

Eating can be the best part of traveling, and travel authority Lonely Planet has come up with a list of the top 10 cities across the globe to enjoy iconic dishes.

1. TAPAS IN BARCELONA, SPAIN

Patatas bravas (potatoes in a spicy tomato sauce), calamares fritos (fried squid), boquerones (anchovies), croquetas de jamon (ham croquettes), chorizo (pork sausage), pimientos asados (roasted peppers), albondigas (meatballs) and berenjenas gratinadas (cheese-baked aubergine) are just some mouth-watering examples of the Spanish snacks known as tapas. The vivacious Catalanian capital of Barcelona excels in the creation of tapas, particularly along La Rambla late in the evening when residents and tourists alike slowly graze their way south from Placa de Catalunya. Leave the cutlery on the table and claim the tapas with a toothpick or your fingers.

2. PASTA IN NAPLES, ITALY

Food historians still debate whether Marco Polo introduced pasta to Italy by importing it from China in the 13th century, or whether the Etruscans had already embraced it long beforehand. But it's generally agreed that by the 18th century Naples had turned the mixing of flour and water into a bona fide industry and was the world's pasta capital. As an encore, Naples also arranged a blind date between pasta and squashed tomatoes, and romance blossomed. So the next time you're wandering the crumbling streets of Naples' historic center, make a beeline for the nearest trattoria and tuck into some pasta napolitana.

3. DONER KEBAB IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

The traditional doner kebab consists of a plate of grilled mutton on a bed of buttered rice, and many of Turkey's restaurants still serve it this way. Far more prominent nowadays, though, is its fast-food cousin, which takes the form of a pita-bread sandwich containing marinated meat that has been sliced from a rotating spit and bundled together with salad and a yoghurt-based sauce. It's de rigueur in Istanbul to equip yourself with a weighty doner and then wander around Sultanahmet or along the Bosphorus.

4. STEAMED DUMPLINGS IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

Shanghai dumplings have to be tasted to be believed and they are one of the items most fought over during dim-sum feasts. These delicious morsels seem like ordinary dough balls until you discover that they are filled with a hot broth flavored with ground pork, crab meat or vegetables. This little surprise is achieved by filling the dumplings with a hardened gelatin that liquefies when the bun is steamed. To avoid scalding your gums with hot soup, do not crunch the dumpling between your teeth but instead nibble it until the liquid seeps out.

5. FEIJOADA IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Taste buds stage their own carnival in honor of Brazil's national lunch, feijoada, a dark and spicy stew built upon a foundation of black beans and pork. Be aware that the feijoada prepared for mass consumption in Rio's restaurants usually just contains pared-down pieces of pig flesh, but it may also contain less familiar porcine treats such as ears, tongues and those cute curly tails. Also note that this hearty recipe is a challenge for any stomach to digest, so plan on hitting a couch rather than the waters off Ipanema after eating it.

6. GUMBO IN NEW ORLEANS, USA

Scooping out a steaming pot of gumbo is as central to life in New Orleans as listening to jazz,

zydeco or swamp blues, or chomping on those sugary pastries called beignets. This Louisiana favorite is essentially a hearty broth of seafood or smoked meats, thickened with okra or a wheat-and-fat mixture called roux, which is then splashed over a mountain of rice. But New Orleans serves up countless variations of the basic gumbo recipe, from classic Creole style to pungent Cajun.

7. COUSCOUS IN CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

The minute you arrive in Casablanca, make straight for Boulevard de la Corniche down on the waterfront, pick an appealing cafe or restaurant and order a cup of mint tea and a plate of Morocco's staple food, couscous. The couscous grain is made from semolina (ground durum wheat) and is ideally prepared by being repeatedly steamed in a special pot called a couscoussier. It's then topped with a spicy stew containing either vegetables or a mixture of veggies and meat such as chicken, lamb and fish.

8. NASI GORENG IN PENANG, MALAYSIA

Visitors to Malaysia inevitably find themselves ordering the delightfully simple nasi goreng. Literally meaning 'fried rice' and also enjoyed across Indonesia and Singapore, this dish is prepared by stir-frying rice with chicken or seafood, vegetables, eggs and a sweetish soy sauce. Nasi goreng is available practically anywhere in Malaysia that serves food but is best sampled within the wonderfully crowded hawker centers that dot the island of Penang. The diverse Malay, Chinese, Indian and Baba-Nonya cooking styles conspire to give an otherwise humble dish some special flavors.

9. CURRY IN MUMBAI, INDIA

Curries are a pan-Asian phenomenon, being cooked almost everywhere between the Punjab and Japan. But the birthplace of curry is India, and you haven't really tasted one until you've come to Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra and delighted your palate with one of the local concoctions. A Mumbai curry typically contains seafood and coconut blended with a masala (mixture of spices). Standard spices include turmeric, coriander, ginger and red chilli.

10. HOT DOG IN NEW YORK CITY, USA

So what if NYC has one of the greatest varieties of dining options in the world? Everyone knows the only truly meaningful foodie ritual here is to head to a busy inner-city intersection, find a shabby metal cart topped by colorful a umbrella, and order a dog with ketchup, mustard, onions and either sauerkraut, relish or chilli sauce. For a bit more of a challenge, head to Nathan's on Coney Island on 4 July and enter the famous hot-dog-eating contest: the record is 53.5 dogs in 12 minutes.

source: reuters.com

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