



## DISFRUTAR: BARCELONA, SPAIN



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Matev Casana, Oriol Castro and Edvard Xatruch, three groundbreaking chefs who met and trained professionally together at Adria Ferran's world-famous El Bulli, opened Disfrutar in Barcelona's Eixample neighborhood in 2014. Over the past few years, the restaurant has become an icon of avant-garde cuisine both in Spain and globally. Disfrutar won its first Michelin Star in 2015, followed by a second in 2017 and 2018, and this year reached #18 on the list of the World's 50 Best Restaurants.

As an over-eager tourist in Barcelona, a reservation at one of the city's hot spots was at the top of my list!



Joan Valera

## **Modernity**

Disfrutar (which translates to – ‘to enjoy’- in English) follows through on the chefs’ commitment to pushing the limits of modern cuisine. Equally important is the restaurant’s markedly Mediterranean identity and its desire to make its guests feel at ease in the minimalist but welcoming atmosphere.

Offering only a select tasting menu focused on seasonal and local classics, Disfrutar’s cuisine embraces molecular gastronomy, an application of food science to create new dishes and culinary techniques, and it’s both emblematic and individualistic. Its primary aim is to amaze and surprise its guests, with each plate a new invention and a radical departure from its original form.



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*Gazpacho Sandwich with Vinegar Garnish*

# Deconstruction

This deconstructivist style of cooking plays out across 12 courses. Start with the chefs' answer to an *amuse bouche*, a Frozen Passion Fruit Ladyfinger with Rum, Lychee and Roses with Gin. Beluga Caviar is served swiftly afterward as a second course. Elevating common Mediterranean dishes to a newer, novel version, there's a Gazpacho Sandwich served with Almond and Elderflower. Then comes a Crispy Egg Yolk with Mushrooms Gelatin, a kind of mushroom soup served in an eggshell.

The Multi Spherical Tatin of Foie Gras and Corn is like abstract art, with geometric shapes like those in Kandinsky's Bauhaus era paintings taking shape on your plate. A crowd favorite is Disfrutar's signature Macaroni Carbonara – a tribute to the Italian classic but made with gelatin macaroni, fresh egg yolk and Jamon Iberico. With my own tendency towards Italomania, this dish was so exciting for me I could have converted to Catalan mania!

Dinner continues with a Catalan 'suquet' (a fish stew) with large prawns. Rabbit with Foie Gras follows next, rich and succulent, though admittedly not for the gastronomically timid. Squab, a young pigeon, with Fermented Corn, Mole and Truffle complete this contemporary orchestra of main courses.



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*Multi Spherical Tatin of Foie Gras & Corn*

# The Finale

There are five other-worldly desserts, the first made with Pandan, the vanilla of South East Asia. Then a Black Sesame Cornet, resembling an ice cream cone topped with delicate hand-made cherries (be careful not to drop one). Then a Whisky Tart followed by a Swiss Roll. And the finale, Cocoa and Mint Cotton served on an actual tree. Imagine a mini Christmas tree decorated with edible cotton balls and served on a plate!

As unusual as the food is, Disfrutar meets all the high standards of service associated with restaurants of its caliber. Two expert sommeliers curate an extensive wine list which includes an 81-year old Spanish Granache from Aragon. The intuitive, hospitable staff have an innate ability to make guests feel special in a warm, unpretentious environment. Colorful ceramic and clay elements contrast with wrought iron throughout the space's interior while an open kitchen displays the chefs' mastery.

Disfrutar presents nothing less than a transcendental dining experience for its guests, a fantasy for the senses. The owners have a sister restaurant on Spain's Costa Brava, Compartir.



Felicia A. Foster

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Felicia Foster is a travel enthusiast, dances tango and writes because she loves to. The Squire has taken Felicia across Argentina and to the beaches of Brazil. She is mostly interested in design, boutique hotels and the entrepreneurs that envision and construct them. She is grateful to be a part of the TravelSquire staff and hopes to continue to travel, write and let the world teach her great lessons.