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THE BIG LIST

25 under-the-radar foodie cities

From sizzling barbecue in Armenia to zingy poke in Hawaii, these are the places you should have on your list with the best cuisine



Visit the street markets of Palermo
REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Richard Mellor | Saturday February 22 2020, 12:01am, The Times

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EUROPE

1. Palermo, Italy

Sicily's chaotic capital is dilapidated and infuriating to drive in, but its cuisine is a joy. At the Vucciria market, try pizza-style sfincione flatbreads or ragu-stuffed arancini among the din of traders, then buy olives at the street-style Mercato di Ballaro. Dine in the Trattoria Piccolo Napoli, whose fishing boats provide the ingredients for dishes such as macaroni with sardines, fennel and apricot jam, before slumbering at the palazzo guesthouse BB22.

Details Three nights' B&B from £445pp, including flights and a guided three-hour food walk (realholidays.co.uk)

2. Vigo, Spain

On the temperate coast of Galicia, western Spain, Vigo excels at fresh seafood, with its specialist stalls and restaurants on touristy Rua Pescaderia (known as the "road of the oysters"). Chipirones (grilled baby squid) and chocos (fried cuttlefish chunks) feature on most tapas menus, as does the hallmark dish of pulpo gallego — warm pieces of octopus in smoked paprika and olive oil. Local, peachy albariño white wine can be knocked back in the NH Collection hotel's bar.

are Tallinn's warm black-rye breads, craft ales and cool cocktails.

Details Three nights' B&B from £435pp, including flights and transfers (regent-holidays.co.uk)



The Norman Hotel in Tel Aviv

REST OF THE WORLD

12. Tel Aviv, Israel

Tel Aviv's coastal position is responsible for a heady mix of north African, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean flavours. Artichoke heads and strings of cherry tomatoes add to the sensory overload that is Carmel Market, while the chickpeas at Hakosem produce some of the best falafel around. There's a buoyant casual dining scene too; make sure to try the restaurant Claro's plates of oven-roasted octopus in romesco. Leave time for pizza at the cavernous radio-station bar Teder, and for cocktails at the Norman Hotel in its low-lit Library Bar.

Details Three nights' B&B from £1,498pp, including flights and transfers (kirkerholidays.com)



The medina in Fez
GETTY IMAGES

13. Fez, Morocco

One of the prevailing themes in Fez's maze-like medina – containing alleys so narrow one must sidestep along them – is food. Stall holders hawk saffron and fresh figs. Cafés sell aubergine zaalouk stew, chargrilled kebabs, fragrant orange cake or mint tea. And restaurants serve complex tagines and sweet, cinnamon-flavoured pigeon pie, using secret family recipes. Especially good for foodies is

Kiad I'es with its Moorish and Andalusian-style suites, spa and orange-tree courtyards and intimate Moroccan restaurant l'Ambre.

Details Four nights' B&B from £995pp, including flights, transfers and a half-day food tour (abercrombiekent.co.uk)



Akyra Manor Chiang Mai
JASON MICHAEL LANG

14. Chiang Mai, Thailand

Bangkok might be the headline act, but smaller Chiang Mai is Thailand's epicurean capital. Along with celebrated staples of pad thai and green curry, there's the chance to try northern dishes such as sai ua (spicy pork sausage), sticky rice in banana leaf and coconutty khao soi noodle soup. The trendy quarter Nimman has some of the best restaurants, including the informal Tong Tem Toh, while on its "Coffee Street", the hip, all-suite Akyra Manor Chiang Mai serves sunset cocktails at its rooftop pool bar.

Details Five nights' B&B from £948pp, including flights, taxes, private transfers and a dinner (ethostravel.co.uk)



There are plenty of mezcal bars in Oaxaca, Mexico
ALAMY

15. Oaxaca, Mexico

Street food is king in Oaxaca in southern Mexico. At the Mercado 20 de Noviembre vendors dish out barbacoa beef tacos; toasted corn cakes called memelas; triangular tortillas stuffed with black beans and cream; and fried grasshoppers known as chapulines. Oaxaca is known as "the land of seven moles" thanks to sauce-specialist restaurants such as Las Quince Letras, and there are mezcal bars aplenty to wash it all down. Black Tomato operates guided, private foodie trips combining Oaxaca with Mexico City, and throws in cookery lessons and mezcal tasting.

Details Six nights' B&B from £4,250pp, including flights, private transfers and private tours (blacktomato.com)

16. Sao Paulo, Brazil

Brazil's sizeable Japanese population explains the proliferation of sushi restaurants around its biggest city, but there's much more besides. In the upmarket Jardins area, DOM uses indigenous rural Brazilian ingredients, including ants and cashew-like baru. Along with the city's street-food stands (pastel de queijo is a great snack) and churrascaria grills, these options are the challenge for any Palacio Tangara guest aiming to leave room for a meal at the