



# Global Alliances

Fusion fare rules in D.C., from Latino dim sum to upscale American comfort food spiked with international flavors. *Eva Leonard* reports

## Zaytinya

701 9th St. NW  
tel. 202-638-0800

With soaring ceilings and walls of windows that stretch two levels high, Zaytinya's modern blue and white interiors brightly evoke the Mediterranean. It's a fitting setting for this hotspot's addictive selection of Greek, Turkish and Lebanese small plates, or mezze. (*Zaytinya* is Turkish for olive oil.)

Start with the *taramosalata*—cured cod roe dip with bread and olive oil—as a salty segue into the almost overwhelming selection of meat, poultry, seafood and vegetable dishes. There's also a wide assortment of Mediterranean cocktails and spirits, such as ouzo, as well as Greek, Turkish and Lebanese wines.

*Dinner for two with wine, about \$110.*

*Mon 11:30 a.m.–10 p.m.; Tue–Thu 11:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m.; Fri–Sat 11:30 a.m.–midnight; Sun 11:30 a.m.–10 p.m.*

## Café 15

Sofitel Lafayette Square  
806 15th St. NW  
tel. 202-730-8701

Tucked quietly off the lobby of the Sofitel Lafayette Square, Café 15 easily qualifies as one of D.C.'s best-kept culinary secrets. It's also an impressive spot for business powwows, with meticulous service, classic, understated décor and ample space between tables, affording plenty of privacy.

From Michelin-starred chef Antoine Westermann's kitchen comes memorable, uncomplicated French cuisine, including appetizers such as green asparagus salad with

diced, seared duck foie gras, and main courses such as steamed sea bass with oyster tartare, broccoli and Riesling emulsion.

*Dinner for two with wine, about \$200. Dinner 6–10 p.m. 7 days; 6:30 a.m.–10 a.m., 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Mon–Fri*

## Ceiba

701 14th St.  
tel. 202-393-3983

Housed within the Colorado Building, built in 1903 by industrialist/gold miner Thomas F. Walsh (one-time owner of the Hope Diamond), Ceiba serves up contemporary Latin American–Caribbean-influenced cuisine. Even when it's packed (which is often), conversation is easy, owing to Ceiba's spacious, smart design, and the building's big-money past suits the well-shod crowd.



Ceiba

For an attention-getting appetizer, try the *queso fundido*—juliened skirt steak with poblano peppers, caramelized onions, pepper sauce and cheese, cooked and served on a hot lava stone. For a less showy but equally popular entrée, the red snapper Vera Cruz is a whole fish deep fried and topped with a Mexican sauce of tomatoes, shrimp essence, peppers, onions, capers, olives and vegetables. *Dinner for two, with wine, about \$130. Mon–Fri 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; Mon–Thu 5:30 p.m.–10:30 p.m.; Fri–Sat 5:30 p.m.–11 p.m.*

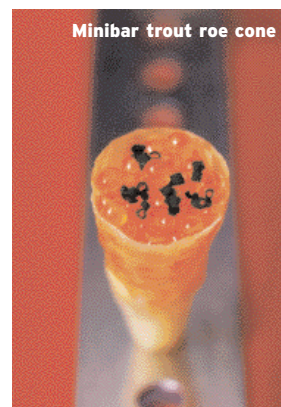
**Café Atlantico and Minibar**

405 8th St. NW  
tel. 202-393-0812

This colorful, three-story temple to Nuevo Latino cuisine offers yet another excellent reason to venture into D.C.’s hopping Penn



Zaytinya, also below, left and center



Minibar trout roe cone

Quarter district. Don’t miss the weekend à la carte Latino dim sum featuring 28 small dishes (priced from \$2.50 to \$9) with delectable, inventive selections such as potato and vanilla mousse with American caviar (yes, it works), mango anchovy raviolis and quail two ways with Latin spices. The menu also features an award-winning selection of South American wine, as well as tropically inspired cocktails.

Upstairs, head chef Katsuya Fukushima cranks the fun up a notch at Minibar, a dining bar with seatings twice an evening (at 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.) limited to just six diners. Of the 35 to 40 mini dishes, as Fukushima calls his unconventional creations, be sure to try the light and savory jicama ravioli with guacamole and tuna ceviche, the conch fritters with their hot liquid centers, and—if you’re a bit more daring—the foie gras wrapped in cotton candy.

*Dinner for two with wine, Café Atlantico, about \$130. Mon–Fri 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; Sun–Thu 5 p.m.–10 p.m.; Fri and Sat 5 p.m.–11 p.m. Latino dim sum Sat–Sun 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.*

**Minibar tasting menu \$65 per person for 35 to 40 small courses.**

**Minibar seatings 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., Tue–Sat**

**David Gregory**

2030 M St. NW  
tel. 202-872-8700

Large groups gather at this restaurant on the outskirts of Georgetown to kick back after office hours, but it’s just as popular with smaller parties. Execs from nearby law firms and CBS and BBC offices are among those who frequent David Gregory for business lunches and dinners. It’s an open, easy atmosphere, with a menu primarily dedicated to upscale American comfort food.

In a region known for crab cakes, David Gregory’s jumbo lump crab cakes (served as an appetizer or an entrée) get it right—they’re all real crab meat with no filler—only egg has been added as a binder. One popular entrée—grilled salmon with basmati rice, curried spinach and pappadam—is typical of the many internationally inspired dishes on offer. Ice cream made in-house will send your best diet intentions packing, with flavors changing every two days or so.

*Dinner for two with wine, about \$135. Mon–Fri 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; Mon–Wed 5:30 p.m.–10 p.m.; Thu–Sat 5:30 p.m.–11 p.m.; Sun 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m.*

*Bar menu: Mon–Thu 11:30 a.m.–11 p.m.; Fri and Sat 11:30 a.m.–midnight*