Adam Platt’s WHERE TO EAT

Including
Stripped-Down SUSHI!
Newfangled BBQ!
Upmarket GREENMARKET!

ESSENTIALS FOR SPLURGING, GRAZING, BOOZING

PLUS
THE YEAR’S BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

AND
The Next Generation of Great Chefs
“Oh, thank God,” declared my friend the Food Aristocrat when I gave her the news. The great tidal wave of giant Vegas-style dining establishments that has flooded the city’s dining scene the last few years appears to have crested and washed out to sea. Down in the meatpacking district, you can still feast in great ocean-liner-size spaces if you wish, or drop thousands of dollars on sushi delicacies jetted in from around the globe. But New York turns out more prize-winning barbecue-pit masters these days than grandiose superstar chefs. In this hypercasual, eco-minded era, the really hot restaurants don’t require jackets or ties, and many don’t take reservations. Japanese cooks have ditched the big-box model and are once again opening elegant little restaurants in elegant little rooms. Dainty finger foods are the rage in Italian food, and the swells at the posh new spots along Park Avenue and at the Ritz aren’t clamoring for soufflés. They’re ordering platters of organic Swiss chard to go with their farm-grown dinners and spiking their $15 cocktails with carrot juice.

We analyze these curious dining trends, plus many more, in this, our annual compendium of all that’s stylish, fabulous, and new in the fickle galaxy of New York restaurants. In the following pages, you’ll find our recommendations for an entire year’s worth of serious eating, broken down, as usual, into categories reflecting the most notable culinary happenings of the moment. We will tell you where to procure the most lethal absinthe cocktails in town, instruct you on where to find a good duck egg for brunch, and provide a list of the most lavishly expensive haute cuisine establishments in which to blow the remnants of your year-end bonus. Consider it a kind of road map to take with you on your culinary ramblings.

Oh, and if you’re looking for the finest Chinese grub in Brooklyn, we’ve got that, too, along with our yearly summation of New York’s best new restaurants, the best up-and-coming chefs, and, last but not least, the best venues, in this age of rampant culinary correctness, for a sinfully delicious, hormone-saturated, nonorganic feast.

**BARNYARD BRUNCH**

The imposing, profoundly nourishing country ham biscuit (stuffed with salty Kentucky ham, Grafton Cheddar, and homemade jam) served to the bohemian breakfast hordes at Egg is still my favorite mid-morning snack in Williamsburg, or anywhere else, for that matter. My daughters can’t decide which of the tasty brunch items they would like me to recommend at the popular new restaurant in the East Village called The Smith, although without a doubt the dish with the best name is an impressive assemblage of smoked ham, scrambled eggs, Gruyère, and home fries called the “Croaker.”