



Where to find the world's best food

By Jay Rayner

The restaurant critic and author presents his planet on a plate

I dream about the pastrami sandwiches at Katz's Deli in New York (www.katzsdelicatessen.com; around £10). There's nothing like them. I've tried to find the British equivalent, but the rye bread isn't quite right, the pastrami isn't cut properly, and the whole thing isn't piled up in a stack bigger than my own head.

You'll find Paris's best wine, fish, cheese and veg at the brilliant Sunday food market Marché Richard Lenoir, near the Bastille. But it's the delicious rotisserie chicken that lingers in my memory. They give it to you in a heat-proof bag, which means you can take it back to your hotel room and get your fingers sticky.

The neighbourhood sushi joints in LA would be considered minor miracles if they were in London. The sushi culture there is just spectacular. I wouldn't say I had a favourite spot – that's the beauty of it – but I regularly sneak off for sashimi, sea urchin and soft-shell crab at Takami Sushi (www.takamisushi.com; sushi from around £9), which is at the top of a skyscraper Downtown.

Ditch wishy-washy lattes in favour of the cracking, blackest-black espresso served in the little cafes near the Court House in Florence. I'll always remember my first focaccia sandwich in the city, too – mainly because I had never eaten rocket before, and thought, 'What's this delicious green stuff?'



They serve the world's fluffiest pancakes at The Red Flame Diner in New York (www.theredflamediner.com; from around £4.50), a few doors down from the Algonquin Hotel. I only allow myself one breakfast per trip to America – it's unfeasible to ingest any more without becoming the size of a house. But another vice of mine is the pork spare ribs at Righteous Urban Barbeque on West 23rd Street (www.rubbbq.net; ribs from around £14.60) – they are special. Though I wouldn't eat them for breakfast.

Taste the difference: Jay adores the pastrami sandwiches at Katz's Deli in New York, but gets his cheese from Paris (left) and sushi (bottom left) in LA

Food tastes better when you fight for it.

That's why, perversely, I was disappointed when Pierre Hermé's macaroons became available in London (www.pierreherme.com; from around £1.70). When it comes to sweet stuff, they're hard to beat – they look and taste like perfection. But it was so much more fun when you had to buy boxes in Paris.

London is the only place in the West where you'll find really good Pakistani food.

Whenever I get back from a trip, my thoughts drift to Tayyabs in Whitechapel, East London (www.tayyabs.co.uk; curries from around £6). Its sizzling lamb chops and dry meat curry always hit the spot.

Jay will be sharing more tips and secrets at the food and music festival, Harvest at Jimmy's, on September 10-11 (020 7292 7121, www.harvestatjimmys.com; tickets £36).

WORDS: LAURA GOODMAN PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, ROBERT HARDING, GETTY

