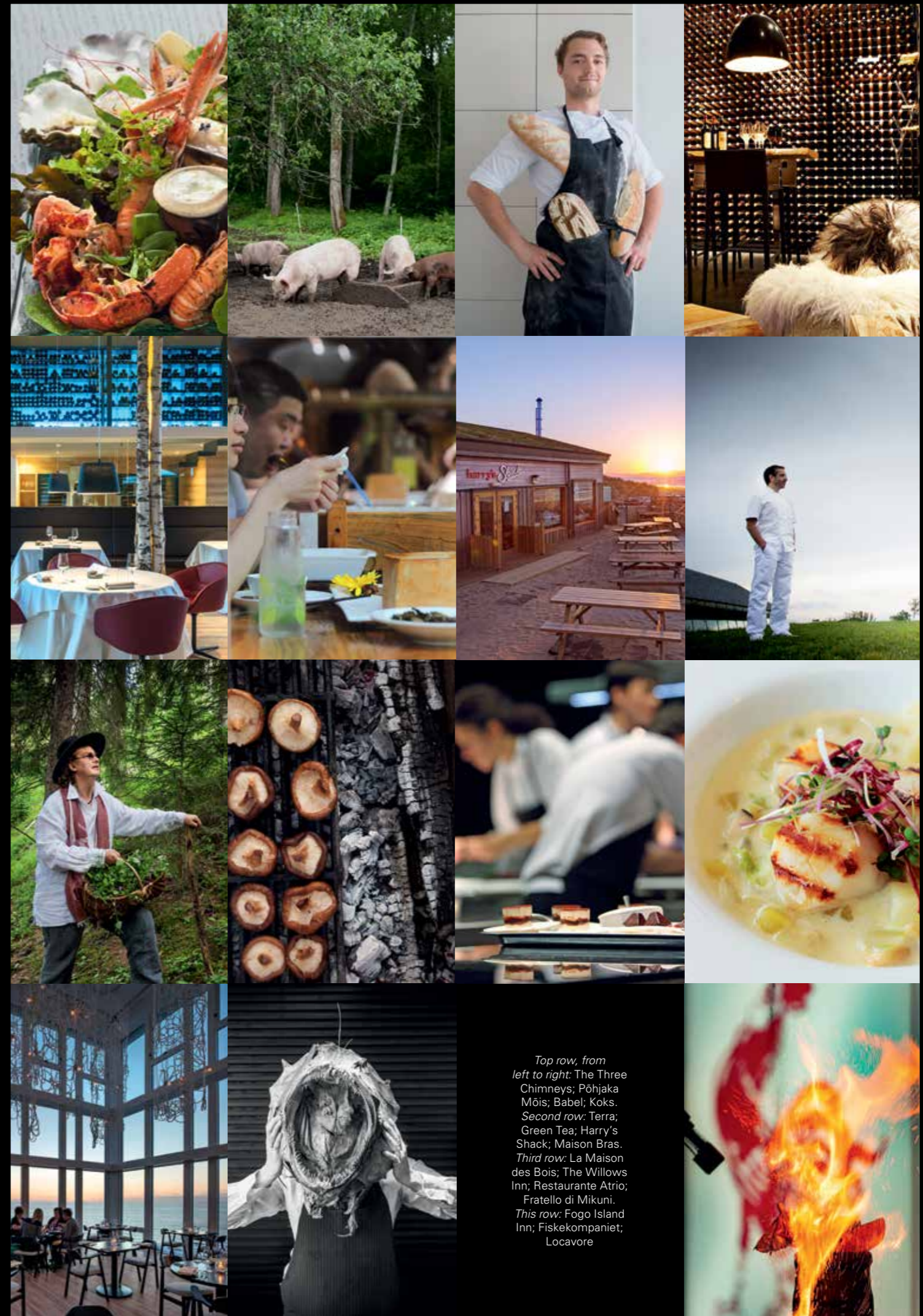


GOURMET GUIDE

The Far-Flung



PAIRING OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD CUISINE WITH END-OF-THE-WORLD LOCATIONS, A NEW BREED OF EATERY IS DRAWING DINERS FAR FROM THE MADDING URBAN CROWDS, SAYS BILL KNOTT



Top row, from left to right: The Three Chimneys; Põhjaka Mõis; Babel; Koks. Second row: Terra; Green Tea; Harry's Shack; Maison Bras. Third row: La Maison des Bois; The Willows Inn; Restaurante Atrio; Fratello di Mikuni. This row: Fogo Island Inn; Fiskekompaniet; Locavore

BACK WHEN DINING WAS EASY, A DESTINATION RESTAURANT WAS SOMEWHERE MILDLY INCONVENIENT TO VISIT.

Manhattanites trudged to the Brooklyn backwoods, Parisians ventured à la banlieue and Londoners even crossed the river if there was the chance of a decent dinner on the other side. Then along came the nouvelle vague of global superstars: elBulli, The Fat Duck and Noma. All significant journeys, to be sure, but – despite all the palaver involved in bagging a table – at least they had the decency to be reasonably close to major population centres.

Not so the latest batch of got-to-get-there restaurants. As chefs seek ever closer communion with the soil and water that nurtures their ingredients, their choices of location often leave the beaten track far behind: like Fäviken, Magnus Nilsson's much-lauded restaurant in the wilds of northern Sweden. The restaurant's website suggests several ways of getting there – planes, trains, automobiles – but none of them is exactly a piece of äppelkaka. GPS coordinates are also listed, just in case.

“Worth a detour” says the Michelin Guide of its two-star establishments: meaning, perhaps, a lunchtime digression from the Autoroute du Soleil. If you would happily go to the ends of the Earth for a good meal, however, these 15 restaurants are for you.



TERRA, ITALY

The restaurant at the breathtaking Auener Hof, Terra is the highest Michelin-starred (it has two of them) restaurant in Italy, loftily perched in the Dolomites not far from the Austrian border. Chef Heinrich Schneider is equally at home in the surrounding woods and meadows as he is at the stove: he picks and uses 50 different wild herbs to enhance his vibrant, modern cooking – beetroot sorbet with lavender mousse, for example, or birch ice cream with black bean paste – while sister Gisela presides over a 1,000-bin cellar, with wines from South Tyrol especially well represented. auenerhof.it

✈️ *Bolzano Airport: 19 miles/31km*



BABEL, SOUTH AFRICA

In the Western Cape winelands between Paarl and Stellenbosch, Cornelle Minie – head chef at Babel, the restaurant at the rustic-but-indulgent Babylonstoren Farm Hotel – is blessed with 3.5 hectares of fruit and vegetable gardens from

which to select her produce every morning. In summer months, you might find gazpacho with deep-fried squid and sweet melon on the menu; in winter, her favourite ingredients include cured duck “biltong”, *waterblommetjies* (water lily flowers) and Cape sugarbush nectar. Olive oil and wine are made on the estate, too, and there is an excellent bakery: as ventures in gastronomy go, Babylonstoren is about as self-sufficient as it gets. babylonstoren.com

✈️ *Cape Town International Airport: 30 miles/50km*



FISKEKOMPA NIET, NORWAY

Tromsø is so far north that, in winter, the sun barely rises above the horizon, but life goes on regardless in this pretty Norwegian harbour town. Take a table at the modern, rather beautiful Fiskekompaniet, order whatever's fresh from the ocean – a colossal limb of king crab, perhaps, or ravioli filled with scallop mousse, or a flappingly fresh slab of cod, served *à la bourguignonne*, with red wine, mushrooms and bacon – order a bottle of wine from the excellent list, and fortify yourself for the town's other highlights: reindeer sledding and the Northern Lights in winter, and in summer, sailing, hiking or a round of 18 holes at Tromsø Golf Park, the world's most northerly golf course. fiskekompani.no

✈️ *Tromsø Airport: 3 miles/5km*



FOGO ISLAND INN, CANADA

Even by Canadian standards, Fogo Island is off the beaten track: so untrammelled by the march of history that its 2,500 residents still have traces of Elizabethan English and Old Irish in their accents. Head chef of the Fogo Island Inn, precariously perched on stilts on the rugged North Atlantic coast, Murray McDonald's menus give local produce the starring role: game, foraged sea vegetables and wild berries, as well as irreproachably fresh seafood. The hotel's environmental credentials, meanwhile, are similarly faultless, and the excellent cocktails are chilled with ice chipped from ancient icebergs: very local, very seasonal. fogoislandinn.ca



GREEN TEA, CHINA

On the outskirts of Hangzhou, amid the mystical West Lake, the chalet-like Green Tea is a refreshingly informal bar-and-grill restaurant, its tea-garden setting

the perfect place to unwind after a temple visit or two. There are imported and local beers on draught, as well as fresh fruit juices and (of course) the area's world-famous Dragon Well tea, alongside a vast menu featuring flame-grilled perch, homemade sausages, spicy frog, and snails fried with aubergines. Almost the only protein not on the menu is koi carp from Green Tea's charming little pond.



HARRY'S SHACK, NORTHERN IRELAND

A converted National Trust beach hut just a few miles along the coast from the imposing basalt columns of the Giant's Causeway, Harry's Shack is the brainchild of restaurateur Donal Doherty and chef Derek Creagh, and it has collected a hatful of awards since it opened in 2014. The kitchen excels at local fish: whitebait dusted with smoked paprika and Marie Rose sauce; megrim sole with brown shrimp, cauliflower and capers; or hake with Moroccan-style chickpeas and couscous. One word of warning: occasionally the North Atlantic waves engulf the shack, so wise diners would do well to check the forecast before going.

✈️ *City of Derry Airport: 26 miles/42km*



MAISON BRAS, FRANCE

The *grandpère* of countryside *haute cuisine*, Michel Bras' seminal restaurant on the beef-farming plateau of l'Aubrac, near the slate-roofed village of Laguiole – famous for its knives – is still going strong. Son Sébastien is now at the helm – his father turned 70 last year – as gastronomic pilgrims flock there for the restaurant's elegant, intricate dishes, many dressed with vegetables, herbs and flowers from Maison Bras' gardens. The signature *gargouillou de jeunes légumes*, a painterly assembly of 50 or more of them, has influenced chefs as far afield as Enrico Crippa in Alba, Daniel Patterson in San Francisco and René Redzepi in Copenhagen. bras.fr

✈️ *Aurillac Airport: 48 miles/80km*



LA MAISON DES BOIS, FRANCE

Master chef Marc Veyrat's astonishing, chalet-like eyrie in the French Alps boasts food as spectacular as its

scenery: proud owner of two Michelin stars and rated 19/20 with five toques in Gault & Millau, he draws inspiration for his exquisite avant-garde menu from the surrounding valleys and forests. Expect langoustines cooked on pebbles, lake trout infused with bark smoke, beef with spruce lichen, or scallops with honey from Veyrat's own hives. And if you happen to see a venerable eccentric in a black Savoyard peasant hat directing operations, that would be the remarkable Monsieur Veyrat himself. marcveyrat.fr

✈️ *Anney Airport: 22 miles/36km*



FRATELLO DI MIKUNI, JAPAN

Set among the majestic peaks of the Daisetsuzan Mountains on Hokkaido, an hour or so from the city of Asahikawa, Kiyomi Mikuni's restaurant fuses Japanese and Italian cuisines with elegance and precision. Highlights include carpaccio of Alaskan pink shrimp from Mashike, grapefruit purée and giardiniera-style edible flowers; panna cotta with Sapporoki yellow onions, asparagus from Aibetsu, snow crab and red onion; and squid-ink taglioni, trout farmed in snow-melt water in Kamikawa, spring onions from Pippu and soba noodles from Toma. Stay the night in one of its comfortable villas; in the morning, warm up in the nearby hot springs. fratello-di-mikuni.com

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: ALEX FRADKIN, JEAN-LOUIS BELLURGET, © FRATELLO DI MIKUNI, RICHARD HAUGHTON, XU KANGPING/IMAGINECHINA, © HARRY'S SHACK



LOCAVORE, INDONESIA

Dutchman Eelke Plasmeijer and a fellow chef from Indonesia, Ray Adriansyah, met at a Jakarta restaurant; now reunited in Ubud, their groundbreaking restaurant, bar and deli features 95% Indonesian produce, much of it from Bali itself. Try squid cooked in homemade *brem* (rice wine) with daikon, cold-pressed peanut oil, lemon basil, soy beans and chillies, or Balinese beef tartare with water spinach, soy sauce, *genjer* (yellow velvetleaf, an aquatic flowering plant), fermented garlic and purslane. Kick off with a cocktail from their Night Rooster bar: tropical infusions and homemade bitters pep up classic concoctions. locavore.co.id



PÕHJAKA MÕIS, ESTONIA

A decade ago, three chefs – Märt Metsallik, Joel Kannimäe and Ott Tomik – stumbled across a derelict manor house an hour's drive southeast of Tallinn, on the road to Tartu; three years

later, with a mission to use only Estonian ingredients year-round, they opened Põhjaka Mõis. Idyllically bucolic, with (authentically) distressed walls and mismatched furniture, the restaurant's menu might include salted perch with cottage cheese and quail eggs; beer-braised lamb with carrots; elk chop with cabbage, mustard and potatoes; reindeer meatballs; or buckthorn pavlova. Pâtés and home-cured meats are specialities, served with pickled gherkins and their excellent black bread. pohjaka.ee

➔ *Tallin Airport: 55 miles/89km; Tartu Airport: 62 miles/101km*



RESTAURANTE ATRIO, SPAIN

The two-Michelin-starred Atrio is housed in a modern, super-smart hotel right in the middle of Cáceres's medieval old town. Toño Pérez echoes his surroundings with refined, intelligent cooking that blends classic combinations with contemporary flourishes: wafer-thin slices of raw turnip – “open ravioli” – for instance, filled with herring and shards of green apple then doused in a fragrant broth of cucumber and celery, or caviar-topped steak tartare with mustard sorbet. The wine cellar is one of the finest in Europe, with a “chapel” dedicated to vintages of Château d'Yquem dating back to 1806. restauranteatrrio.com

➔ *Badajoz Airport: 72 miles/116km*



KOKS, FAROE ISLANDS

A restaurant just 15 minutes' drive from a capital city would not usually be classed as remote, but the city in question is tiny Tórshavn, on the far-flung Faroe Islands. Koks, which relocated from a hotel to a coastal village a couple of years ago, was honoured with a Michelin star this year, rewarding chef Poul Andrias Ziska's refinement of the islands' flora and fauna into masterpieces of New Nordic cuisine. Fish and seafood from the islands' cold, clean waters delight – langoustine spiked with spruce, for instance – but watch out for *ræst* mutton: wind-dried and semi-fermented, it is definitely an acquired taste. koks.fo

➔ *Vágar Airport: 35 miles/56km*



THE WILLOWS INN, USA

The much-lauded menu at Blaine Wetzel's gloriously homely restaurant-with-rooms, on an island in the salmon-rich waters of the Pacific Northwest,

is rigorously seasonal: depending on the time of year, you might find rockfish wrapped in burnt kelp; aged wild venison; raw chanterelles with dried smelts; smoked mussels and sunflower roots; or “doughnuts” of smoked black cod. Work up an appetite with a spin in a kayak, or hop on a trawler and head off to sea in search of grey whales or orcas; but, next morning, don't miss The Willows Inn's legendary breakfast: buckwheat crêpes, local eggs, seasonal fruit and excellent coffee. willows-inn.com



THE THREE CHIMNEYS, SCOTLAND

The distinction of Scotland's ingredients has not always been apparent in her restaurants, but at the Three Chimneys, head chef Scott Davies's menu draws heavily on the produce from local Skye farms, the seashore, the pier at Dunvegan and the mainland port of Mallaig: plates range from scallops with salt-baked celeriac and crab paired with radishes and samphire to venison with roast pear and sauerkraut and beef with Jerusalem artichoke, salsify and squash purée. For a nice dram, look no further than the five different bottlings from the Talisker Distillery, 35 minutes' drive away, and a must-visit for any whisky aficionado. threechimneys.co.uk

➔ *Inverness Airport: 136 miles/218km*

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AS CHEFS SEEK EVER CLOSER COMMUNION WITH THE SOIL AND WATER THAT NURTURES THEIR INGREDIENTS, THEIR CHOICES OF LOCATION LEAVE THE BEATEN TRACK BEHIND



OUT OF THE WOODS

A typically avant-garde creation featuring sautéed frogs legs from Marc Veyrat for his *La Maison des Bois*