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The French Connection

OUR LOVE AFFAIR WITH FRENCH CUISINE

BOCA GETS ITS HISTORY ON
OUR NEW MUSEUM!



SHAMIN ABAS
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

boca features

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Over the past two years, a few fine French restaurants have planted their flags and baked their baguettes in Palm Beach—adding to the Francophile invasion of the Palm Beach County culinary scene. We explore the many ways locals *mangez bien*.

By **MARIE SPEED**

74 History Alive!

Thanks to a \$2.9 million infusion and the creation of five stunning permanent exhibitions, the Boca Raton Historical Society's renovation proves that the future of our history is here.

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From trends to tips, top designers show us that in our homes' hardest-working spaces—our kitchens and bathrooms—esthetic beauty and functionality are not mutually exclusive.

By **CHRISTIE GALEANO-DEMOTT**

Chef Dieter Samijn
of Cafe Boulud



ANTHONY BRISTOL



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The French



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COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

*Amid a new wave of legendary
restaurants, Palm Beach County
rediscovers cuisine with a
French accent*

Written by **MARIE SPEED**

Connection



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First came the tsunami of New Yorkers and other urbanites abandoning their respective cities for places like South Florida; then came more of the good life, right on their heels. French restaurants—names like Bilboquet, La Goulue, even rumors of an imminent La Grenouille—all landing in Palm Beach. These big names join Café Boulud, Almond, St. Ambroeus and Cafe L'Europe on the island itself, but there are many, many French restaurants thriving throughout our county.

Why?

Because French cuisine is still considered the best in the world, thanks in part to centuries of refined technique, devotion to fresh ingredients and layers of flavor. We decided to offer a taste of what makes French cuisine so beloved, and where to go here when the craving strikes.

The Maestros

In no other cuisine are great chefs so revered; French chefs are regarded with worldwide reverence and provide the inspiration for subsequent generations. Here are some of the original greats, who have given rise to the modern-day artists who have carried on—and refined—their techniques and passion.



The first of these is undoubtedly **Marie-Antoine Carême** (1784-1833), a Frenchman many say was the first celebrity chef. He is best known today for his elaborate sugar, marzipan and pastry sculptures and his “systemization” of French

cuisine in the early 1800s, essentially providing rational instructions through his books for building sauces and layering flavors to codify French home cooking. It was Carême who came up with the five essential sauces, known as “mother sauces,” which formed the basis of and garnish for hundreds of dishes. (see page 71). Carême cooked for royalty and the upper classes, and was a shameless self-promoter and absolute prima donna. He invented strawberries Romanov as well as Charlotte Russe, among many ornate desserts.



George Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935) extended (and simplified) Carême’s notion of haute cuisine, building and refining his techniques, as well as establishing firm

recipes for the five mother sauces. He was the chef of his day, much as Carême was, especially in London and Paris, and published *Le Guide Culinaire*, which is still used as both a textbook and cookbook. Escoffier is also credited with “elevating” the profession, bringing order, discipline and dignity to the kitchen—and undoubtedly raising the status of the chef in the process.

Paul Bocuse (1926-2018) is best known for tempering traditional French cooking with a lighter touch—known as Nouvelle Cuisine—that was defined by lightly cooked vegetables, more low-fat ingredients, and a more sparing use of heavy sauces and dressings. He was a towering influence internationally for chefs in the modern period of French cooking; his restaurant outside of Lyon, L’Auberge du Pont de Collonges, held three Michelin stars for 55 years. Bocuse also founded the culinary academy Institut Paul Bocuse in 1990 and launched the most prestigious cooking competition to date, the Bocuse d’Or, in 1987 in Lyon.



Of course, there are many, many famous French chefs who came after and are practically household names now, people like Alain Ducasse, Julia Child, Alain Passard, Jacques Pépin, Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud—and more on the way. It is the world’s most elegant and refined cuisine, with an ongoing and timeless appeal.

12 Other Great Things From France

- Edith Piaf → 
- French fries → 
- Victor Hugo → 
- Kissing → 
- Statue of Liberty → 
- The hot air balloon → 
- Maurice Chevalier → 
- Champagne → 
- Francois Truffaut → 
- Chanel No. 5 → 
- Jacques Cousteau → 
- “The Little Prince” → 



“The best way to execute French cooking is to get good and loaded and whack the hell out of a chicken.”

—Julia Child



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Things You Will Need In Your Pantry To Whip Up Something French

OLIVE OIL. Extra-virgin, But you know that.



HERBES DE PROVENCE. Fragrant, dried herbs from Provence like rosemary, thyme, oregano, lavender and tarragon season savory dishes like poultry and roasted vegetables. But you probably already have this, right next to the Montreal steak seasoning.



FLEUR DE SEL. Traditionally from Brittany, natural sea salt is your go-to instead of Morton's.



CRÈME FRAÎCHE. Heavy cream mixed with buttermilk is used in soups and sauces, as well as a topping for desserts.



TRUFFLES. A little goes a long way when you use truffles, and we know how expensive they can be. If you don't want to splurge in season, you can always check out Urbani (urbani.com), which also has truffles mixed with mushrooms, cream or other ingredients to give you flavor without the price tag. Or check out our own Marky's in Miami (687 N.E. 79th St., 305/758-2005, markys.com), which has a wide range of truffle products. And, of course, caviar. But we digress.



DIJON MUSTARD. This slightly spicy mustard can thicken a marinade or emulsify a vinaigrette.



SHALLOTS. Somewhere there must have been a dalliance between an onion and some garlic, which may be how we happen to have shallots, which are milder than either and really rev up sautéed fishes and stews and other dishes.



FRENCH BREAD. Forget the whole bread-means-calories thing and get thee a baguette. You can't go all French-inspired without one.



WINE. Well, duh. And you can use it in the cooking, too.



Nicolas and Catherine Vernet

AARON BRISTOL

Our Own French Grocery

If you want to try your hand at sampling (or cooking) French cuisine, we suggest a stop at Boca's **THE GOURMET MARKET**, our hometown lifeline to French groceries (the mustards alone are worth the trip!), home-baked baguettes (said to be "just like in Paris") and everything from croissants and paninis to quiches, wine, cheeses, meats and imported French pantry essentials. Nicolas and Catherine Vernet launched the market almost five years ago; both have serious culinary backgrounds, including Catherine's stint at Michelin-starred Paris restaurants and Nicolas's particular specialty in wine. The food here is casual and superb, and the guidance invaluable.

"The bread and the products we get here are the very best you can find in grocery stores in France," Nicolas says. "The quality is the best quality we produce in France." He adds that one item in particular—fresh foie gras—is a rare treasure, but that other items in the deli section of the market are also crowd-pleasers. "We have the real Parisian butter croissant, the fresh baguette, paninis and French quiche."



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French Restaurants We Love

La Goulue Palm Beach is the latest outpost of the revered (and very clubby) New York restaurant, famous for its classic French dishes and signature cheese soufflé. Opening in 2020, it capitalized on the wave of pandemically traumatized Upper East Siders fleeing to Palm Beach, where dining was wide open and you could get a decent foie gras, by god. **288 S. County Road, Palm Beach, 561/284-6292.**

Le Bilboquet, a fancy Manhattan rival of La Goulue's, was originally opened in New York by Ronald Perelman, Eric Clapton and Steven Witkoff, and made its way to Palm Beach in 2021, alighting in Via Encantada in a building owned by former Warhol muse "Baby Jane" Holzer. Its signature dish is Cajun chicken, and its clientele is A-list Manhattan transplants. **245a Worth Ave., Palm Beach, 561/812-2363.**

Café Boulud, by the venerated chef Daniel Boulud (who makes appearances frequently), opened at the Brazilian Court Hotel years ago, and is a mainstay in Palm Beach. Although you won't find Boulud's signature "DB Burger" on the menu, this is classic French, "modernized," in what may be Palm

Beach's loveliest setting. **301 Australian Ave., Palm Beach, 561/655-6060.**

La Nouvelle Maison is part of Arturo Gismondi's restaurant trioka (along with Trattoria Romana and Luff's Fish House), so you would expect a first-class operation, and it is. The restaurant is modern and sophisticated, with excellent French cuisine and the impossibly happy news that the dessert menu includes bananas Foster. **455 E. Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton, 561/338-3003.**

Chez Marie French Bistro is tucked into a Boca shopping center and owned by a couple from the French Alps, Marie and Stéphane Gattacieca, the latter of whom earned his chops at the world-famous Paul Bocuse Institute in Lyon, France. This is neighborhood dining with an authentic French accent—and all your favorites. **Polo Club Shoppes, 5030 Champion Blvd., #D3, Boca Raton, 561/997-0027.**

Café L'Europe is a landmark French/European restaurant in Palm Beach opened 40 years ago by Norbert and Lidia Goldner, which quickly became the place to be, with

its glam champagne and caviar bar back in the 1980s, as well as its signature weiner schnitzel. Norbert died in 2018, Lidia retired recently, and the landmark is now being run by the Marcello family, which had long been involved. Today, Café L'Europe's waiters no longer wear black tie, the vibe is less formal, but the pianist David Crohan is still on the ivories. **331 S. County Road, Palm Beach, 561/655-4020.**

For 14 years now, **Casimir French Bistro** in Royal Palm Place, owned by Laurent and Doris DiMeglio, has been a Boca favorite, with the best French bread this side of Paris and a hugely popular duck l'orange. It's easy, it's nearby and it never disappoints. **416 Via De Palmas, Boca Raton, 561/955-6001.**

Le Rivage is a Parisian-styled bistro with very traditional and well-wrought French classics, including calf liver with onion, veal sweetbread and frogs' legs—in addition to the standard exquisite dishes executed by its longtime chef Paul Collange. Le Rivage has been in Boca for decades, and has a loyal following. **450 N.E. 20th St., #103, Boca Raton, 561/620-0033.**

Kathy's Gazebo Café was one of Boca's first "fancy" restaurants some 30-plus years ago, a French/Continental dining spot that has held on to its top-notch quality and reputation ever since. Once owned by the late Kathy Sellas, who died in a traffic accident in 1997, the Gazebo is still our special-occasion restaurant, the ladies-who-lunch place, the place for pâté and vichyssoise served in a tiny silver tureen. And, of course, its famous Dover sole. **4199 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton, 561/395-6033.**

Since 2008, **Pistache French Bistro** has been the West Palm Beach catcher's mitt when you want to escape Clematis Street, boat shows and just about anything else. This handsome Parisian brasserie run by restaurateur genius Thierry Beaud (who opened PB Catch in 2011 and was a partner in Lindsay Autry's the Regional Kitchen and Public House) is consistently excellent and has great steak frites in the best location downtown. **101 N. Clematis St., West Palm Beach, 561/833-5090.**





MAROK BRISTOL

Left, duck l'orange at Chez Marie; Clockwise from top, Daniel Boulud's sweet potato gnocchi fritti, steak frites at La Nouvelle Maison, Casimir's escargot and Dover sole from Kathy's Gazebo



And the Wine...

CHAMPAGNE

About two hours northeast of Paris sits the bubbly motherland. The sparkling wine, which has to be made in this region to be called Champagne, can be made with pinot noir, meunier and chardonnay grapes. The wine comes in a variety of classifications including cru, vintage and non-vintage, alongside styles that can range from sweet to dry, like blanc de blancs, rosé and blanc de noirs.

TO BUY: Mœt & Chandon Impérial
PAIR WITH: fried chicken or sushi



LOIRE VALLEY

On the opposite end, in the northwestern part of the country, you'll find the land of chateaux and white wines like chenin blanc, which can be dry or sweet, and sauvignon blanc with bright floral notes. The cooler climate region also produces sparkling wines with tart fruitiness, reds including cabernet franc with red fruit notes, and dry rosés. Vouvray is one of its regions famous for chenin blanc.

TO BUY: Bernard Fouquet-Domaine des Aubuisieres Vouvray
PAIR WITH: light meats like turkey or pork



PROVENCE

While cerulean views of the Med with lavish backdrops of mega yachts along the coastal towns of Cannes and Nice may come to mind when you think the South of France, its superstar rosé wine is the complement to it all. Its largest area, Côtes de Provence, produces about 80 percent rosé wine, mainly using grenache, mourvèdre, syrah and cinsault. Its wines are light and crisp, with fruit notes that make them the perfect cool sip on hot days.

TO BUY: Château Vignelaure
PAIR WITH: seafood



BURGUNDY (BURGOGNE)

In the center of the country, closer to Switzerland, Burgundy is known for pinot noir and chardonnay. There are five primary wine-growing areas, like Chablis, that rarely age in oak and produce white wines with more of a citrus and floral palate. While Beaujolais sits to its south, it's not part of this region.

TO BUY: Joseph Drouhin Bourgogne Pinot Noir
PAIR WITH: salmon, veal or chicken



BORDEAUX

These wines can be overwhelming when getting down to details of Right Bank versus Left Bank, etc. Red blends reign and mainly feature merlot, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc. Left Bank wines are cabernet sauvignon-focused with earthy fruit notes, while Right Bank wines are merlot heavy with deep cherry, chocolate and dark berry flavors

TO BUY: Château-Figeac Saint-Émilion Premier Grand Cru
PAIR WITH: game or tuna



—Christie Galeano-DeMott

French Chefs

Dieter Samijn, from Antwerp, Belgium, has been at Café Boulud Palm Beach since January 2021, although he has worked with Chef Daniel Boulud since 2018. Upon graduating from cooking school, he started working for the legendary Alain Ducasse in Monte Carlo and Paris, followed by stints with Peter Goossens at Hof van Cleve, which has three Michelin stars, and Bart Vandaale in Washington, D.C.

He sees French cuisine as a "foundation for menus as we know them today. ... If you know your basic French techniques well, you basically have a base to understand so many other styles of cuisine. When you work with cooks and chefs who have a great technique, they typically have a great work ethic, too. It goes hand in hand."

—Dieter Samijn, Café Boulud, Palm Beach



AARON BRISTOL





AARON BRISTOL

Five Mother Sauces

BÉCHAMEL SAUCE, a versatile white sauce based on milk thickened with a white roux, is used in Mornay sauce, in croque monsieurs, macaroni and cheese, lasagna and more.

ESPAÑOLE SAUCE is based on a brown stock reduction, and thickened with brown roux. Ingredients typically include roasted bones, bacon and tomato. You'd use this sauce in dark meats like beef or duck and in soups, stews and risottos.

TOMATO SAUCE (sometimes "Tomate" or "Tomat") made in France also includes carrots, onion, garlic, butter and flour, pork belly and veal broth. This sauce is used in chutney, polenta, beans, grilled cheese, poultry, fish and, famously, in eggs, Provence-style.

VELOUTÉ SAUCE: Made by reducing clear stock (made from un-roasted bones) and thickened with a white roux, velouté is French for "velvety" and goes well with vegetables and more delicate meats like seafood or chicken. It can also be used as a gravy.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE: This warm emulsion of egg yolk, melted butter, and lemon juice or vinegar is most popularly associated with asparagus and eggs Benedict, but it's also great on poached fish and even steak.

French Chefs

"I have been at the Gazebo about 18 years—since 1983. I was trained by the original chef at the Gazebo, Bill Sellas, as well as Jean Banchet, who owned the famous Chicago restaurant La Francaise, and Chef Dominique Fortin, who was a pupil of Paul Bocuse. French cuisine is more complex and intense than others, and involves a long preparation, particularly the base sauces and the fact that everything we do is made to order. Our most popular dish—as everyone in Boca knows—is still the Dover sole."

—Miguel Martinez,
Executive Chef, Kathy's Gazebo



What Comes From Where: Your Foodie Cliff's Notes

AUVERGNE-RHONE-ALPES

This southeast region of France is the home of Lyon, known as the "gastronomic capital of France" and home to more than 4,000 restaurants. The city is known

for its exceptional cuisine and dishes like salad Lyonnaise and Vichyssoise—and the Michelin-starred (three stars for 55 years!) L'Auberge du Pont de Collonges, known simply as Paul Bocuse, the chef who helped

put Lyon on the map, and the Les Halles de Lyon Paul Bocuse, an elaborate indoor market known around the world simply as "foodie heaven."



BOURDEAUX, PÉRIGORD, GASCONY AND BASQUE COUNTRY

This region is best known for its saltwater and freshwater fish as well as top-tier lamb, beef, chicken turkey, duck, capon, the works. Which also means foie gras. And of course, that spanky little Bordeaux grape, which we've been drinking forever.

BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTÉ

Outside of Paris, there are more Michelin-starred restaurants in Burgundy than any other region in France. Naturally you're going to want to sip Burgundy here the whole time, but the region is also known for its escargot, its beef bourguignon and a little town called Dijon—the birthplace of everyone's favorite mustard.

CHAMPAGNE, ALSACE, LORRAINE (GRAND EST)

Champagne speaks for itself—what greater contribution to life than “stars in a bottle?” But this area is also known for its fine cheeses, and Lorraine is, of course, the home to quiche Lorraine and the Madeleine butter cake, which we generally call a cookie.

ÎLE DE FRANCE

You could never leave Paris and have a field day with world-class cuisine. There are 9,000 restaurants. (10 with three Michelin stars!) But stars or no stars, dining here is the epicenter of French culinary excellence, from bakeries to bistros to elegant dining, sidewalk dining, in-the-park dining, you name it. You have it all here—plus a few in-between stops like the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower.

LOIRE VALLEY AND CENTRAL FRANCE

The Loire Valley is a day trip from Paris and is known for its fruits, the French rustic staple coq au vin, the wide use of beurre blanc sauce as well as very good goat cheese and rare mushrooms.

NORD PAS-DE-CALAIS, PICARDY, NORMANDY, BRITTANY

Where do we start? This seaside region specializes in seafood, especially shellfish, like moules à la crème Normande (mussels cooked in white wine, cider, garlic and cream), but it's also Calvados apple country, the home of Camembert cheese, and the home of crêpes, which is worth the trip alone.

POITOU-CHARENTES AND LIMOUSIN

This region is known for fresh shellfish and maybe the best butter and cream in France—as well as a potato pie to die for (paté de pomme de terre).

PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE D'AZUR

And then there's Provence, with its spices, its lush fruits and vegetables, its seafood, the French Riviera. It's everything swoon-worthy. This region's food is affiliated with Italy's, so you'll see more olive oil used here than butter, as well as garlic aioli. Don't miss salade Nicoise, bouillabaisse and ratatouille here.

SOUTH OF FRANCE

This region is more heavily influenced by Basque and Spanish cuisine, and is famous for its cassoulet, a dish of white beans and confit of duck or goose. Armagnac brandy is also from here.

There are more culinary regions to explore, of course, from the island of Corsica, known for its seafood and some of the best pork in the world (wild pigs feed on chestnuts); Aquitaine for foie gras; Roussillon, Languedoc and Cevennes, for Roquefort cheese; Toulouse-Queyrey-Aveyron, for haricot beans and what may be the finest sausage in France, saucisse de Toulouse—but it's all good. It's France. Where exquisite food was invented. **b**



ARON BRISTOL

French Chefs

“French cuisine’s contribution to the culinary world is immeasurable, starting with the basics like the first true standardized recipes and the brigade system which created a structural hierarchy in the kitchen. . . . You see French influence in cuisine all over the world, from Vietnam to Mexico, India to Canada and right here in the U.S. As an example, take my favorite sandwich, the Vietnamese Bahn Mi, which we occasionally serve as a lunch special at Pistache. It starts with a crispy baguette brushed with a creamy aioli. Add any kind of pâté, and that alone makes it a delicious meal, but the addition of Vietnamese ingredients—fresh herbs and vegetables, and pickled components—elevates it to an entirely different level.”

—Michael Burgio, *Chef de Cuisine, Pistache, West Palm Beach*

