

## Executive Pastry Chef Nick Malgieri Article

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**Executive Pastry Chef Nick Malgieri**

Nick Malgieri is the national spokesperson for the Switzerland Tourism Gastronomy and Wine program. After culinary school in the United States, he apprenticed in Switzerland and has maintained close ties with the country ever since through frequent visits. A frequent traveler to other destinations, he collects recipes everywhere. Below is a sample of some of the recipes from his book, *A Baker's Tour: Nick Malgieri's Favorite Baking Recipes from Around the World* (HarperCollins, October 2005).

Additional information on Nick Malgieri: [www.nickmalgieri.com](http://www.nickmalgieri.com) 

### Barcelona



In dramatic contrast to many other European countries that didn't unite as a single state until the middle of the 19th century, Spain already existed much in its present form by the end of the 15th century. But like its neighbors, the regions of Spain have retained their native characteristics, and Barcelona is to this day very much a Catalan city. Catalan influence is everywhere in the city from the place names and other liberal use of Catalan language, to the architecture, arts, and most notably the food. Several years ago, Coleman Andrews, then editor in chief of *Saveur* magazine wrote in an editorial: "Shaped by the Moors, the Romans, the Goths, the French, and the Italians [Barcelona] seems mediaeval, baroque, and surrealistic (Dalí was a Catalan). Catalan cuisine does things with rice that would make risotto jealous; uses pasta in ways Italy never imagined; worships wild mushrooms and treats dried beans like precious gems." Think you'll have a good time eating your way around Barcelona? I can guarantee it.

Some of the restaurant recommendations in this month's column were generously shared by my friend Todd Coleman, food editor of *Saveur*.

### Timing Your Meals in Spain

If you follow the Spanish custom of a light breakfast of coffee and a roll, you'll probably need an easy to find mid-morning snack before lunch which is usually served in restaurants between 2 and 4 PM. Dinner starts around 9:30 PM and continues until 1 AM, though the kitchens of most restaurants close around 11:30. Most tapas places open around the beginning of the lunch hour and remain open until late at night, just in case you can't wait until 9:30 for dinner.

### Tapas: Never better than in Barcelona

"Going for tapas" is as much of a ritual as it is an eating experience. It can be as casual as picking up a filled roll much like an Italian panino on the run, or an organized crawl from one tapas place to another to sample the specialties of each establishment. Seafood, cheese, and cured meats rank high on the list – so here are a few you're likely to encounter (Catalan names are first, Spanish second, when they differ):

Anxoves, anchoas: Anchovies; the white ones are marinated raw, and the darker ones cured in salt and/or olive oil. Sometimes fresh ones are deep fried

Bunyols, buñuelos: Light fritters flavored with ham, cheese, or other additions

Cargols, caracoles: Snails, simply roasted or coked with garlic, live oil, and parsley

Clamars farcits, calamars rellenos: Stuffed squid which may be filled with either a meat or mushroom stuffing

Cloïsa, almejas: Clams, often steamed open in white wine, parsley, and garlic

Croquetes: Chicken or ham croquettes served hot

Gambes, camarones: Shrimp, grilled or sautéed with garlic and olive oil

Escopinyes, berberechos: Cockles or tiny clams, often prepared from canned ones

Musclos, mejillones: Mussels, prepared very simply as clams, above

Navalles, navajas: Razor clams, simply steamed and doused with a little lemon

Olives, acietunas: Black or green olives served in dozens of ways stuffed with anything from anchovy paste to almonds, and/or steeped in various marinades

Patatas Bravas: Fried potato chunks heated in a spicy sauce

Truita de patata: Traditional potato frittata

### Catalan cheeses

Cows graze on the high pastures of the nearby Pyrenees and produce rich milk excellent for making cheese.

Alt Urgell-Cerdanya: A cylindrical cow's milk cheese made throughout the year. Can be sampled in fresher or more aged varieties

Costa Negra: A sweet/tart cow's milk cheese with a black rind and a semi-soft consistency

Drap: A buttery cow's milk cheese, available both fresh and slightly aged, with a slight tangy edge

Mató de Montserrat: A fresh unsalted cheese that may be made from either cow's or goat's milk, often served with a drizzle of honey  
Tou del Tillers: A soft cheese covered in white mold that could be called the Catalan version of Brie

### **Embotits: Catalan cured meats**

Botifarra: A sausage that figures in many dishes in either its white or black variety. The black one has some blood and spices added to the stuffing, the white one lacks the strong flavoring  
Bull: Cured pork sausage cooked in liquid before serving  
Catalana: Cured pork first cooked in white wine  
Fuet: Dried sausage flavored with white wine, pepper, and spices, in a salame shape.  
Jamon Serrano: Spain's equivalent of prosciutto di Parma, its best raw ham  
Salchichon de Vic: Dry salame covered in white mold, very delicately seasoned

### **The Big Three: Catalan superstar Chefs**

Ferran Adrià, chef of the notoriously difficult to get into El Bulli, a couple of hours from Barcelona, is arguably the most famous chef in the world today. The inventor of "foam" and various other trompe l'oeil foods, his work has provoked reactions from outright idolatry to sneering disdain. At the forefront of the molecular gastronomy movement, Adrià and his brother Albert, who is a pastry chef, spend 5 months of every year experimenting with new ways to turn our understanding and enjoyment of food upside down. During the past 20 years they have developed hot gels, "caviar" and "egg yolks" of savory or sweet liquids trapped in an invisible membrane, and hundreds of variations on the notorious "foam" that brought Adrià his first recognition. Whether or not you like the idea of a squid risotto made from miniscule dices of squid instead of rice, Adrià's influence will be felt for decades to come.

Santi Santamaria, the 50-year-old Catalan chef, is now the proprietor of four restaurants throughout Spain, several of which are Relais-Chateaux properties. Taking a more traditionally-based approach to the food of Catalonia and the Mediterranean in general, his insistence on quality and simplicity of preparation have won him innumerable accolades. Like Adrià and Ruscaldeda, he is the author of several cookbooks


Carme Ruscaldeda, one of the few women chefs to achieve 3 Michelin stars as have Adrià and Santamaria, also takes a more traditional approach to her food, blending the flavors of the Mediterranean. Together with her husband Toni Balam, they run the 35-seat Saint Pau, which recently spawned an exact replica in Tokyo.

El Bulli	Can Fabes	Sant Pau
Ferran Adrià	Santi Santamaria	Carme Ruscaldeda
Cala Montjoi Ap. 30 17480	Sant Joan 6	Nou 10
Roses, Girona	Sant Celoni	Sant Pol de Mar
<a href="http://www.elbulli.com">www.elbulli.com</a> 	<a href="http://www.canfabes.com">www.canfabes.com</a> 	<a href="http://www.ruscaldeda.com">www.ruscaldeda.com</a> 

### **Some fine tables in Barcelona**

Ca l'Isidre: Considered by many to serve the finest food in Barcelona, its owner, Isidre Girons, has been more than 50 years in the restaurant business. Gazpacho garnished with lobster and seafood, grilled prawns, tuna braised in fresh tomatoes, and roast baby goat with new onions are all sought-after specialties here. It's whispered that the King and Queen of Spain breeze in when they're in Barcelona.

Ca l'Isidre  
Les Flors 12  
Barcelona  
Phone: 011 3493 441 1139  
Fax: 011 3493 442 5271  
E-mail: [info@calisdre.com](mailto:info@calisdre.com)

[www.callisdre.com](http://www.callisdre.com)  Cal Pep: Some of the best seafood in Barcelona is served up here in a very casual setting. Always crowded, but everyone always manages to get served. Cal Pep  
Placa de les Olles 8  
Barcelona  
Phone: 011 3493 310 7961  
E-mail: [calpep@calpep.com](mailto:calpep@calpep.com)


[www.calpep.com](http://www.calpep.com) 

Can Gaig: Carles Gaig, the chef, succeeded his grandparents who opened a restaurant in 1869. The original restaurant was a little outside the center of things, so Gaig has recently moved closer to the center of town. He still attracts a clientele enthusiastic for his excellent take on updated Catalan food.

Can Gaig  
Carrer d'Aragó  
Barcelona  
Phone: 011 3493 429-1017  
Fax: 011 3493 429 7002

Casa Leopoldo: Homey Catalan specialties abound in this historic Barcelona restaurant open since 1929. Try scrambled eggs with new garlic and shrimp, grilled turbot, meatballs with cuttlefish and shrimp, braised oxtail, or langostinos with clams. Not in the city's best neighborhood, it's best to have them call you a cab after dinner.  
Casa Leopoldo  
San Rafael 24  
Barcelona

Phone/fax: 011 3493 441 3014


[www.casaleopoldo.com](http://www.casaleopoldo.com)  Can Majo: A casual seafood and paella restaurant in beachfront Barceloneta, there's also plenty of outdoor seating. Other rice and pasta dishes are also featured.

Can Majo  
Almirall Aixada 23  
Barceloneta  
Phone: 011 3493 221 5455

#### Time For Sweets

When Espai Sucre opened in 2000 it was one of the very first all-sweet restaurants where you could have successive courses of desserts in an organized tasting menu. The brainchild of Jordi Butrón and Xano Sagner, the restaurant has since spawned a dessert school and actually has an application on its website for young pastry enthusiasts eager to go and work there. A not to be missed experience in Barcelona.

Espai Sucre  
Princesa 53  
Barcelona  
Phone: 011 3493 268 1630  
Fax: 011 3493 268 1523  
E-mail: [restaurant@espaisucre.com](mailto:restaurant@espaisucre.com)

[www.espaisucre.com](http://www.espaisucre.com) 

Chocolate is a big thing in Catalonia, especially in Barcelona. Antonio Escriba now runs the chocolate and pastry business started by his grandfather at the beginning of the 20th century, expanding it to 3 locations. Escriba is famous for his Easter chocolates and for his Monas, a uniquely Catalan small chocolate sculpture of a church or chapel that godparents give their godchildren on Palm Sunday. His newest creation is Candy Glam Rings sporting enormous stones made from colored sugar.

[www.escriba.es](http://www.escriba.es) 

Rambla de les Flors 83  
Phone: 011 3493 301 6027  
E-mail: [rambla@escriba.es](mailto:rambla@escriba.es)

Gran Via 546  
Phone: 011 3493 454 7535  
E-mail: [granvia@escriba.es](mailto:granvia@escriba.es)

Ronda Litoral 42  
Phone: 011 3493 221 0729  
E-mail: [xiringuito@escriba.es](mailto:xiringuito@escriba.es)

#### Some useful links:

Restaurants in Barcelona lists dozens of choices, grouped by type of cuisine (Catalan, Mediterranean, etc.)

[www.barcelona.com/layout/set/print/barcelona\\_directory/restaurants.com](http://www.barcelona.com/layout/set/print/barcelona_directory/restaurants.com) 

The same website has a good listing of bars and cafes:

[www.barcelona.com/layout/set/print/barcelona\\_directory/bars\\_cafes](http://www.barcelona.com/layout/set/print/barcelona_directory/bars_cafes) 

A few pages describing Catalan foods and eating habits:

[www.aboutbarcelona.com/barcelona/food-drink.asp](http://www.aboutbarcelona.com/barcelona/food-drink.asp) 

A page of guidebooks on Barcelona, as well as some restaurant guides:

[www.spanishjourneys.com/guidebooks.htm](http://www.spanishjourneys.com/guidebooks.htm) 

#### A word about Catalan wine

Although vines were grown in Catalonia before Roman times, it was the Romans who expanded vineyard area and developed a taste for Catalan wine, to the extent that it was frequently exported to Rome. After the fall of Rome, serious winemaking didn't begin again until the sixteenth century.

Although the vineyards of Catalonia were hit just as hard as those of France during the great Phylloxera epidemic of the late 19th century, the infection didn't arrive in Spain until 15 years later. By that time French vintners had already developed the technique of grafting their vines on immune American rootstock and when Catalan winemakers went to France to study the grafting techniques, they returned with another skill: a mastery of the methode champenoise, the way of making white wine into Champagne. Although no one calls sparkling white wine made outside France Champagne any more (with the exception of a few obstinate American growers), the Catalan version, now called Cava, grows in popularity almost by the minute.

Red wines, formerly known as vi negra, or black wine, have increased in quality with the introduction of standard grape varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, to stand beside the native Catalan grapes such as Garnatxa, Carinyena, and Ull de Llebre.

Red wines to look out for on Barcelona wine lists include Priorat, Montsant, Penedes, Costers del Segre, Terra Alta, Alella, and Emporda. Among the better whites you'll find Kyrie, Barranc dels Closos Blanc, Augustus Chardonnay (from Penedes), and Mas d'en Pol Blanc.

Among the Cavas easily available there are Albet i Noya Barrica 21, Albet i Noya Brut Nature, Huguet Brut Nature, and Parxet Brut Nature.

Curiously different Cavas are made from widely divergent varieties of grapes, but all deliver the dry Champagne-like tingle we associate with a fine sparkling wine.

### **Recipe: Escalivada, Catalan Eggplant Salad**

I've taken one liberty with the original recipe – I never fry eggplant. The method below, when you bake the eggplant slices on an oiled pan results in much the same texture and flavor, but with less work and much less mess. This makes a perfect appetizer with some cheese and cured meats or a great accompaniment to simply grilled meat or fish.

Makes 4 generous servings

#### Vegetables

2 or 3 small eggplant, about 1 1/2 pounds, peeled and sliced about 1/4-inch thick  
1/3 cup olive oil, divided use  
Kosher or other coarse salt  
1 large white onion, about 3/4 pound, peeled and coarsely chopped  
2 red or green bell peppers, about 3/4 pound, stemmed, seeded, and sliced into 1/2-inch wide strips  
8 ripe plum tomatoes, quartered and seeded  
Freshly ground black pepper

#### Vinaigrette Dressing

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped  
1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

2 jellyroll pans, plus a medium roasting pan

1. Set racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 450 degrees.
2. Oil the jellyroll pans and sprinkle the surface with Kosher salt. Arrange the eggplant slices, slightly overlapping on the pans. Bake the eggplant for 5 minutes, then use tongs to turn the slices over and bake for another 5 minutes or so, or until the eggplant looks slightly dry and starts to color. Leave the eggplant slices on the pans until you need them.
3. Cook the onion with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a small saucepan over medium heat until it is wilted and beginning to color, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir the eggplant slices, cooked onion, and remaining vegetables together in a large bowl. Salt and pepper liberally and fold in the remaining oil.
5. Scrape the mixture into the roasting pan and place it on the lower rack of the oven. Bake for about 1 hour, gently stirring once or twice, until all the vegetables are tender and the mixture is no longer watery.
6. Cool the vegetables and fold in the vinaigrette.