



# DESTINATION: FOOD

Food and travel are inextricably linked, and when it comes to global gastronomic getaways, the choice is endless. We've made the world just that little bit smaller by narrowing the selection down to five of the foodie destinations that top our must-try-before-we-die wish list, plus a bonus dark horse

## ✈️: SPAIN

Spain, where round-the-clock snacking seems to be a national pastime, is where it's at for us here at Foodie. We only have to look to our very own Hong Kong to see that the popularity of this cuisine shows no signs of abating, with Spanish the byword for vibrant and cutting-edge cuisine. Should we be lucky enough to bag a holiday to Spain, our numero uno dining choice would have to be **El Celler de Can Roca** in Girona, which rocketed to the top spot in this year's S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list, toppling Noma in Copenhagen from its well-established perch. Founded in 1986 by the Roca brothers – Joan (head chef), Josep (sommelier) and Jordi (pâtissier) – El Celler de Can Roca is

known for its avant-garde and visually stunning dishes. At this beautifully designed restaurant with its calming glass-walled garden front and centre in the dining room, our foodie adventure might begin with a paper globe containing small bites inspired by the chef's travels. Other dishes could include an



El Celler de Can Roca

appetiser of anchovy-stuffed caramelised olives ready to be plucked from a bonsai olive tree, plus the post-dessert presentation of Can Roca's Willy-Wonka-esque sweets trolley as the meal's grand finale. Choosing either the seven-course Classics menu (135 euros/HK\$1,400) or the 14-course Feast menu (165 euros/HK\$1,700) – with a bunch of extra titbits sprinkled in for good measure – we're certain we'd be in for the gastronomic ride of a lifetime.

If we found ourselves on Spain's Costa Brava without having snagged a booking at Can Roca (the waiting list is currently a tear-inducing one year), we'd go for a more local – but still spectacular – option: charming restaurant **Sa Rascassa**, nestled within the splendid seclusion of pine-scented boutique *Hostal Sa Rascassa*, only a few short metres away from a crystal-clear cove. Proprietor Oscar Górriz serves up rave-worthy classic Catalan dishes, with an emphasis on grilled meats and seafood. We'd split the difference with the "sea and mountain" main-course option of grilled lobster and free-range chicken (24 euros/HK\$250).

*El Celler de Can Roca: Can Sunyer 48, 17007 Girona*  
☎ +34 972 222 157

*Sa Rascassa: Hostal Sa Rascassa, Cala d'Aiguafreda 3, 17255 Begur* ☎ +34 972 622 845



Sa Rascassa garden

chef's top-of-the-line *Grande Tradition Classique* menu (240 euros/HK\$2,500).

To savour a taste of Chef Bocuse without the high price tag, the elegant but not quite so grand **Saisons** would be an excellent alternative. The teaching restaurant at culinary school *Institut Paul Bocuse*, *Saisons'* lunch and dinner menus are designed according to the seasons, with the kitchen overseen by Bocuse protégé Alain Le Cossec. A big-bang multi-course menu here can be had for a pittance, starting at only 29 euros (HK\$300) for lunch – we'd make ours long and boozy, just how they like it in France.

*L'Auberge du Pont de Collognes: 40 Quai de la Plage, 69660 Collognes au Mont d'Or* ☎ +33 (0)4 72 42 90 90

*Saisons: Institut Paul Bocuse, Château du Vivier, 1A Chemin de Calabert, 69130 Ecully* ☎ +33 (0)4 72 18 02 20

## ✈️: FRANCE

Long considered the epitome of fine dining, France is always on our radar for premier haute cuisine, as well as the best breads and patisserie on the planet. Given the opportunity to dine out in one locale in this food-obsessed nation, we'd head to Lyons, referred to by French food writer and Prince of Gastronomes himself Curnonsky as the "world capital of gastronomy" nearly a century ago. Synonymous with Lyons is Paul Bocuse, an 87-year-old three-Michelin-starred chef whose restaurant **L'Auberge du Pont de Collognes** (usually referred to as simply "Paul Bocuse") has been wowing diners with its opulent decor and flawless old-school French cuisine since the mid-1960s. Truffle soup V.G.E. (a dish created by Chef Bocuse for the French president in 1975), foie gras, Beaujolais sherbet and Bresse chicken are just some of the luxe ingredients incorporated into the

## ✈️: ITALY

Food-loving tourists flock to Italy to immerse themselves in the country's passion for *la dolce vita*, with Italians being true proponents of the phrase "live to eat". What we love most about Italian cuisine is its simplicity and reliance on the freshest-of-the-fresh ingredients. Because girl power rules here at Foodie, the fine-dining restaurant in Italy that's calling to us is **Ristorante dal Pescatore**, located in a small village in Lombardy. Currently ranked at number 74 in S. Pellegrino's World's Best Restaurants list, this remote country-house restaurant is headed by Nadia Santini, who, back in 1996, was the first female chef in Italy to be crowned with three Michelin stars – although she's been running the family restaurant with her husband since 1974. Chef Santini was also named