensive.

THE SUNSET

THE SUNSET is full of restaurants and bakeries, although it might not be as well-designed for leisurely walking as some of the downtown neighborhoods. The weather in this little valley (between Vicente Street and GOLDEN GATE PARK) is some of the worst in the city; the wetness and fog seems to get trapped here even when the rest of San Francisco is in near-sunshine. Visit ST. ANNE OF THE SUNSET, a beautifully restored 1931 Mission-style church (at 850 Judah near 14th). Hiking up into Golden Gate Heights will yield a wonderful view (from either Grand View or Sunset Heights parks) of the entire city. There is an almost-hidden staircase between 14th and 15th avenues on Kirkham Street; take it to 14th and Noriega and look for another staircase that leads to the top of the park.

HOWARD'S CAFÉ (1309 9th at Irving, 415.564.4723 – \$\$) has a menu that seems a half mile long, full of home-cooked meals at bargain prices. The roast turkey special and the French dip were good, filling, and cheap. Decent wine at about \$2.50 a glass?! I thought I had somehow been transported out of San Francisco.

A PLACE ON JUDAH (3940 Judah at 44th, 415.566.9933 – \$) has great breakfasts that are a perfect cure for any dipsomaniacal night out. Endless coffee, huge plates of meat and eggs and absolutely huge omelets for about \$7. Walk off your hangover by serving your own coffee from the pot at the rear of the restaurant.

ARIZMENDI BAKERY COOPERATIVE (1331 9th Ave., 415.566.3117 – \$) has lines out the door for the delicious pastries and breads at this storefront bakery. At lunchtime, folks stream in for a slice of the daily special pizza.

ART'S CAFÉ (747 Irving St., btw 8th & 9th, 415.665.7440 – \$) is a long-time neighborhood favorite. Wait in line to sit at the counter, if you can. The Korean BBQ and American breakfasts are all good.

EBISU (1283 9th Ave., btw Lincoln & Irving, 415.566.1770 – \$\$\$) is considered by some to be one of the top sushi restaurants in the Bay Area. The room is loud & chaotic and the wait can be long. Ebisu may not compare to Tojo in Vancouver or Jewel Bako in Manhattan, but the fish is fresh and the preparers are skilled and once I sit down that's all I really care about.

THE RICHMOND

The INNER RICHMOND district (\$10 taxi ride, \$1 exact change on MUNI Bus #38 along Geary) has plenty to do before or after dinner. If you are in the neighborhood, be sure to visit GREEN APPLE BOOKS (506 Clement at 6th), which has a large collection of American firsts, books on the social sciences and gender & ethnicity subjects. The area is also home to a number of Irish pubs, and nobody can tell me why they're all clustered here. I stop asking after a few pints.

HAIG'S DELICACIES (642 Clement; 415.752.6283 – \$\$) is the greatest delicatessen in the city, bar none. This middle-eastern market sells everything from preserved lemons in olive oil to pomegranate syrup to stroopwafel. Their homemade hummus is really, really, really good.

CAFFE RIGGIO (4112 Geary Blvd. btw. 5th & 6th, 415.221.2114, – \$\$\$) serves excellent Italian food in a congenial setting, as good as anything in North Beach and less expensive than the best restaurants of that neighborhood. Reasonably priced (and extensive) wine list. One of my favorite places in the city. The crab bisque is pretty close to perfection in a bowl.

CLEMENTINE (126 Clement, btw. 2nd & 3rd; 415.387.0408 – \$\$\$) prepares some of the best French food in Northern California. Reservations req.

FOUNTAIN COURT (354 Clement, btw 4th & 5th, 415.668.1100 – \$\$) has near-perfect Shanghai cuisine. In a neighborhood overloaded with Chinese restaurants, this is the cream of the crop.

NAGANO SUSHI (3727 Geary at 2nd, 415.221.9811 – \$\$\$) is, at least in the opinion of the Richmond locals who swarm this place regularly, the best sushi restaurant in SF. It is a small, friendly place, with fresh, delicious fish. Try the Cherry Blossom roll – an inside out roll with tuna on the inside and salmon on the outside, topped with seaweed salad. Written up in many foreign guidebooks, it's often full of Japanese and Korean tourists.

BROTHERS RESTAURANT (4128 Geary at 6th, 415.387.7991 – \$\$) and BROTHERS #2 (a block up at 4014 Geary, 415.668.2028) serve the best Korean dishes and BBQ in the city. There are a dozen decent Korean restaurants in Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco, but none compare to BROTHERS, which is why the line can run way down the sidewalk many nights. The panchan are good & varied and the BBQ is a carnivore's fantasy. The room is noisy and the atmosphere nonexistent, unless you count clouds of meat-smoke as atmosphere. Regulars claim that #2 has better cooks, a shorter wait and is more likely to bring each table an extra dish or two of whatever is surplus in the kitchen that evening. If one is closed, walk to the other.

Also in the Richmond, **CHAPEAU!** (1408 Clement, 415.750.9787 – \$\$\$) is a noisy and friendly neighborhood bistro with a tremendous wine list (over 300 bottles, which has won the owners a number of awards from various wine authorities). The tasting menus are a great value. Get there before 6 on weeknights for a three-course \$19.50 early-bird special.

ABBEY TAVERN (4100 Geary at 5th, 415.221.7767 – \$) is a typical Irish sports bar, and can get quite chaotic during World Cup playoffs.

IRELAND'S 32 (3920 Geary at 3rd, 415.386.6173 – \$) has live music most nights, darts, and particularly loud trivia nights midweek. Sinn Fein fanclub.

THE PLOUGH & STARS (116 Clement at 2nd, 415.751.1122 – \$) has local & international Celtic music & poetry almost every night.

THE BITTER END (441 Clement between 5th & 6th, 415.221.953 – \$) is full of expats & other bitter people, but is a surprisingly pleasant place for a pint. Decent food, great bartenders, and entertaining company.

OUTSIDE OF THE CITY

Food aficionados will know of **CHEZ PANISSE** (1517 Shattuck in Berkeley: café [where reservations are not always required] 510.548.5049 – \$\$, restaurant [where advance reservations are required] 510.548.5525 – \$\$\$\$). The restaurant is generally considered one of the very best places to eat in the world and always requires reservations, and the upstairs café is also quite good and much less expensive, with some of the best calzone in the Bay Area. Because of the ease of using BART to get from downtown to the East Bay, Chez Panisse and a few other restaurants in the area are certainly worth considering.

OLIVETO (5655 College in Oakland, reservations required 510.547.5356 – \$\$\$\$) is in Oakland, just over the border from Berkeley, and a 1-block walk from the Rockridge BART station. The executive chef, Paul Bertolli, wrote a mostly traditional Italian cookbook with **CHEZ PANISSE's** Alice Waters. Not inexpensive, and generally accepted as second only to Chez Panisse in the area. The Rockridge area is also home to a number of good independent bookstores, cafés, a wonderful music store and plenty more.

Considered by some very fussy eaters to be the best value for your money at the highest end of the Bay Area culinary universe, **BAYWOLF** (3853 Piedmont in Oakland, reservations required 510.655.6005 – \$\$\$\$) has been an Bay Area institution for over 25 years. The menu, which I have only browsed online, is full of literally mouth-watering grilled meats, fish and fowl, homemade boudin, shellfish tagines, and the desserts..!

THE CASTRO

I did not expect to be able to offer much info on this neighborhood, but information on a few especially good restaurants came in at the last minute and I felt compelled to include them. Please note that any visit to the Castro is incomplete without a stop at the beautifully restored CASTRO THEATER (429 Casto Street, 415.621.6120 for showtimes).

THE CASTRO once was the spiritual heart of San Francisco's gay population, although today I think one can safely say that that heart is beating in every single neighborhood of the city. The Castro is full of great bars and dance clubs and a number of decent restaurants and bookshops, and is always entertaining for an evening stroll.

2223 RESTAURANT & BAR (2223 Market at Sanchez, 415.431.0692 – \$\$ and ½) is a noisy and chaotic room that constantly draws a steady crowd of locals. The noise makes conversation almost impossible, but the very thin-crust pizza, ultra-meaty porkchops and dim sum dumplings are worth a visit. Sunday brunch is particularly good; the blood orange and ricotta pancakes really stand out.

MA TANTE SUMI (4243 18th Street, 415.626.7864 – \$\$\$) is, with only a dozen tables, as quiet and intimate as 2223 is boisterous. The French-Japanese fusion is always subtle, the duck terrific and the appetizers original. Owner Sumi Hirose & chef Brenda Buenviaje's restaurant has been one of the most consistently fine restaurants in the Castro since its opening in 1985.

DESTINO (1815 Market Street, 415.552.4451 – \$\$\$) brings a cozy room and a pan-Latin (but mostly Peruvian) influenced menu. The tiger prawn cocktail, chile relleno (served with a delicious citrus creme fraiche) and pork enchilada really shine. The lightly-fried pumpkin doughnuts are an original and delicious dessert. Directly across from the LGBT center.

TALLULA (4230 18th Street, 415.437.6722 – \$\$\$) melds the flavors and cooking styles of the Indian subcontinent with more familiar ingredients to create a menu that is both familiar and exotic. The plum and tamarind sauce laden aloo tikki are citrusy and succulent; the dosa (a sort of south Indian crepe) stuffed with lobster, corn and morel mushrooms, served in a bath of curry cream, was delicate and delicious. Tandoori-roasted squab, cod ceviche and grilled anchovies are all standouts as well. Most of the dishes are relatively small and are meant, like chaat, to be shared. Great desserts.

IN CLOSING

The eating options in the Bay Area – specifically within San Francisco’s downtown area – are almost unlimited. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on where in your personal heirarchy of importance you place sociology vs. food), there are so many choices that not only will your wallet be severely taxed but your focus on the sessions at the meeting may also be compromised.

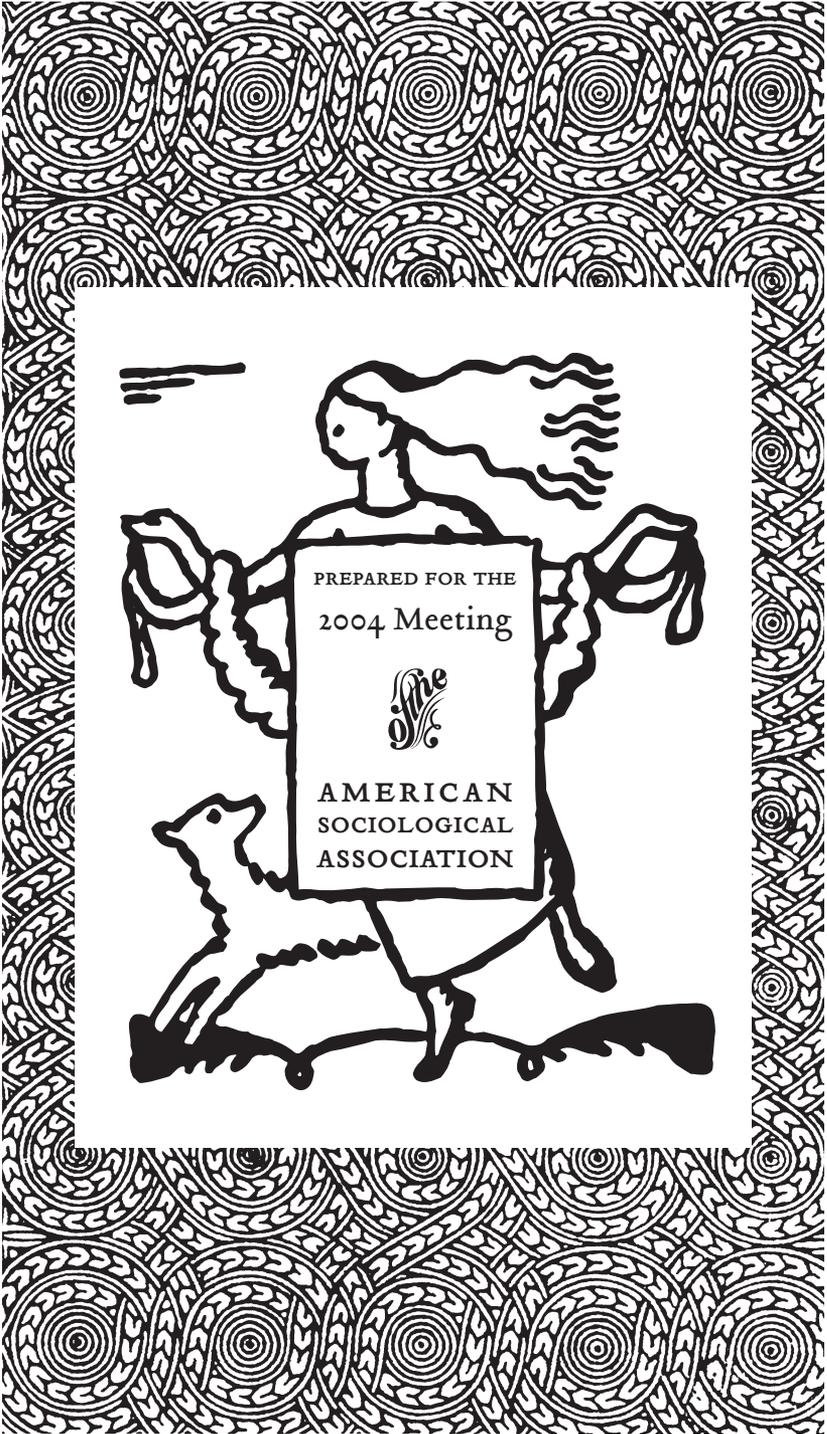
If this list is not enough, there are many dozens of small independently-owned ethnic eateries in every neighborhood of the city, many as good as the most fancy-shmancy and trendy restaurants on this list. There are fantastic neighborhood cafes throughout Noe and Hayes Valleys, along three sides of Golden Gate Park, all across the Mission and even in the furthest reaches of HUNTERS’ POINT and the INDIA and CHINA BASINS.

Obviously there are many many other places to eat than what is listed here. My selection is both limited and slightly skewed; I eat out several times a week, and am constantly trying new places. Even though I love to cook at home, I tend to prepare simpler dishes there, opting for less pedestrian and often more expensive – or at the very least creative, original or otherwise interesting – food when I eat out.

Please do not let this guide constrain you to a particular block, neighborhood or even city. You can easily jump on a hydrofoil ferry, for example, and 20 minutes later be sitting at one of the several restaurants that line the water in Tiburon, such as GUAYMAS (the fish, Dungeness crab & oysters are all excellent – and the view is superior to almost anything in the city on evenings when the fog has not come in; 5 Main Street, Tiburon, 415.435.6300 – \$\$\$). San Francisco city rivals Paris, Bangkok, Los Angeles and even Manhattan for the tremendous variety and quality of food and drink available, from the basement rooms of Chinatown to the finest Michelin multi-star. If every meal you eat in the city is not at the very least an interesting and pleasant experience, you either skipped your medication or didn’t follow my advice.



Bon Appetit!



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