Paris to Portugal: six restaurants to visit in Western Europe
LAURA PRICE

Every year, 1,000 food experts vote on their favourite restaurant experiences of the previous 18 months, forming The World’s 50 Best Restaurants. Only 50 restaurants make that list – plus another 50 on the 51-100 list – but there are many other incredible spots that receive votes from all over the world, forming The Diners Club 50 Best Discovery Series.

In the first of eight monthly installments based on the 2016 voting, we bring you six of the best restaurants in Western Europe.

1. Le Grand Restaurant / Jean-François Piège – Paris, France
7 rue d’Aguesseau, 75008, Paris
In a nutshell: This chic 25-cover restaurant combines luxurious modern French cuisine with striking interior design – a formula that has won its acclaimed chef patron two Michelin stars less than a year after opening.

Don’t miss: The podium of cheese – a multi-level, wooden platform loaded with fromage that is placed in the centre of the table.

Discover more about Le Grand Restaurant

2. Saziani Stub’n – Straden, Austria

Straden 42, 8345 Straden
+43 3473 8651

Why go? A ravishingly beautiful location, fabulous wines and the terroir-driven cooking of talented young chef Harald Irka are all good reasons in their own right. Put them together and you have a special restaurant.

What’s on the menu? Irka has a minimalist style that owes much to the New Nordic movement. Three or four key ingredients are combined on a plate to showcase the flavours of super-fresh, locally sourced produce; think a parcel of pike-perch wrapped in a charred cabbage or a delicate assembly of crayfish with buttermilk and pea purée.
3. Restaurant Focus – Vitznau, Switzerland

Park Hotel Vitznau, Seestrasse 18, CH-6354 Vitznau
+41 (0)41 399 60 60

What's it all about? Don't expect to see lobster or even black pepper on the menu at this pioneering restaurant, where young head chef Nenad Mlinarevic is committed to using only ingredients sourced from within Switzerland.

Tweezers at the ready: Mlinarevic spent time working at Noma in Copenhagen and honed his talents under legendary Swiss chef Andreas Caminada – experiences that are reflected in precisely constructed dishes that showcase traditional fermentation, pickling and curing techniques. Typical dishes include smoked goat's milk ricotta with fennel and saffron, and rainbow trout with celeriac and tomatoes.

Discover more about Restaurant Focus

4. Ristorante Lido 84 – Gardone Riviera, Italy

Corso Zanardelli, 19625083 Gardone Riviera
+39 0365 20019
Spaghettoni, butter and dried yeast (image: Francesco Cancarini)

**What makes it so special?** The menu at this restaurant overlooking Lake Garda reads like a sonnet to the region, capturing the landscape in dishes created with wonderful local ingredients.

**Tell us more:** From extra virgin olive oil and lemons to sardines and veal, chef Riccardo Camanini uses innovative cooking methods to bring out all the natural flavour of such local produce. Highlights include pike poached in parsley broth with olives, capers and polenta, or a surreal version of 'cacio e pepe' pasta boiled inside a pig's bladder, which is then theatrically sliced open at the table.

**Discover more about** Ristorante Lido 84

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5. **Disfrutar – Barcelona, Spain**

163 Carrer de Villarroel, 08036, Barcelona  
+34 933 48 68 96

*Tarta al Whisky* (image: Francesc Guillamet)

**Fun food:** The multi-course tasting menus ricochet from one theatrical avant-garde dish to another, dizzying the senses and leaving diners with smiles on their faces. Think transparent tubes of 'macaroni', made from gelatine, which are tossed in truffle foam and smothered in Parmesan at the table. Even more unusual is a deconstructed whisky tart, which involves washing your hands in whisky and sniffing them as you eat.

**What's it all about?** Set up by three former El Bulli chefs, this beautiful Mediterranean restaurant in Barcelona’s Eixample neighbourhood owes a debt to Ferran Adrià’s modernist ideals, but also has its own quirky personality.

**Discover more about** Disfrutar

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6. **L'And Vineyards – Montemor-O-Novo, Portugal**

Estrada Nacional 4, Herdade das Valadas, Montemor-o-Novo, 7050  
+351 266 242 400
Roasted Merino lamb loin, organic vegetables, olives and date tagine, sweet potato purée and spheres of yoghurt and fresh mint

Chief reason to visit: Part of an uber-stylish boutique hotel in the Alentejo region, the restaurant is surrounded by breath-taking countryside, which also provides inspiration for Miguel Laffan’s modern take on Portuguese cooking.

Typical dishes: Organic and biodynamic produce is treated with deep respect in dishes that reinterpret Portuguese cuisine with French and Asian flavours. Start with braised shrimp and seaweed croquette as part of a Portuguese bouillabaisse, before a main of rich roasted merino lamb with zingy spheres of yoghurt and fresh mint.

Discover more about L’And Vineyards

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