

EAT BEAT

by Martha Wagner

All smart lovers of fine food arrange for their families, old friends, business associates and tax-deductible professional meetings to be located in cities renowned for their restaurants.

It's not by chance that I find myself in San Francisco every year or two, visiting friends and relatives. It was on a visit two years ago that I learned why San Francisco is one of the best cities for eating. A story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* revealed that the city had more eateries per capita than any other city in the country; one per every 164 residents. The figure worked out to 92.6 restaurants per square mile, enough to keep a food lover busy for more than 11 years, sampling one restaurant per day.

It's not merely numbers that count, of course, but the diversity and high quality to be found. On a week's visit last month I had my usual difficulty deciding where to eat, but did sample the fare at Italian, Indian, Greek, Chinese, Japanese and Middle Eastern restaurants, plus a few all-American cafes. By week's end, and the final dessert, I wondered how food critics like Calvin Trillin can eat with such gusto meal after meal, day after day. I was ready for a break from the good life.

Eating out in San Francisco can be pricey, but there are also bargains. I sampled several restaurants listed in an article which appeared in *California Living Magazine* on June 9, entitled "Feast on \$5 or Less." You can find the magazine in the *San Francisco Sunday Examiner* and *Chronicle* of the same date at the Eugene Public Library.

"Cheapskate's Survey"

The authors singled out 24 San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley restaurants in what they described as a "cheapskate's survey of the gourmet landscape," where they found an exceptional main dish priced at a maximum of \$5. Half of their meal discoveries featured Asian food; other meals were Mexican, Tunisian, Salvadoran, Palestinian and Italian. Two Vietnamese restaurants and one French/Vietnamese restaurant appear on the list.

I can't endorse the entire survey, but I did try two of the restaurants—with good results. Pasand, in Berkeley, is a pleasant South Indian restaurant serving copious quantities of well-prepared, spicy food for very low prices. Three of us shared several of the house specialties and our bill was about \$12, including beer. Also good was the Fettuccine alla Marinara, at Fettuccine Brothers (corner of Larkin and Vallejo Streets in San Francisco). The small cafe is a sideline of the company which produces fresh pasta and sauces for the retail market.

For a different kind of bargain, a \$100 French meal available for \$20, several people recommended to me the California Culinary Academy cooking school restaurant (215 Fremont St., San Francisco). The place is so popular, especially for Thursday and Friday night buffets, you need to book reservations a month or two in advance. It's on my list for my next visit.

A good between-meal occupation in San Francisco, other than walking off that full feeling, is browsing in the specialty food shops, cookware and cookbook stores. There are two cookbook stores in the city. The Cookbook Corner (620 Sutter St. in the YWCA), just a block from Williams-Sonoma, the gourmet cookware shop, sells both new and used cookbooks.

Gourmet Guides in North Beach sells both food and travel books, including books for the professional chef, the largest collection of American regional charity cookbooks anywhere, and dining guides for many foreign cities. Owners Jean Bullock and Louise Thoresen compile and update book lists of new cookbooks and travel books, historical cookbooks, baking books, American regional cookbooks, vegetarian cookbooks, wine and spirit books and other food categories (21 in all). You can order books and book lists from the shop (1767 Stockton St., San Francisco, CA 94133).

Pleasures at the Coast

If the San Francisco Bay Area is not in your plans this summer, how about Bay Street in Florence's Old Town waterfront district? It's a 90-minute drive from Eugene and offers a pleasant small-town coast retreat for city-weary visitors. I recently spent a night there in style—at The Johnson House, the charming bed and breakfast inn just a block from the waterfront.

The three-year-old inn is Florence's oldest house, built in 1892 as a doctor's residence and clinic. Innkeepers Jayne and Ron Fraese, refugees from the Southern California rat race, have skillfully and lovingly restored the two-story white frame house. The living room, dining room and five guest rooms are tastefully furnished with antiques and with special touches like fresh flowers and volumes of classic English and American humor and short stories.

Summer breakfast at The Johnson House consists of fresh strawberries or raspberries in cream, scrambled eggs, sliced ham, muffins or coffee cake, plus as much tea or coffee as you can drink. Breakfast is served on lace-covered tables in the sunny dining room. The food is well-prepared and attractively presented. The added treat comes with meeting fellow travelers. The Fraeses say they've had guests from every state and many countries. Visitors have included diplomats, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a National Geographic photography crew traveling by bicycle.

For information or reservations, call 907-8000 or write to The Johnson House, PO Box 1892, Florence, OR 97439.

One of the most popular dinner spots in Florence is The Bridgewater Restaurant (1297 Bay Street). One of the oldest storefronts in Florence, once a paint store, it's now an attractive, spacious restaurant with wood and wicker decor and posters of Bogart and Gable movies on the walls. Fresh seafood is the specialty. I ordered salmon. It was carefully char-broiled to yield a moist and tender interior. Dinners are in the \$8-\$14 range and come with a salad bar as first course. There's live music on weekends. A hot Dixieland jazz trio, The Pussyfoot Stompers, was playing as I ate my dinner.

If you're in need of a good loaf of bread or a pastry pick-me-up over in Florence, stop in at the Old Sarajevo Bakery at the corner of First and Maple Streets, across the street from The Johnson House. Darja and Jim Lockett bake wonderful breads and pastries, many of the recipes coming from Darja's Yugoslav heritage. You'll find baklava, large croissants, cream puffs, napoleons and several types of European peasant breads (now in fashion, you may recall from my column last month). Bakery hours are 10:30 to 5:30 Monday through Saturday.

Last month I reported that Johan's Bakery was easing out of the wholesale bread business. Fall Creek Bakery has decided to expand its bread sales. In addition to its baguettes, the bakery is now distributing a variety of breads to stores in all areas of Eugene. The breads include Italian Herb Bread, Wholewheat Buttermilk, Anadama (wholewheat, corn and molasses), Challah (on Fridays), Peasant French Bread (two-third wholewheat, one-third white) and Sweet Rye Bread. Look for them at Of Grape and Grain (both locations), Newman's Fish Market (both locations), The Kiva, New Frontier Market, Pasta Plus, Hilyard Street Market, Sundance and Mark's Produce.

The most unusual cookbook of the year just might be *The I Hate to Chew Cookbook: A Gourmet Guide for Adults Who Wear Orthodontic Braces*. The Associated Press reports that an Indiana man, Jack McJunkin, came up with the recipes for his wife, Penelope, after she was fitted with braces so tight she couldn't eat solid food. She grew so tired of milkshakes and mashed potatoes, he began experimenting with classier recipes. The book is being sold across the country.

An important reminder: Put the Farmers' Market (8th & Oak Streets) on your shopping list this Saturday or next. It's a terrific market this summer. Several vendors are selling fresh flowers—by the stem or the bunch—and they are stunning. You'll also find top quality locally-grown fruits and vegetables, fresh herbs, honey, eggs, potted plants and bread from Sunny Days Bakery. The prices are good and it's a fun place to shop. The market is open from 9 am to 5 pm, but items run out, so it's best to shop early.



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