

**MUST
EAT
NYC**



MUST EAT

AN ECLECTIC SELECTION
OF CULINARY LOCATIONS

LUC HOORNAERT
PHOTOGRAPHY: KRIS VLEGELS

Colophon

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Texts: Luc Hoornaert

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Graphic design: Grietje Uytendhouwen & Peer bvba

Illustrations: Emma Thyssen

Cartography: Elke Feusels

If you have any questions or remarks, do not hesitate to contact our editorial team:
redactiekunstenstijl@lannoo.com.

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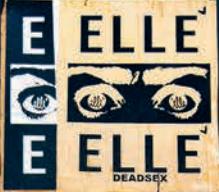
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STAY ALIVE FOR NOW
HOST



Handwritten graffiti on the left black metal beam, including the letters 'M' and 'A'.



NOU

Handwritten graffiti on the right black metal beam, including the letters 'A' and 'D'.



Handwritten graffiti on the right black metal beam, including the letters 'S' and 'P'.

Scenes from the Battleship Gastronomica in NYC

“What’s the purpose of your visit to NYC, sir?” asked the customs officer, minutes after I disembarked at JFK. “Um, well, lunch and dinner,” I replied hesitantly. Three minutes later two custom officers were unpacking my luggage with the most sincere interest. I just barely avoided a full body cavity search. But I was telling the truth. I hadn’t come to NYC to see the numerous mind-blowing landmarks, the fabulous museums or Broadway shows. I came here to eat, full stop, to give myself over to absolute gastronomical pleasure in all its forms.

As a child of the Old World, it seemed (for a long time) as if I were strapped to some sort of gastronomical chastity belt. Somehow it felt like my taste buds were not allowed to go all the way. My first eating experiences in NYC, however, completely liberated me from the burden of gastronomical history and even “proper gastronomy” which always seemed to peep over my shoulder like a black raven. Entertainment seems to be the hardest word to stomach in the Old World. Here I really found the best of both worlds. Old World focus, depth, and precision, coupled with a New World perspective, playfulness and vision. All of this was 30-odd years ago.

Being a full time importer of wine and high-end Japanese ingredients (in Belgium) gets me around the globe. Wherever I am I always try to scratch the surface to connect with the soul of local gastronomy and eating establishments. Nowhere else have I found more culinary bliss than in NYC.

Must Eat NYC is absolutely not a complete guide; the mere idea that a guide to NYC restaurants could ever be “complete” is utterly preposterous. The NYC food scene is a bit like a Borgesian encyclopedia; unimaginably endless and profoundly strange. *Must Eat NYC* highlights my personal favorites and features those dishes that touch me, embrace me, and make me feel like coming home.

I hope you enjoy and savor this guide as much as I did in its creation.

Luc Hoornaert and Kris Vlegels

*Thanks, dear Qurratul-ain, for your patience and strength.
You are the wind beneath my wings.*

In aeterna gratitudine to Randall Graham.

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DIRCK THE NORSEMAN

7 N. 15th St. (between Gem and Franklin St.) - NY 11222

T (718) 389 2940 - www.dirckthenorseman.com

Mon-Thurs: 5:00 p.m. - midnight, Fri: 5:00 p.m. - 2:00 a.m., Sat-Sun: Noon - 2:00 a.m.



One of the first people to settle in Greenpoint
was Dirck Volckertsen.



Braised pig's knuckle

The piece of land now called Brooklyn and of which Greenpoint is a part, was purchased by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1638. In 1645, Dirck Volkertsen, originally from Scandinavia, received the company's blessing to live there and since he came from the far north, he was called Dirk de Noorman, later changed by the British to Dirck the Norseman. He was a ship builder.

Edward Raven is the owner and driving force of the Lane Brewery on Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn's most applauded beer store and café where selected beers were poured. A wild plan became a reality in the former plastic factory close to the East River waterfront. The space is very impressive and dominated by a big shiny brewery, which is clearly visible through a large window from every corner of the entire establishment. This place is commanded by brewery and beer phenomenon, Chris Prout. Together, they are Dirck the Norseman, the first real

brew pub in Brooklyn. The result is a wonderful, gigantic pub with room for live bands and the immense brewing talent of Chris, who can let loose his full creative talent under the name of Greenpoint Beer & Ale Co.

The food is ingenious and hearty, and attuned to Chris's beers, not an easy feat. That's why the management decided to keep the food simple but tasty. And as everyone knows - simple is not always easy. There are the perfect ribs, the nostalgic-tasting pork shank and the impressive breast of veal - smoked for eleven hours. Wonderful food that goes perfectly with Chris' assertive beers, such as the Tupelo IPA with a touch of honey added to it, yet remaining refreshing and dry, and Helles Gate Smoked Lager, with a subtle smoky taste. Here you can drink sixteen different beers from the tap, ten of which are brewed on site. Dirck the Norseman is a fantastic bistro by all standards; hanging around here is more of a rule than an exception.



LA BONBONNIÈRE

28 8th Ave. (between Jane and W 12th St.) - NY 10014
T (212) 741-9266
Daily 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

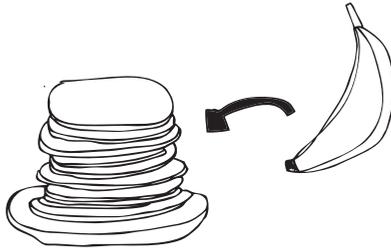


A few steps away from super cool Hudson Street you will find La Bonbonnière, a gem of the die-hard breed of diners.

WE SERVE
BREAKFAST



Fluffy Banana pancakes



It even belongs in a rare category: the hole-in-the-wall diner, because it is certainly not big. In spite of its somewhat chic French name, it is a 100% American diner, though it would not snatch too many prizes for its interior design.

The drab brown walls attest to the fact that they have not been painted since NYC became a smoke-free city, and that was easily twenty years ago. However, this does not keep a cluster of fans from swearing by this honky-tonk diner, which is especially popular for breakfast and brunch.

La Bonbonnière does, however, possess a great deal of incredible charm in spite of the Formica counter and plastic chairs. Historically, such places have always attracted celebrities precisely because they can maintain their anonymity in such environments. In La Bonbonnière a celebrity will be

less noticeable than at The Standard, for example, because here everyone is busy with themselves and not with their surroundings. From the hall of fame, I did recognize the late James Gandolfini and Ethan Hawke as habitués of the diner. It is really a place that gets to you, and whenever I see the signed CD covers hanging on the wall with titles such as Mike Viola's *The Candy Butchers*, *Live at La Bonbonnière*, I am endlessly impressed.

I am not actually a great fan of pancakes, but for their fluffy banana pancakes, I make a special exception. They are preternaturally fluffy and light, apparently due to the use of well-beaten buttermilk in the batter. The banana purée in the batter and extra slices of fried banana make this dish a uniquely tasteful experience, even for someone who is not crazy about pancakes.



DICKSON'S FARMSTAND

75 9th Ave. (in Chelsea Market, between 16th and 15th St.) - NY 10011

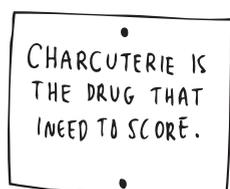
T (212) 242-2630 - www.dicksonsfarmstand.com

Open Mon-Sat: 10:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m., Sun: 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Whenever I walk through Chelsea Market,
I inevitably get sucked into this top artisanal butchery.





Handmade
artisanal
charcuterie

Ted Rosen is a butcher with a real twinkle in his eyes as he tells you about meat and fine cold cuts, and he is even happier when he sees how you enjoy his products.

It is not easy to find artisanal charcuterie or cold cuts in NYC, and seeing that I can't go too long without it, Dickson's is an ideal refueling station. Charcuterie is the drug and I need to score. If you look closely around you, you quickly discover that this is not your run-of-the-mill butchery. It starts with entire animals. The carcasses come in one piece and are entirely chopped up by professional butchers - right in the store where everyone can

follow their nimble fingers. The noblest parts are placed on the counter, the less noble parts, but usually the tastiest, are processed in the charcuterie workshop into paté, ham, coppa (cured meat), bacon, pastrami, chorizo sausages, hotdogs, rillettes and blood sausages.

All the meat sold here comes from sustainable, small-scale meat farms. These are small farms that raise traditional breeds and moreover, they don't use any antibiotics or hormones. A four-legged dream. You can come here for delicious cold-cut sandwiches or you can buy the products and eat them at home; there are fantastic cuts of pork, beef or lamb, and fowl. Top address!