

1-Plano Noble salons The *Plano Noble* salons are in one of the city's great palaces, the Palacio Duhanu, now a Park Hyatt. Order a glass of intensely fruity but bracingly dry torrontes white wine along with a selection of cheeses from the all-Argentine cheese cave. Be sure to sample tres leches, a cheese made with cows', sheep's, and goat's milk.

2-Croque Madame At *Croque Madame* head to the patio for a coffee. If you order *un café*, you'll get espresso. If you want milk, say, "Un cortado, por favor."

3-Jauja At *Jauja* ("Joy"), the aptly named Patagonian *helado* shop, you'd do well to order a scoop of *cajalete con leche de oveja*, a sheep's milk ice cream made with an indigenous dark-blue berry that grows at the continent's southern tip.

4-Nucha At *Nucha*, a confection shop that makes all its own chocolates and pastries, order a slice of the *torras javi* (a layer cake of chocolate mousse and cream, topped with Italian meringue). If they're out of the *torras javi*, make do with chocolate truffles.

5-Isabel *Isabel* specializes in superb old-time cocktails; you can order a classic pre-dinner concoction like a Spritz (Orange sparkling wine, Campari, bitter orange). But you're better off trying one of the in-house creations, such as the Blind Pig, which comes disguised in an old newspaper. The bar doesn't open until 9 p.m.—which might seem late but puts you on track to eat dinner as the locals do, after 10. If you can't wait that long, stop back later for a nightcap.

6-Ølsen *Ølsen* is one of the best bars in Buenos Aires. It prefigured the world's fixation with Scandinavian cool when it opened ten years ago. Order a *capriroska*—a distinctive take on the Brazilian national cocktail, the *capirinha*, but made with vodka instead of *cachaça*. There are more than 60 vodkas behind the bar at *Ølsen*, so it's best to leave the decision to the bartender.

7-Osaka At *Osaka*, a young, well-dressed crowd savors the textures of Japan with the tropical flavors of Peru. Order a *tiradito*—seviche's shy but better-looking cousin. Then order another, and another, and mutter a prayer of thanks to Saint Benedict of Palermo—the patron saint of the neighborhood's namesake city in Sicily—that raw fish is so incredibly non-filling, because you still need room for the steak.

8-Miranda At *Miranda*, you will be thrilled by thick and bloody *ojo de bife* (rib eye), but if you want to really eat like a local, order the *asado de tira* (grilled short ribs). Be sure to accompany it all with a mighty cab or malbec.

9-Tegu For dessert head to *Casa Rica* to *Tegu*. The sign is tiny, so look for the graffiti-covered wall, knock on the big black door, and wait until you're granted entry into Palermo Hollywood's ultimate sanctuary of food chic. The brainchild of celebrity chef German Martignu—he of *Ølsen* and a flashy joint called *Casa Cruz*—this concealed yet ultra-stylish restaurant is known for its super-eclectic tasting menus—think cow-brain pie, or a banana split with gingerbread and coconut ice cream. Whatever you order, accompany it with a glass of sweet semillon, one of Argentina's tremendously underrated dessert wines.

10-HG The final course of the evening takes place at HG, the restaurant named for rising Argentine culinary star Hernan Gippioni. The kitchen turns out seasonal tasting menus for a mere \$45—if you still have...



The "Grande Bouffe"

Buenos Aires Culinary Walking Tour & Restaurant Guide

In which MARK SCHATZKER proves once and for all that feasting (11 eateries) and fitness (7 miles walked) go beautifully together



Asado de tira (grilled short ribs) with the ubiquitous *papas fritas* at Miranda, in Palermo Hollywood

By **MARK SCHATZKER** **YADID LEVY** JUNE 2012 ISSUE

Buenos Aires was made for walking. The city unfolds like a poem, one that you read block by block as you stroll grand, leafy avenues, admire architecture seemingly airlifted from Europe, and study the supremely well-dressed (yet disarmingly approachable) residents. But Buenos Aires is also made for eating. Here, you'll find everything from the expected (the best steaks this side of Texas) to the, frankly, improbable (corn blini topped with lumpfish caviar?). So today's walk will take you on a ten-course, multi-venue dinner that shows off the best of both the city's traditional fare...and its avant-garde.

Your walk encompasses the Palermo neighborhoods (Palermo Soho and Palermo Hollywood), but it begins in elegant Recoleta, where BA's wealthy flocked during the yellow fever outbreak of 1871, and whose discreet, hushed shops, Parisian-inspired facades, and grand hotels make it feel like a fin de siècle dream-city. Your first stop is the ● **Piáno Nobile** salons of one of the city's great palaces, the Palacio Duhau, now a Park Hyatt. Order a glass of intensely fruity but bracingly dry *torrentés* white wine along with a selection of cheeses from the all-Argentine cheese cave. Be sure to sample *tres leches*, a cheese made with cow's, sheep's, and goat's milk (Av. Alvear 1661).

After, walk down the stairs and take Avenida Alvear to Ayacucho, then head toward Avenida Quintana (Jorge Luis Borges lived here), continuing down Quintana to Plaza Alvear. Meander along its east side past the old convent, then through Plaza Francia all the way down to Avenida Presidente Figueroa Alcorta, which you will cross. Pause for a gander at the giant metal flower. Continue northwest on Alcorta, and turn left at Mariscal Ramón Castilla to reach Plaza Grand Bourg.

You've just taken in two miles of shopping, gardens, and monuments. You need water. You need caffeine. You'll find both at the Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo (across Avenida del Libertador from Plaza Grand Bourg). In front of this once-proud mansion stands the once-proud gatehouse, which has been converted into one of the city's best cafés, ● **Croque Madame**. Head to the patio for a coffee. If you order *un café*, you'll get espresso. If you want milk, say, "*Un cortado, por favor*" (Av. del Libertador 1902).

Time to move again. Head west on Avenida del Libertador, turn left on Avenida Ortiz de Ocampo, and continue to Avenida Cerviño, where you'll find a refreshing stretch of everyday Buenos Aires—laundries, barbecue joints, dog walkers, ice-cream shops. Resist the temptation

to buy a cone until you get to ❷ Jauja (“Joy”), the aptly named Patagonian *helado* shop, where you’d do well to order a scoop of *calafate con leche de oveja*, a sheep’s milk ice cream made with an indigenous dark-blue berry that grows at the continent’s southern tip (Av. Cerviño 3901).

Take Republica de la India to the botanical garden, then cross Avenida Santa Fe into the Palermo Soho district—a walker’s paradise of trendy boutiques set inside old, restored homes along quiet, foliated streets—and continue the sweet theme at ❸ Nucha, a confection shop that makes all its own chocolates and pastries. Order a slice of the *tortas javi* (a layer cake of chocolate mousse and cream, topped with Italian meringue). If they’re out of the *tortas javi*, make do with chocolate truffles (Armenia 1540).

Before you even consider dinner, you must prepare the stomach with another Italian gastronomic tradition Argentines have embraced as their own: *aperitivo*. Down Uriarte, ❹ Isabel specializes in superb old-time cocktails; you can order a classic pre-dinner concoction like a Spritz l’Orange (sparkling wine, Campari, bitter orange). But you’re better off trying one of the in-house creations, such as the Blind Pig, which comes disguised in an old newspaper. The bar doesn’t open until 9 p.m.—which might seem late but puts you on track to eat dinner as the locals do, after 10. If you can’t wait that long, stop back later for a nightcap (Uriarte 1664).

And now, at last, the first course: corn blini topped with lumpfish caviar, smoked salmon, or smoked trout. If it sounds Scandinavian, it’s because...it is. A left on Fitzroy and a right on Gorriti will bring you to ❺ Ølsen, one of the best bars in Buenos Aires. It prefigured the world’s fixation with Scandinavian cool when it opened ten years ago. Order a *caipiroska*—a distinctive take on the Brazilian national cocktail, the *caipirinha*, but made with vodka instead of *cachaça*. There are more than 60 vodkas behind the bar at Ølsen, so it’s best to leave the decision to the bartender (Gorriti 5870).

For the fish course, the city’s incessant celebration of cultures near and far continues at ❻ Osaka, where a young, well-dressed crowd savors the textures of Japan with the tropical flavors of Peru. Order a *tiradito*—seviche’s shy but better-looking cousin. Then order another, and another, and mutter a prayer of thanks to Saint Benedict of Palermo—the patron saint of the neighborhood’s namesake city in Sicily—that raw fish is so incredibly non-filling, because you still need room for the steak (Soler 5608; 54-11-4775-6964; entrées from \$19).


And now, the moment you’ve been waiting for: steak time! “Beef—it’s what’s for dinner” may be a marketing slogan in America, but it’s a way of life in Argentina. It would be sacrilegious not to eat at a *parrilla*—the country’s version of a steak house, but here, the grill is always wood-fired and the menu will contain more cuts of beef than you knew existed. At ❼ Miranda, you will be thrilled by thick and bloody *ojo de bife* (rib eye), but if you want to really eat like a local, order the *asado de tira* (grilled short ribs). Be sure to accompany it all with a mighty cab or malbec (Costa Rica 5602; 54-11-4771-4225; entrées from \$14).

Totter away from the table. You’re on the move again. For dessert—make that the first dessert—head a few blocks up Costa Rica to ❶ Tegui. The sign is tiny, so look for the graffiti-covered wall, knock on the big black door, and wait until you’re granted entry into Palermo Hollywood’s ultimate sanctum of food chic. The brainchild of celebrity chef Germán

Martitegui—he of Olsen and a flashy joint called Casa Cruz—this concealed yet ultra-stylish restaurant is known for its super-eclectic tasting menus—think cow-brain pie, or a banana split with gingerbread and coconut ice cream. Whatever you order, accompany it with a glass of sweet semillon, one of Argentina's tremendously underrated dessert wines (Costa Rica 5852; 54-11-5291-3333; desserts from \$36).

The final course of the evening takes place at **16** HG, the restaurant named for rising Argentine culinary star Hernan Gipponi. The kitchen turns out seasonal tasting menus for a mere \$45—if you still have room, by all means go for it—but will serve dessert to those who ask nicely. A recent option was apple sorbet with carob flour and coriander—definitely worth the stop (Soler 5862; 54-11-3220-6820; desserts from \$7).

The walk may be done, but you're not. There's still the small matter of a nightcap. HG will pour you a nip of the Italian *digestivo* Fernet Branca, the bizarre, not to mention potent, herbal syrup that has been called Argentina's national drink. (People here mix it with Coke—seriously.) Whatever you think of the taste, be thankful for its reputed medicinal qualities. At this point, you not only deserve it—you need it.

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