

AROUND LONDON IN SEVEN CUISINES

They say London is one of the most multi-cultural cities in the world, and when it comes to our restaurants, you'd be hard pressed to find anywhere more globally inspired. From Peruvian platefuls to Nordic nibbles, we've rounded-up those in the know to review the best world cuisines in the capital



1 Pachamama East, Old Street

What for: Peruvian

Says who: [Hannah Ralph](#), *Club* content editor

If, like me, your knowledge of [Peru](#) is a little wanting, here's the London spot turning lost-looking Llamas into Peruvian pros, one ceviche at a time. [Pachamama East](#) – the sister site of the Marylebone original – is tropic without a hint of tack, all big-bulbed fairy lights and foliage. Jorge, our ineffable, Peruvian waiter, advises two to three small plates and a couple of Pisco Sours each, starting with the glazed pork belly chicharrones. Then, zesty ceviche, sizzling stir-fry and melt-in-the-mouth duck over puffed rice deliver the Peruvian punch, while South American-flair elevates some drool-worthy veg and that unforgettable fried chicken waffle, drizzled with sichuan pepper syrup.

Top tip: [This](#), the restaurant's ceviche masterclass held in the downstairs dining room (which can be spied through a glass floor hatch near the bar), with Piscos, snacks and citrusy ceviche rustled up by your own fair – and well guided – hands.





2 Smoking Goat, Shoreditch

What for: Thai

Says who: [Madévi Dailly](#), food and travel writer

There's no denying it, [this hip Shoreditch eatery](#) is fully committed to its street food schtick. Pastel plastic plates may seem incongruous against bare-brick walls and low-slung filament bulbs, but immediately transport me back to the crowded, deliciously-hot markets of [south-east Asia](#). We kick things off with Tamworth skewers (charred piggy treats with just the right chilli kick) and a plate of the joint's signature wings, expertly fried and coated in a sticky fish sauce. Subtle fare this isn't – from the smoked aubergine salad to the glorious barbecued rib, the menu is unapologetically flavour-packed. Just the thing to feast on with a head-turning cocktail or three.

Top tip: Come early and ask for off-menu specials. We lucked out with grilled, hand-dived scallops served with a fiery dip in their still-sizzling shells.



3 Tapas Brindisa, Battersea

What for: Spanish

Says who: [Ross Clarke](#), food writer and *Club* contributing editor

Fifteen years ago, any *paseo* around the capital and you'd have found places for authentic [Spanish](#) cuisine were few and far between. However, simmering like a fine *fabada* for the last 30 years has been [Brindisa](#). The latest incarnation of this Spanish food importer-cum-restaurant chain finds itself nestled on the Thames waterfront at the iconic

Battersea Power Station, with an inspired focus on its 1980's roots. Unctuous *croquetas de jamón*, *huevos rotos* with paprika-spiced *sobrasada*, and just-gooey *tortilla española*, are served next to regional specialities like Monte Enebro goat's cheese from Ávila and the best charcuterie from as far and wide as Fuerteventura to [Menorca](#).

Top tip: The Battersea spot also serves a weekend brunch menu including *huevos a la flamenca* – [Andalusian](#) baked flamenco-style eggs, with chorizo. Want to learn more about jamón? Take yourself to [ham school](#) at Brindisa's original Borough Market shop.



4 Aster, Victoria

What for: Scandinavian

Says who: Marisa Cannon, travel writer and *Club* contributing editor

Located next to the [Victoria Palace theatre](#) – where musical success, *Hamilton* currently resides – [Aster](#) provides a classy dinner spot if you're after some [Nordic](#) post-theatre swag. Inside, décor is elegant with polished marble tables and rustic wooden accents, while the menu perfects Scandi-influenced European fare. For fresher-than-fresh food, try the Skrei cod with crushed potato and seaweed, or the seared scallops with plankton and kohlrabi. The duck breast with beetroot and liquorice, too, is an unexpected showstopper, pairing swimmingly with the truffle potato or braised red cabbage. Finish with the dark chocolate tart, which comes with dollops of sweet lingonberry gel.

Top tip: The bar is kitted out with an enviable selection of premium booze, which ends up creating a truly impressive spread of cocktails. Try the Scandinavian Sling - made with aquavit, lingonberry, lemon juice and dill.





5 Hoppers St Christopher's Place

What for: Sri Lankan

Says who: [Matt Richardson](#), *Club* picture consultant

There's one name to know right now in London's culinary scene, and it's the Sethis. The sibling unit behind [Gymkhana](#), [Brigadiers](#), [Bao](#) and more, they now bring us the second [Hoppers](#) outpost, an ode to the spice gardens of [Sri Lanka](#). The menu might seem a little daunting (there's even a glossary), but you can't go wrong with the mutton rolls – a spring roll, but meatier, paired with a delightfully hot dip – the *karis* (Tamil for curry), and the insanely rich but impossible to stop eating bone-marrow *varuval*. You scoop out the marrow, mix into the fiery sauce, and mop it up with your roti.

Top tip: If you can't tell a *hopper* from a *dosa*, or *ghee* from a *sambol*, the [Taste of Hoppers](#) menu is for you. It leaves the kitchen with all the tough decision making, serving up the largest variety of what Hoppers has to offer.



6 Casse-Croûte, Bermondsey

What for: French

Says who: James Thompson, the foodie behind [@food_feels](#)

Housed in a former sandwich shop in burgeoning Bermondsey, [Casse-Croûte](#) is garlic-around-the-neck, handlebar moustache-levels of [French](#). And this is no bad thing. Bustling with dimly-lit intimacy, vintage art on the walls and checkerboard tiles on the floor, this neighbourhood bistro feels achingly authentic. Once you've taken your seat, it's all about the ever-changing chalkboard menu, all-French wine list and host of absolute classics. Think tender *boeuf en croute*, parsley-flecked *feuillete d'escargots* and creamy *poulet de Bresse*. If it's on the menu, the strawberry and pistachio tarte is the best way to finish things off.

Top tip: There are no reservations for this tiny gem, so go and add your name at the door and grab a drink at [José tapas bar](#) across the road.





7 A.Wong, Victoria

What for: Chinese

Says who: Charlotte Swift, *Club* group editor

The memory of MSG-laden Chinese meals still 'fresh' on my taste buds means the cuisine is rarely one I crave. However, on a recent trip to Shanghai, I had the most unexpectedly flavourful dinner that on my return home to London, I made it my mission to find a Chinese establishment to add to my favourites list. And in [A. Wong](#) – a modern and buzzy restaurant on an assuming street in Victoria – I found it. Offering a traditional à la carte dinner menu with a contemporary twist, each dish was a successful demonstration of chef Andrew Wong's creative talents. Stand-outs included wagyu beef laced with mint, chilli and lemongrass, and Sichuanese aubergines. My return visit will be at lunch, to sample the much-lauded dim sum menu.

Top tip: Arrive early to savour cocktails in the restaurant's seductively lit, subterranean bar, temptingly named the Forbidden City.

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