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Suzuki of the souks

Behind the scenes at
Morocco's electric
motorcycle factory

Pristine peaks

Narvik is Norway's
best-kept ski secret
- but not for long

Oeuf-ully good

We try vegan
scrambled
eggs



Sew tasty

How Providence went from textile town
to one of America's top foodie destinations

Behind the scenes

THIS MONTH we went to Providence, USA, to shoot some of the dishes being cooked up by the top young chefs there. Our cover image is a recreation of a delicious seafood dish by Champe Speidel at Persimmon, ably brought to life by talented embroidery illustrator Jessica Dance.

jessicadance.com



Contribs *Just some of the talented people who helped make this issue*



HANNAH SUMMERS

Two-time Young Travel Writer of the Year, Hannah writes about food and travel for British national newspapers and magazines. For us she went to find out why Providence is a great foodie city (see p44).

burgersandbruce.com



MATTIAS FREDRIKSSON

One of the world's top ski photographers, this month Mattias went to Narvik in Norway for us (p88), where he documented a ski-touring trip on pristine slopes, with some cracking photos.

mattiasfredriksson.com



CLAUDIA GAUDELLI

A talented Argentinian photographer who went pro in her fifties, Claudia made her name shooting female boxers in her home city of Buenos Aires. Find out what drives her - and them - on page 66.

claudiagaudelli.com

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Fruits of the loom

Once a leading textile town, Providence is now weaving some serious culinary magic. We took a trip to the unlikely new food capital of the US

Words / Hannah Summers → Photography / Lizzie Munro

Providence isn't a place that features on many travel wish lists. For decades the small city, three hours north of New York and one hour south of Boston, has hovered in the shadows of its big-time neighbours. A former manufacturing powerhouse, whose textile, tool and jewellery industries once made it the richest city in America, it fell into relative obscurity during the 20th century.

However, while the former "Beehive of Industry" buzzes with industry no longer, Rhode Island's capital has been buzzing for a different reason. Over the last 18 months, the American food media have been singling out its culinary scene for platefuls of praise. It was one of Zagat's most exciting food cities, second on *Travel + Leisure's* Best Cities for Foodies and BuzzFeed's number one Underrated Food City in America. It seems to be becoming a top (if still relatively secret) destination for savvy food lovers. The big question is: why?

To find out, our first tip is to take a look at the city's location. Rhode Island might be the US's smallest state but it's home to more than 1,200 farms and 645km of coastline – and has the unofficial nickname, "The Ocean State". It's a fortunate location that has gifted local chefs with an abundance of produce and seafood, and made Providence one of the leading US players in the farm-to-table movement that started in California in the 1990s.

More recently, it's attracted a new wave of culinary wizards who are taking advantage of the local-ingredient bonanza to push the creative boundaries.

"I call my fisherman in the morning, and collect it from the dock down the road," says Ben Sukle, speaking in the kitchens at his restaurant Birch. "The proximity of produce is something I really harp on about. I can drive for 30 minutes and reach a dock, a farm or a ranch. It allows you to get an absolutely fresh and really beautiful product." »





NORTH

Chef James Mark studied at Johnson & Wales culinary school in Providence, but the lure of New York got the better of him, and he spent several years working at trendy New York institutions including Momofuku, before coming back to set up his own restaurant, North. “Essentially I burnt out,” he realises now of his decision to return to Providence to set up on his own. “Here I can curate an experience with diners and farmers that you just don’t get in New York,” he says. “Caviar and truffles aren’t luxury to me – I can’t connect with that. It’s about time, hard work and skill.”

foodbynorth.com



Opening page ✓
 Scallops with carrot-celery root purée at Nicks on Broadway
 This page, from top ✓
 Chicken dish at North; chef James Mark

Sukle doesn’t just have farmers and fishermen on speed-dial, he sources niche items from specialist producers, goes foraging for wild foods, and even kayaks out into the Atlantic in search of sea lettuce. His two downtown restaurants – Birch, which opened to a fanfare of food-critic praise in 2013, and more casual Oberlin (2016) – let top-quality produce speak for itself, with top-quality results. Last year he was nominated for a James Beard Award – the cheffing Oscars.

Out in the moodily lit dining room, diners feast on ludicrously fresh slices of flounder doused in olive oil and sprinkled with salt; duck ravioli; or pierogi made with a beer-washed raw cow’s milk cheese. It’s fresh, world-class cuisine, at a fraction of the price you’d pay in nearby cities – and he’s not the only one serving it up.

Just down the road you’ll find James Mark’s North, and the most exciting small plates you’ll find this side of the Hudson. Dishes like crispy chicken thigh resting on a bed of fluoro-pink watermelon radish; grilled mackerel buried in a kohlrabi salad and laced with gochujang and mint; a slab of chocolate upside-down cake topped with lemongrass whipped cream and candied beets... »



Like Sukle, Mark is inspired by the quantity of fresh food at his fingertips – “Seasonal limitations on produce drive creativity,” he says. “It helps us focus.”

That’s not all they have in common. Both chefs attended Johnson & Wales, the local culinary school that supplies much of the talent for Providence’s restaurants. Other alumni include Derek Wagner, owner and chef at Nicks on Broadway and the leading voice in the city’s responsible-eating movement; Champe Speidel, whose Persimmon is one of the most celebrated restaurants; and Ashley Faulkner, whose shack-like Bucktown serves reimagined fried chicken sandwiches to loyal locals and students from nearby Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design.

The fact that so many of these graduates stay in Providence, rather than heading for bigger nearby cities, says a lot about its charms. “Rents in Providence are five to 10 times cheaper than Boston or New York,” says Lori Kettelle, another J&W-trained graduate and the owner of PV Doughnuts. “And this city is also much more welcoming to small businesses.”

So welcoming, in fact, that queues often wiggle out of the door of her shop and onto the pavement. Locals are happy to wait for her glazed crème brûlée monsters and hefty rings laden with multicoloured sprinkles. It’s not unusual for the shop to sell 3,000 giant doughnuts a day – not bad for a population just shy of 180,000. »



From top left ✓
Giant murals can be found around the city; one of PV’s giant pistachio doughnuts; Providence river; Derek Wagner; his house-made bluefish torchon

NICKS ON BROADWAY

All of Providence’s chefs support the farm-to-table philosophy, but if you had to pick a ring leader, it would be Derek Wagner, owner and chef at Nicks on Broadway. The chef took over the restaurant when he was just 24 years old, and was one of the earliest proponents of forging close relationships with farmers and fishermen. Today he sits on the board of the Chefs Collaborative, a nationwide network of conscientious chefs who are committed to sourcing and serving food responsibly. He always has one question in mind: am I putting something on the plate that I can truly get behind? Always, his answer is yes.

nicksombroadway.com,
chefscollaborative.org



“It’s fresh, world-class cuisine, at a fraction of the price you’d pay in nearby cities”



OBERLIN & BIRCH

Ben Sukle has come a long way since his burger-flipping days. His restaurants Oberlin and Birch produce some of the city's best food, at beyond reasonable prices. In fact, after being nominated for a James Beard award last year, he's the closest thing the city has to a celebrity chef – not that it shows. His modesty extends to his less-than-showy attitude to PR. "I want people to trust that this is a restaurant they can go to where we source responsibly and locally," he says, "[but] I'm wary of people who broadcast it."

oberlinrestaurant.com, birchrestaurant.com

The local enthusiasm speaks to the city's history as a place that's always been open to different ideas. Established in 1636 by Roger Williams as a safe haven for freedom of thought and religious belief, it evolved into a manufacturing giant, attracting millions of workers from around the US and eventually the world.

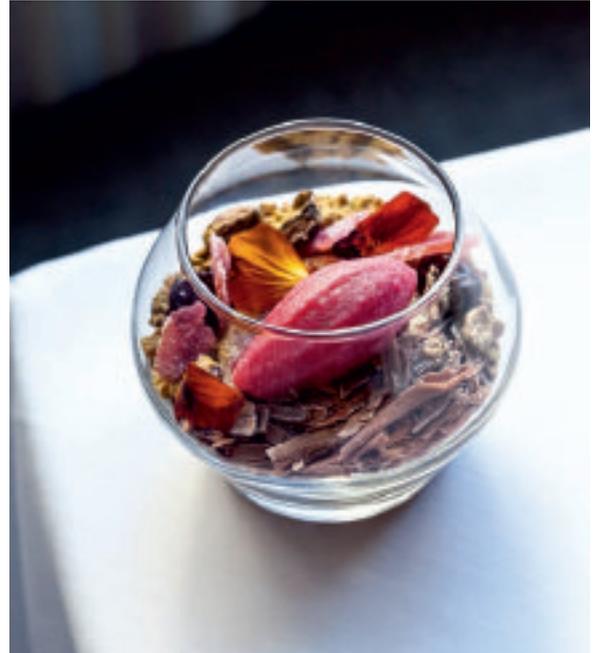
This global influx in the late 1800s and early 1900s influenced the food scene in two major ways. First it inspired the beginning of the quintessential American restaurant, when Walter Scott began to sell food to night workers from a horse-drawn wagon in the 1870s. This "Nite Owl" was the first example of the American diner. Today, everyone – from families to beer-fueled students – still squeezes into the Tango-orange booths at Olneyville NY System, a popular example.

It also led to a strong Italian-American influence on food culture that continues today. Four million »

“Providence has always been open to different thoughts and approaches”



Previous page ✓
 Brandade, herbs and
 grilled bread at Oberlin;
 chef Ben Sukle
 This page, from left ✓
 Just some of the beautiful
 desserts, including
 macarons, created by
 Melissa Denmark, below
 Opposite ✓
 Seafood pachamanca
 (baked stew) at Los Andes;
 chef Cecin Curi



GRACIE'S & ELLIE'S

Melissa Denmark, a J&W-trained pastry chef at both Gracie's and Ellie's, has been touted as the next big thing in the dessert world. Along with running a farm with her wife, she's responsible for the restaurant and café's pastries and desserts – think roast parsnip ice cream in the winter, and sweet pea frozen yoghurt with lemon pound cake by the spring. "In the US I think we'll start to see more support for farmers producing and harvesting grain by hand. People are already conscious of where their meat, fish and vegetables come from – they'll start to think the same way with grains."

graciesprov.com, elliesbakery.com,





LOS ANDES

Bolivian chef Cecin Curi learnt his skills aged 13, while watching local women cooking in the underground, under-the-radar, basement of his father's shop. The family moved from Bolivia to Providence (via Italy) in the early 1990s, and today Curi runs one of the most successful restaurants in the city, creating dishes that test diners' boundaries. "I use all parts of the meat, and work to expand people's palates," he says of his menus, which might feature dishes such as cow's hoof with a dash of cinnamon.

losandesri.com

“As chefs here continue to push forward, the global food community is going to take notice”

Italian immigrants arrived, with women forming the backbone of Rhode Island's textile industry. Companies like the Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company and Fruit of the Loom attracted settlements in the north end of Providence in the 19th century. According to the New England History Society, 19% of all Rhode Islanders claim Italian ancestry – in North Providence this rises to 37%.

In the sleepy neighbourhood of Federal Hill, Carol Scialo Gaeta is the living embodiment of this statistic – an 80-something lady who struts around the kitchen of Scialo Bros Bakery with the sass of a 16-year-old. Her father emigrated from Italy in the 1900s and when he died, aged 103, he left the entire bakery to her and her sisters. Today she's the head »



honcho at this historic shop crammed with old cake pans, huge brick ovens and glass cabinets of overblown gateaux.

Elsewhere in the city, other immigrants have left their mark on the scene, particularly those from South and Central America. Bolivian chef Cecin Curi and his brother Omar moved here in 1991 so their father could work in the city's jewellery industry. Three decades later, their packed neighbourhood restaurant Los Andes is one of the hottest family-run joints in town. Families tuck into huge portions of squid topped with corn, cheese and jalapeños; or beef heart marinated in Peruvian dehydrated pepper. Curi's creativity pushes boundaries and challenges the city's palates.

So while Providence may not have the big-city allure of New York, San Francisco or Chicago, what it does have is hugely creative, impeccably sourced food served at a slice of the price you'd pay elsewhere.

According to Derek Wagner, it won't be long before the city gets the global culinary recognition it deserves. "Ten years ago many people here in the States didn't even know about Providence, and certainly didn't rank it high on the list of places to travel for food and wine," he says. "But as chefs here continue to push forward, the global food community is going to sit up and take notice."

Norwegian flies to Providence from seven destinations. Book flights, a hotel and a rental car at Norwegian.com



From left
Men enjoy coffee at Venda Ravioli, an Italian grocery; Olneyville NY System is a popular Providence diner; Federal Hill is the city's Little Italy

While you're in... Providence



Sleep

The Dean

This downtown boutique hotel is the coolest in town. Grab a coffee from Bolt in the lobby or sing your heart out at the onsite karaoke bar.

thedeanhotel.com



See

The RISD Museum

A brilliant maze of 93,000 artworks ranging from Picasso to Monet and ancient Greek vases to 19th-century Japanese prints. Visit on a Sunday for free entry.

risdmuseum.org



Do

Westminster Arcade

It's the oldest mall in the US, with dramatic Greek-style architecture on the outside, and small boutiques and vintage shops inside.

arcadeprovidence.com