

EATER

WHERE TO EAT IN 2022



They're delicious, too, but there's good food everywhere. Destination meals are different. They whisk travelers from their cooking routines and familiar takeout spots, drawing them out with flavors that can't be replicated, service that can't be matched, and most of all, a story that can't be told elsewhere.

The cities, islands, neighborhoods, and regions that top the list of places we want to eat in 2022 span the globe, from Guadalajara to Markham, Saint-Martin to Orange County — yes, *that* O.C. — and their cuisines range from nasi lemak to puffy tacos to conche Creole. But every single one offers a captivating narrative, a reason to visit *right now*. These stories are told by a diverse cast of chefs, home cooks, street hawkers, and restaurateurs, all people who make us excited to travel, cooking the foods that make us excited to eat.

There's the Korean-born opera singer in Buenos Aires serving japchae con carne, the pizzaiolo baking wild-yeasted pies on a Berkshires farm, the self-proclaimed first Arab pitmaster smoking Texas-style brisket in Dubai, and the photographer plating omakase picnics on a golden Malaysian rice paddy. There's the chatty couple splitting coconuts on a bustling Saint-Martin street corner, the refugees baking peanut butter curry cookies at a nonprofit outside Atlanta, the chef distributing katsu sandos around St. Louis from a tiny Japanese fire truck, and on and on.

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, these stories also reveal cities that have emerged from the throes with their food traditions not just intact, but thriving — places where chefs gamely pivot to customers' needs, restaurant workers lift each other up, and generous spirits endure. They've proven themselves resilient, if not immune, to the virus. We're still anxious about the pandemic's course and cautious about our impact on global health; we're even more inspired by the myriad ways food communities everywhere have risen to meet the challenge head on — and come out serving food that's unambiguously delicious. These are the 13 places we're most excited to travel, and eat, as soon as we get the chance.

Note: There isn't a corner of the globe untouched by COVID-19. This isn't a list of Edens where you can escape the virus, nor an invitation to disregard the well-being of communities. It's definitely not a guarantee these places will even welcome visitors throughout 2022. Check for updates from local health agencies before booking any trip. Travel responsibly. Eat well.

Guadalajara, Mexico | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Saint-Martin,
Caribbean | San Antonio, Texas | Markham, Canada | St. Louis,
Missouri | Dubai, United Arab Emirates | Clarkston, Georgia |
Mallorca, Spain | Orange County, California | Nantes, France | Buenos
Aires, Argentina | Berkshires, Massachusetts



GUADALAJARA, MEXICO



What:

Mexico's Silicon Valley and the proud home of tequila, birria, mariachis, and Mexican rodeo, the Jalisco capital is driven by young, spirited entrepreneurs who link the city's past and present.

Why now:

Guadalajara is the new Mexico City. After years in the shadow of CDMX, Tapatíos are threatening to nab the title as the country's gastronomic center. Financed by local tech and tequila industries, celebrated young chefs are drawing international diners and expanding on their parents' success.

The buzz builds on the city's famed taquerias, fondas, and street food, as well as Jalisco's ancestral agave spirits. It's also a destination for mariscos, spicy tortas ahogadas doused in incendiary Yhualica chile salsa, and antojitos (snacks) like red and green enchiladas and crispy tacos dorados. And then there's birria, found at honored institutions and street stands. Strolling through the city, sizzling comales awaken the senses with aromas of chiles, tomatoes, and spices, while young locals can be heard toasting the enlivened dining scene. Grab a glass. — *Bill Esparza*

■ **Map: The 30 Essential Guadalajara Restaurants**

NEED TO KNOW:

- Currency: Mexican Peso (\$1 USD = 21 pesos)
- When to visit: January through May or November and December for the warm, semiarid weather that's part of Guadalajara's attraction.
- Must-try: Tortas ahogadas, carnitas sandwiches drowned in a fiery salsa of tomatoes and lots of chile de árbol.