



Black Pearls

In a second-floor jewel box of a restaurant with hand-painted murals and Murano glass chandeliers, the elite meet to sip champagne and eat tiny, glistening beads of beluga, osetra and sevruga. This is Caviar Russe, devoted to one of the most decadent of all foodstuffs—sturgeon roe. The highest quality American and Caspian Sea caviar is served by the mother-of-pearl spoonful, in a beggar's purse or over ice, with the traditional accompaniments of housemade blinis, toast points, poached potatoes, crème fraîche and chives. It's also offered in exquisitely prepared and presented dishes on Executive Chef Christopher Agnew's indulgent seven-course tasting menu, as well as his three-course Sunday brunch. For those who can't get enough of the briny stuff, hand-packed tins are available in the on-premises boutique. » **Caviar Russe, 538 Madison Ave., 212.980.5908**

Spanish Style

At Barraca (*below*), the lively West Village Iberian outpost where Chef Jesús Nuñez helms the kitchen, the sepia a la plancha (grilled cuttlefish) can be habit forming. Sweet and crunchy, with subtle smokiness, the tentacled mollusks are simply prepared with preserved lemon, kale and roasted peppers, and when you've cleaned your plate, you may crave another serving. Paella comes in six versions, including negra—with artichoke, monkfish, squid and shrimp over squid-ink-infused rice. Safron-infused sangría complements the cuisine, and chocolate flatbread is a sweet ending. » **Barraca, 81 Greenwich Ave., 212.462.0080**



Caviar served by the mother-of-pearl spoonful ... paella with squid-ink-infused rice ... crispy pig tails with soy, lime and cilantro ...



Peruvian Piggies

Placing equal emphasis on fine food and good libations, Raymi's Chef Erik Ramirez has beefed up (rather, porked up) the Happy Hour offerings on Tuesday nights, when a Pigs 'n' Tails menu is served until closing. Among the porcine finger foods are crispy ears with spicy mayo; crispy tails with soy, lime and cilantro; and feet croquetas with sweet plantains, Gruyère and salsa criolla. Four small *pan con chicharron* sliders (*left*), mini mounds of succulent roast pork with sweet potato, spicy mayo and salsa criolla, are washed down with pisco sours. » **Raymi Peruvian Kitchen & Pisco Bar, 43 W. 24th St., 212.929.1200**

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