



## BOOK PREVIEW

Le Bal Café's owners Alice Quillet and Anna Trattles make all the desserts, including this almond-coconut orange cake (p. 72).



# Recipes from Paris's Best New Bistros

A NEW GENERATION OF CHEFS IS SERVING ASTONISHINGLY REFINED, INVENTIVE YET AFFORDABLE FOOD IN RESTAURANTS THAT LOOK LIKE LAID-BACK BISTROS.

BY JANE SIGAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDRIKA STJÄRNE

**W**HEN I WAS at cooking school in Paris in the 1980s, I knew very well what a bistro was: a hangout with a zinc bar, tiled floors and reassuringly predictable dishes like blanquette de veau. Ambitious cooking happened elsewhere, in hushed, expensive dining rooms. But things change: Chefs began liberating good food from formal settings. In 2011, when the dazzling Bertrand Grébaut opened Septime, the concept of refined, inventive yet affordable food with a bistro aesthetic took off and became a movement with a name: bistronomy.

One of the great things about bistronomy is its inclusiveness. Kitchens are not all-male French clubs; you'll find lots of women and cooks from Japan, England, America; some, like James Henry, come from as far away as Australia. Even wine lists are more open-minded. Instead of rough Beaujolais served in thick carafes, there's serious glassware designed to show off

curated lists of wines from established and emerging regions. It's a startling turnaround in a country that still marvels over the 1976 Judgment of Paris, a blind tasting in which California wines beat out Burgundies and Bordeaux.

I became so interested in French cooking's new identity that I decided to write a book, *Bistronomy: Recipes from the Best New Paris Bistros* (just released). I wanted to find out how these chefs, many with haute cuisine backgrounds, were creating this deceptively simple food. I spent a year squeezed into tiny kitchens, like the one chef Dai Shinozuka runs at Les Enfants Rouges. Once, in a space-starved galley, I nearly stepped in a frigid tub of blanched white asparagus on the floor.

"It's constraint that motivates me," says Le Servan's Tatiana Levha. The 30-year-old chef, who worked at Michelin-three-stars Arpège and Astrance, opened her restaurant last year in a revamped café in a former borderland region of the city. Like many of the neo-bistros, Le Servan lacks square footage, so there's not much expensive equipment. There are also no



28-course tasting menus. At dinner Levha offers a handful of starters and mains. With only three other chefs in the kitchen, she can improvise as inspiration strikes. “Our cooking is more spontaneous than anyone could imagine,” she says. The Filipina-French chef refers to her own past and traditions—for instance, stuffing guinea hen with a voluptuous ginger-herb butter (p. 74).

One reason talented chefs are drawn to bistronomy is that if you keep costs low, you can quickly be your own boss. “It can take so much time to climb the traditional restaurant ladder,” explains Levha. At Haï Kaï, chef-owner Amélie Darvas, who learned her technique in grand kitchens like Le Meurice and Hélène Darroze, makes a point of using inexpensive ingredients. Her light, bright, citrusy

**“Constraint motivates me,” says bistronomy cooking star Tatiana Levha.**

“tartare” (p. 72) features smoked fish instead of sushi-grade tuna.

Another way neo-bistros cut costs is by dispensing with pastry chefs. You won’t find intricate confections; instead, the desserts can be prepared by any cook or even a dishwasher. At Le Bal Café and their coffee shop, Ten Belles, co-owners Alice Quillet and Anna Trattles keep it simple:

Pureed oranges flavor the incredibly moist almond-coconut cake and whipped cream topping (p. 72).

I learned so much from those bistronomy kitchens, and I’d watch, from a corner, for as long as I could. But once service reached its frenetic peak, I was usually booted to the bar. That was OK: Counters offer some of the best seats in the house at these spots. I’d get a glass of New World white wine and take notes for my book.

Jane Sigal is F&W’s France correspondent.

## Tomatoes Two Ways with Crab and Soppressata

Total **50 min**; Serves **4**

James Henry, who cooked at Bones, smokes the tomatoes for his colorful salad; as a shortcut, author Jane Sigal recommends fresh tomatoes.

**1 lb. ripe tomatoes**

**2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**

**¼ cup minced white onion**

**2 garlic cloves, minced**

**Pinch of crushed red pepper**

**Pinch of sweet paprika**

**Kosher salt and black pepper**

**½ cup dry white wine**

**1 large purple or green basil sprig, plus basil sprigs and flowers (optional), for garnish**

**2 oz. uncured soppressata or hot Italian sausage, crumbled**

**1½ lbs. heirloom tomatoes, cut into ½-inch slices**

**4 oz. lump crabmeat (about ¾ cup)**

**1.** Halve the tomatoes cross-wise. Grate them on a box grater, discarding the skin; you should have 1½ cups of pulp.

**2.** In a medium saucepan, heat the oil. Add the onion and garlic and season with the red pepper, paprika, salt and black pepper. Cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and simmer until just evaporated, 3 minutes. Add the grated tomatoes and basil sprig and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens, 20 to 25 minutes. Discard the basil sprig.

**3.** Add the soppressata to the sauce and cook, stirring, until cooked through, about 5 minutes. Spoon the sauce into shallow bowls and cover with the sliced tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Top with the crab, garnish with basil and serve.

**WINE** Full-bodied, minerally Jura white: 2011 Domaine Badoz Côtes du Jura Chardonnay.

Australian-born James Henry, FAR RIGHT, brings an international perspective to Paris with dishes like tomatoes with crab and soppressata.



FOLLOW US @FOODANDWINE



Chef Amélie Darvas, FAR RIGHT, uses masking tape for signage at Hai Kai. Her delightful tartare is made from smoked fish.



**“Amélie Darvas, who learned her technique in grand kitchens like Le Meurice, makes a point of using inexpensive ingredients.”**

## Almond-Coconut Orange Cake

**■** PAGE 68

Active **40 min**; Total **2 hr 45 min**  
Serves **12**

This coconut-macaron-like cake is from chef-bakers Alice Quillet and Anna Trattles of Le Bal Café.

**Unsalted butter, for greasing**

**1½ lbs. blood oranges or navel oranges, scrubbed**

**6 large eggs**

**2¾ cups granulated sugar**

**5 cups unsweetened shredded coconut (9 oz.)**

**3 cups almond flour**

**1 tsp. baking powder**

**½ cup sliced almonds**

**2 cups heavy cream**

**2 Tbsp. confectioners' sugar**

**¼ cup apricot jam, melted with 1 tsp. water**

**1.** Preheat the oven to 350°. Brush a 10-inch springform pan with butter. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and butter the paper.

**2.** Put the oranges in a microwave-safe bowl; add enough water to reach halfway up the side. Cover partially with plastic wrap. Microwave on high power, turning the oranges every 3 minutes, until very soft, about 15 minutes; drain. Quarter the oranges, discarding any seeds. In a food processor, puree until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes.

**3.** In a large bowl, beat the eggs with the granulated sugar. Whisk in 1½ cups of the orange puree. Using a spatula, fold in the coconut, almond flour and baking powder. Scrape the mixture into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Sprinkle the sliced almonds over the cake and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 45 minutes. Let cool slightly on a rack.

**4.** In a bowl, whip the cream with the confectioners' sugar and fold in the remaining ¼ cup of orange puree.

**5.** Brush the melted jam over the warm cake and let cool. Unmold the cake and serve with the orange whipped cream.

## Smoked Whitefish Tartare with Herb Oil

**⌚** Total **30 min**; Serves **4**

This bright-flavored tartare from Amélie Darvas at Hai Kai can also be made with smoked bluefish.

**½ lb. fava beans, shelled (½ cup) or ½ cup frozen baby peas**

**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**¼ cup loosely packed flat-leaf parsley, chopped**

**2 Tbsp. chopped chives**

**Kosher salt and pepper**

**½ lb. smoked whitefish, skinned and cut into ¼-inch pieces**

**½ cup loosely packed microgreens**

**2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice**

**¼ tsp. piment d'Espelette (see Note)**

**¼ cup crème fraîche**

**1 Tbsp. fresh Meyer lemon or lemon juice**

**1.** In a saucepan of salted boiling water, blanch the fava beans or peas for 1 minute. Drain and cool in a bowl of ice water for 1 minute. Drain well; if using favas, slip off and discard the tough outer skins. Transfer the beans or peas to a bowl.

**2.** In a small bowl, whisk the olive oil with the parsley and chives and season with salt and pepper. Add 2 tablespoons of the herb oil to the favas in the bowl along with the smoked fish, microgreens and lime juice. Toss gently to coat. Season with salt and pepper and the piment d'Espelette.

**3.** In another bowl, whisk the crème fraîche and lemon juice. Spoon the tartare onto plates and dollop the lemon cream alongside. Drizzle the remaining herb oil on top and serve.

**NOTE** The mildly spicy Basque chile powder piment d'Espelette is available at specialty food stores and from amazon.com.

**WINE** Brisk, savory Muscadet: 2014 Domaine du Haut Bourg Côtes de Grandlieu.



## Thyme-Basted Pork Tenderloin with Oyster Mushrooms

 Total **45 min**; Serves **4**

Chef Dai Shinozuka of Les Enfants Rouges uses an enticing, crunchy mix of walnuts, shallot and chives to garnish pan-roasted pork.

### 1 Tbsp. grapeseed oil

One **1¼-lb. pork tenderloin**

**Kosher salt and pepper**

### 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter

**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**1½ lbs. oyster mushrooms, trimmed and torn into 1-inch pieces**

**4 garlic cloves, 2 minced and 2 crushed**

**2 Tbsp. chopped parsley**

**2 large thyme sprigs**

**Toasted walnuts, chopped shallot and chives and flaky sea salt, for garnish**

1. In a 12-inch ovenproof skillet, heat the grapeseed oil until shimmering. Season the pork with salt and pepper and cook over moderately high heat until browned all over, about 5 minutes. Transfer to the oven and roast the pork until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part registers 135°, 18 to 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a very large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in the olive oil. Add the mushrooms, season with salt and pepper and cook over moderately high heat, turning occasionally, until golden, about 15 minutes. Add the minced garlic and the parsley and cook, stirring, until the garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat.

3. Set the pork over moderate heat. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter, the

crushed garlic and the thyme to the skillet and cook until the butter is foamy. Baste the meat with the butter just until the butter browns, 2 to 3 minutes.

4. Transfer the pork to a cutting board and cut into thick slices. Spoon the mushrooms onto a platter, top with the pork and drizzle with the brown butter. Garnish with walnuts, shallot, chives and flaky salt and serve.

## Ginger-Nut-Butter-Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Total **1 hr 15 min**; Serves **4**

Nut-and-ginger butter flavors this chicken, adapted from a guinea-hen recipe by chef Tatiana Levha at Le Servan.

**1 stick unsalted butter, 4 Tbsp. softened**

**¼ cup mixed chopped herbs, such as parsley, chives, tarragon and dill**

**2 Tbsp. minced raw cashews, plus more for sprinkling**

**2 Tbsp. almond meal**

**1 Tbsp. finely grated fresh ginger**

**Kosher salt and pepper**

**Four 6 oz. skin-on, boneless chicken breasts**

**1 Tbsp. vegetable oil**

**1 shallot, finely chopped**

**1½ cups dry white wine**

**1½ cups chicken stock**

1. In a small bowl, mash the softened butter with the herbs, 2 tablespoons of cashews, the almond meal and ginger. Season with salt and pepper. Using your fingers, loosen the skin of each chicken breast to form a pocket, then stuff with a generous tablespoon of the ginger-nut butter. Season the chicken with salt and pepper and refrigerate until the butter is firm, about 20 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 400°. In a large cast-iron skillet, heat the oil. Add the chicken breasts skin side down and cook over moderately high heat until well browned, 5 minutes. Turn the breasts and cook for 3 minutes. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake the chicken for 8 to 10 minutes, until just cooked through. Transfer to a platter and keep warm.

3. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in the skillet. Add the shallot and cook over moderately high heat, stirring, until softened, 1 minute. Add the wine and cook, scraping up the browned bits, until nearly evaporated, about 3 minutes. Add the stock and simmer until reduced to ½ cup, about 9 minutes. Whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter and season with salt and pepper. Strain the sauce into a bowl.

4. Spoon the sauce onto plates. Set the chicken on top, sprinkle with cashews and serve.

**WINE** Ripe, focused Chenin Blanc: 2012 Les Vignes Herbel La Rue aux Loups.

Author Jane Sigal researches her book in Les Enfants Rouges' tiny kitchen with chef Dai Shinozuka. He bastes pork tenderloin with brown butter before serving.

