


Executive Pastry Chef Nick Malgieri Article



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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 



Zurich

Zurich is teeming with hospitality. New hotels and restaurants are opening all the time and classic ones are being renovated and revitalized. Now that spring is definitely here, restaurants have opened their outdoor terraces; open air cafés are everywhere in the center of the city. Soon municipal plantings as well as the window boxes and planters on and in front of buildings will be ablaze with flowers and outdoor markets will begin to feature the freshest local produce. It's time for an excursion on a lake boat, or a quickie river cruise on the long, narrow boats that glide on the quiet waters of the Limmat. Whether you're in the mood for a pull-out-all-the-stops gastronomic experience or a quick casual meal, Zurich's tables provide excellent food and service as well as outstanding value.

The largest urban area in Switzerland, Zurich and its surrounding canton afford a varied menu of food and wine experiences within an hour from the center of the city. Baden, Winterthur, and Zug are within easy reach by car or frequent S-Bahn (local area) trains. Lake boats stop at quaint villages where you'll find a casual lunch in a Beizli (village bistro) up and down Zurich's lake. Travel a little and sample freshest fish on the shores of Lake Zug, or visit wineries as close as Höngg, a short tram ride from the city center. Zurich and its region are ready to serve you up some fine fare, just be sure to arrive hungry.

For general information about Zurich, be sure to visit Zurich Tourism's website

www.zuerich.com 

where you'll find recommendations for shopping, walking tours, restaurants, and just about anything else you'll need to make your stay a breeze. If you like to travel by public transportation, click on the ZurichCARD link on the home page for an all-inclusive transportation card that will let you hop on and off trams, buses, some suburban trains and even a few lake boats and gives you free admission to all the city's museums, discounts in selected stores, and a "culinary surprise" in participating restaurants.

Hotels

Already famous by the middle of the nineteenth century, Swiss hotels are still a model of excellence followed by hotels the world over. Zurich boasts some of the best in the country and though it's not possible to list them all here, I've included some favorites.

The Hotel Storchen, Zurich's only hotel right on the river bank in the city's old town, has been welcoming travelers for over 600 years. Its winning combination of elegant surroundings and cheerful, friendly service make it a repeat destination for most of the people who stay there. Expertly managed by Jörg Arnold, the Storchen has recently renovated parts of the upper floors to create several spectacular suites that feature views over the river and down

toward the lake. Chef Fredy Nussbaum has overseen the Storchen's impressive menu offerings for over 15 years and a meal on the hotel's first floor (above the street) outdoor terrace can be a high point of any visit to Zurich. When you elect to stay at the hotel, head concierge Gennaro Archideacono and his colleagues will attend to every aspect of your stay and offer some great advice regarding shopping, restaurants, and getting around in general. The Storchen has been my Zurich choice for over 25 years and it's the only hotel in the world that makes me feel as though I'm really at home.

Hotel Storchen
Weinplatz 2
CH-8001 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)44 227 27 27

www.storchen.ch 

The completely renovated and recently reopened Dolder Grand Hotel has occupied a position of prominence in the world of Zurich's fine hotels since 1899. Managing Director Thomas Schmid saw the hotel through the growing pains of renovation and struck gold when he hired a new fine dining chef for the hotel in the person of Chef Heiko Nieder. Simply called The Restaurant, Chef Nieder's domain has been awarded an enviable two stars by the Guide Michelin. His insistence on top quality local ingredients combined with his innovative, but never bizarre, creative touches have earned him the highest distinction awarded to any restaurant within the confines of the city. Try turbot with oysters, apples, and Gorgonzola as a main course and spiced chocolate with corn and coriander for dessert. Aside from a la carte offerings there are several set menus to choose from. And excellent Swiss food is available in the hotel's Garden restaurant too. Worth a special trip.

The Dolder Grand
Kurhausstrasse 65
CH-8032 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)44 456 60 00

www.thedoldergrand.com 

A relative newcomer to the Zurich hotel scene, the Park Hyatt Zurich's sleek contemporary design is tempered by warm colors and an even warmer welcome. Food service in the hotel is elegant and imaginative in its ground floor Parkhaus restaurant and its casual Café Z. Parkhaus features both an open kitchen and a towering wine storage unit accessed via a spiral staircase. Its wood burning oven provides flavorful roasts of chicken, veal, Wagyu beef, and bison, as well as excellent roasted vegetables. Café Z offers a high quality self-service experience, open from 7 am to 7 pm, with most dishes available for takeout, providing a quick alternative for the denizens of the city's financial district.

Park Hyatt Zurich
Beethoven-Strasse 21
CH-8002 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)43 883 12 34

www.zurich.park.hyatt.com 

Newcomers

With new restaurants cropping up all the time as sure as there are sands in the lake, Zurich has developed and exciting restaurant scene. These are a few newer favorites among the many choices available.

Though it only opened several years ago, Chef Markus Lindner quickly earned a Michelin star for Mesa, a tiny jewel box of a restaurant. Creative cuisine utilizing the freshest ingredients also bears a touch of Catalan influence, making for some deliciously surprising combinations. Formal, but unobtrusive, service and a light contemporary décor make Mesa a popular destination for residents, business people, and the occasional tourist. Lindner's wonderful sweet cheese soufflé is this month's featured recipe.

Mesa
Weinbergstrasse 75
CH-8006 Zurich
Phone: +44 (0)43 321 75 75

www.mesa-restaurant.ch 

Devoted to the best in Italian seafood dishes, Bianchi has become a Zurich standard in the short time it has been open. Part of the Bindella restaurant group, Bianchi is co-owned by the family of the same name, famous seafood

suppliers of Zurich's past. Originally from Milan, they settled in Zurich in 1881. Aside from the freshest fish and seafood specialties, Bianchi serves some of the best dishes of home-made pasta and risotto in Zurich.

Bianchi

Limmatquai 82

CH-8001 Zurich

Phone: +44 (0)44 262 98 44

www.bindella.ch 

Recently the old "Helfti Bar" of the Hotel Helvetia became a restaurant of the same name whose kitchens are now headed by Swiss celebrity chef Francoise Wicki. A veteran of such high-profile establishments as the Lucerne Palace and the Three Kings in Basel, Wicki is providing light contemporary food with touches of old Switzerland. A recent menu featured a crayfish cocktail with grapefruit, zander (pike-perch) with leeks and bacon, and house-made pizokel (buckwheat pasta) with Savoy cabbage. A soft-centered chocolate cake with sour cream ice cream topped the dessert menu.

Helvetia

Stauffacherquai 1

CH-8004 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 297 99 99

www.hotel-helvetia.ch/en/node/26 

Top Tables

These several recommendations have been impressing both residents and visitors to Zurich for years. Each is perfect for a celebration meal during your visit.

The Kronenhalle isn't just a restaurant, it's a monument – albeit to fine food and service. It's as much a part of the cultural history of the city as other monuments and still as wonderful as it was the day it opened. Long the property of the Zumsteg family, the Kronenhalle was a favorite hangout for artists and writers such as Friedrich Duerenmatt, James Joyce and Marc Chagall. In fact over the years, the Zumstegs bought many paintings from their artist friends – an especially striking Miro hangs above a sofa in the bar, and there is an exquisite Chagall oil over my favorite table at the back right side of the dining room.

But of course, the Kronenhalle is not all atmosphere and paintings. Kitchen chef Peter Schaerer makes sure that the food is equally up to par. The food ranges from the simple to the elaborate – I was shocked the first time I had dinner at the Kronenhalle to see that Bratwurst (veal sausage) and Roesti were on the menu. My friend Anita, with whom I always go there, explained that many of the regulars eat out in fancy restaurants all the time, and need a break from it once in a while. Don't think that all the food is simple and earthy, though. Every day, there are specials on the elegant silver cart that circles the dining room, or you can have a house specialty, Robespierre, rare fillet of beef sliced thinly and arranged on a hot plate with a luscious sauce poured over all. Those roesti are always available, and make a great accompaniment to many of the meat and fish dishes. Excellent local and Mediterranean fish are also always available.

Of course, the Kronenhalle is a paradise for lovers of Swiss wines, and excellent French and Italian wines are also not neglected.

I always like to start out an evening at the Kronenhalle with a visit to the bar to unwind. Prize-winning bartender Peter Roth presides over the elegant bar designed by Robert Haussmann, with exquisite lamps and fixtures made by Swiss artists, Diego and Alberto Giacometti. Have your regular favorite cocktail, or let Peter propose one of his inventions. Peter's associate Hildegard Muellner also adds a welcoming warmth to the bar. I have to confess that I don't ever do it except at the Kronenhalle, but I usually also end the evening with a brandy or liqueur at the bar after dinner. In fact, I would sleep at the Kronenhalle if they let me!

By the way, do call a few days in advance for a reservation, you can't just walk right in and be assured of a table.

Restaurant Kronenhalle

Raemistrasse 4

Ch-8001 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 262 99 00

www.kronenhalle.com 

Beyond one corner of the St. Peter Hofstadt, the beautifully-proportioned square in front of the St. Peter church lies another Zurich landmark restaurant, Peter Brunner's Kaiser's Reblaub. The name of the restaurant is the Kaiser family's grape arbor and Kaiser refers to the name of a previous owner of the restaurant, not to a German king of the past. Really two restaurants in one, Kaiser's Reblaub is the larger ground-floor restaurant that serves

typical Zurich specialties. One flight up is the Goethe Stuebli (Little Goethe Parlor) a small dining room that seats about 30 diners at a time and was once the German author Goethe's bedroom. Here Brunner serves traditional Swiss food with a modern twist. A Swiss friend who joined me at the Goethe Stuebli for dinner remarked that it was like his grandmother's cooking but prepared by a brilliant chef.

In a recent interview, Brunner told me that one of the restaurants he most admires in New York's Union Square Café. He is attracted by Union Square's insistence on fresh local produce and the use of preparations that enhance but don't mask the essential flavor of food.

The mid-winter meal I had started with three little pots of spreads to enjoy with while waiting for the first course – they were made from duck liver, black olives and celery root respectively. The first course was a parsnip soup with oatmeal and a garnish of shredded salty-sweet cured ham from Willsau near Lucerne. Next, a ragout of diced calf's foot with Jerusalem artichokes and black truffles – I almost swooned this was so good. The main course was a rack of baby lamb with polenta and an herb salad that included dill, tarragon, celery leaves and mache, called nuessli in Swiss German. Dessert was a slice of barely cooked beet, providing a counterpoint to a compote of preserved sour cherries, a sour cream ice cream and scoop of a quite bitter chocolate mousse, perfectly echoing the earthiness of the beet. I think I'll have to go back to see what Brunner is concocting in each season. I love this type of approach to food – it stretches the boundaries and comes up with a surprising touch that makes perfect flavor sense in each dish, without making them at all bizarre.

Kaiser's Reblaube/Goethe Stuebli

Glockengasse 7

CH-8001 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 221 21 20

www.kaisers-reblaube.ch 

Not many places that call themselves a wine bar are quite as elegant as Caduff's Wine Loft. The beautifully but starkly appointed room dominated by an enormous bar also holds tables for dining. Really a combination of wine bar, wine store and restaurant, Caduff's is an oasis of calm good taste in this busy city.

Long a veteran of the food profession, Beat (pronounced BAY-ott) Caduff has also run a successful hotel with a Michelin one-star dining room, the Hotel Anita in Arosa in the Grisons canton. Now he has turned his attention to market-fresh food and the best wine imaginable in a beautiful contemporary setting.

Caduff serves a well-seasoned menu based on seasonal selections and the best in Zurich's markets. Emphasis on fresh produce and local meats and cheeses makes the menu seem like a short list of the season's best.

Current features include Basque-style marinated calamari, braised veal shoulder with morels, and warm chocolate cake with berries. Raw-milk cheeses are the specialty here and they serve the best of what Switzerland has to offer.

Now for the wine: the extensive list is strong on Swiss wines but also features the best of what France, Italy and Germany have to offer. Empty bottles of outstanding vintages are turned into a decorating element as they line the walls of the dining room. Not to be missed when you're in Zurich.

Caduff's Wine Loft

Kanzleistrasse 126

CH-8004 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 240 22 55

www.wineloft.ch 

Sweet Zurich

Confiserie Sprüngli

If I had to give up going to all pastry shops save one for the rest of my life, then the one I would choose to keep would be Sprüngli. I started making sketches and taking photographs of the cakes and pastries in the window while an apprentice years ago wondering with a combination of hope and dread if I would ever learn to make things as beautiful. The chocolates, cakes, pastries and other sweets at Sprüngli's main store at Paradeplatz and their dozen odd stores scattered around the rest of Zurich exhibit the benchmark of quality and exquisite flavor for all things sweet and delicate.

Founded by David Sprüngli and his son Rudolf in 1836 at another location, the pastry shop moved to its present headquarters at Paradeplatz, the traditional center of Zurich, in 1859. The shop has recently undergone a multi-million dollar renovation, making more seating room in the ground-floor café and completely redesigning the sales floor.

No visit to Zurich is complete without a visit to Sprüngli (I usually manage to fit in several) and it's easy to do because there are many Sprüngli boutiques sprinkled around the center of the city, a couple conveniently placed in the main train station and at the airport for a last minute treat to take along on a visit to friends or back home. Sprüngli's chocolates would be enough to make it famous, but all the other goods are just as wonderful. A favorite on many are the Luxemburgerli, an ethereal cross between macaroons and meringues that are coupled with a dab

of buttercream. Eating Luxemburgerli can only be compared to having a bite of a pink cloud at sunset – they are meltingly delicate, perfectly sweet and never too rich. Don't miss the Truffles-cake or truffle cake, or neglect to buy some fancy cookies (Konfekt) to take back to your room.

This year Sprüngli celebrates its 175th birthday with a new and indulgent chocolate anniversary gâteau sprinkled with shreds of gold leaf and with Mosaïque, a brand new assortment of chocolate squares filled with chocolate, apricot, and caramel creams.

Confiserie Spruengli am Paradeplatz
Bahnhofstrasse 21
CH-8022 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)44 224 46 46

www.spruengli.ch 

Péclard Zurich im Schober

The former Café Schober, a Zurich institution since 1836, has recently been renovated and reopened under new management after years of being run by the Teuscher chocolate company. Its miniscule setting gives you the exact impression of what it must have been like to visit such a place during the first half of the 19th century. The cakes, pastries, and chocolates are displayed on old wood tables, and the tiny tea room to the right of the salesroom is always teeming with Zurich citizens, tourists, and a sprinkling of royalty out for a leisurely coffee. Though it's not very large, Péclard manages to serve a couple of thousand people a day – in the past, James Joyce, Lenin (he didn't pay his bill), Hermann Hesse and Brahms were among them.

Seasonal specialties abound, along with the traditional assortment of pastries and cakes; in summer you'll find blueberry crumb cakes, in the fall and winter, vermicelles, those squiggly strands of chestnut puree served with broken meringues and whipped cream.

Today's assortment includes many French-style specialties, including those Parisian macarons that seem to have taken Zurich by storm.

Péclard Zurich im Schober
Napfgasse 4
CH-8001 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)44 251 51 50

www.peclard-zurich.ch 

Vollenweider Chocolatier Confiseur

A relatively new kid on the block, Vollenweider's main shop is in Winterthur a 20-minute train ride from Zurich. About a 5-minute walk from Bellevueplatz, Vollenweider Zurich is a retail shop specializing in truly exquisite chocolates and desserts. While many Swiss chocolates can be on the sweet side or have overly liquid centers, Vollenweider's lean a little toward the French style and are all the better for it. First to introduce Parisian-style macarons to Zurich (and give Sprüngli's Luxemburgerli a run for their money), Vollenweider's assortment made even Sprüngli jump on the bandwagon with a pitch-black licorice flavored version. I love Vollenweider's macaroon pyramids (really cones), which they introduced to Zurich long before Ladurée arrived with the originals. When I want to buy chocolates for friends in Zurich I head straight here.

Vollenweider
Theaterstrasse 1
CH-8001 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)43 288 04 04

www.vollenweiderchocolatier.ch 

Zurich Wines

Zurich's vineyards form part of the central area of the Eastern Switzerland wine region. Though most of the vineyards are in the canton's rural area, there are actually several functioning wine producers within the confines of the city.

With over 600 hectares of vines in cultivation, Zurich is the largest producer of the Eastern Switzerland region and the sixth largest producer in the country. Four main districts produce a combination for white (40% of production) and red (60% of production) wines. The first district, that of Lake Zurich, also houses the training center of cellar masters, vintners, and oenologists at Waedenswil on the lake. The other districts are the Limmat Valley region, the Unterland that skirts the Jura, and the Weinland, near Winterthur. Excellent white wines are produced along the lake shore at Meilen; and Weiningen and Regensberg produce excellent reds in the Limmat Valley.

See:

for extensive information about the wines of canton Zurich as well as listings of local vintners and hiking and bike paths through the vineyards.

Recipe: Sweet Cheese Souffle with Compote of Cherries

Adapted from Chef Marcus Lindner, Restaurant Mesa, Zurich

Makes 6 individual soufflés in 4-ounce ramekins

Ricotta is the best substitute for the type of cheese normally used in Switzerland. The baked soufflés have a flavor and texture like a light and airy version of cheesecake.

Cherry Compote

- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 cup inexpensive Port
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 4-inch cinnamon stick
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 2 small bay leaves
- 2 pieces star anise
- 1 pound sweet cherries, pitted and halved

Sweet Cheese Souffle

- 1/3 cup whole milk or part-skim ricotta
 - 1/2 cup sour cream
 - 1/3 cup sugar, divided
 - 1/4 cup cornstarch (spoon into dry-measure cup and level off)
 - 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
 - 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
 - 3 large eggs, separated
 - Pinch of salt
- Six 4-ounce porcelain ramekins, buttered and sugared, placed in a small roasting pan or gratin dish

1. For the compote, combine the wines, sugar, and seasonings in a non-reactive saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, reduce to a simmer, and cook 5 minutes. Add the cherries, return to a boil, remove from heat and pour into a glass or stainless steel bowl to cool. Cover and chill – may be prepared up to several days in advance. Before serving, remove the spices and pour the chilled compote into a serving bowl. (The photo shows the spices still in the compote, but it's safer to remove them since they're not meant to be eaten.)
2. For the soufflé, set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees. (If you decide to make the soufflé batter in advance, preheat the oven about 30 minutes before you intend to serve the soufflés.)
3. Place the ricotta in a medium mixing bowl and whisk in the sour cream, a little at a time. In a small bowl, stir together half the sugar and the cornstarch, then whisk into the cheese mixture. Whisk in the zests and the egg yolks.
4. Combine the egg whites and salt in a clean dry mixer bowl and use the whisk attachment to whip the egg white until they are holding a very soft peak. Increase speed to medium-high and whip in the remaining sugar a little at a time, continuing to whip the whites until they hold a soft peak. Remove the bowl from the mixer and fold the cheese mixture into the egg whites.
5. Fill the molds to within 1/4-inch of the top. Pour hot water into the larger pan to a depth of about 1/2 inch. Bake the soufflés until they are risen and golden, about 15 minutes.
6. Serve immediately, placing the molds on dessert dishes. Each guest should pierce the top of the soufflé and pour in a few tablespoons of the cherry compote.