



69 W 9th St #6A
New York, NY 10011
646-825-0268 or 615-400-9969
info@thesinglegourmet.net

March 2018

A very wise, wealthy man once said to me, *"In life, you can be right, or you can be rich!!! You decide. I prefer to be rich."* I have taken that mantra and lived by it my entire life. Not regarding monetary riches, but interpreting his words to mean take the high road, no one *needs* to know how "right" you are, nor what opinions you have. This has created many amazing relationships for me in my life, great happiness, and (as others have observed) diplomatic, exceptional people skills. It is very simple: I do not have to be "right." In observing the majority of people I come across (and there are few exceptions in this audience), we all tend to want to be right. In the past, I have asked us to be aware of our surroundings and situation, advising that it is better to *share* your experiences rather than *state* your opinions, and to be kind to the staff working with us. I assure that if you do so, you will find far more riches in your social experiences than you will by proving to others that you're right. It takes a lot of work behind the scenes for us to create a relationship with a restaurant. It takes a lot of work for some members to take the plunge and join one of our dinners to create new relationships for themselves. Both these combine for a great experience, *most of the time*. However, I still notice some people need to be *right* in social settings and state their point, state their opinions, demand or complain to staff, and all around feel that they matter more, *that them being right*, means more to them than the riches of a positive experience. This has harmed the group in many ways. Both with relationships with restaurants (and I assure you that we have lost relationships based on the behavior of members wanting to be "right") by belittling the staff, and with members not wanting to come back or be seated with someone who always has to be "right". Maybe take a moment to reflect on past social encounters with others, past experiences in your life where you had to prove your point, prove that you were right, and ask yourself if the outcome brought you greater riches with that person or not. Only you know the answer to that, but I suspect that it did not.

The saying goes, "March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb." January and February have been brutal this year; let's hope we get more lamb than lion from March. Originally the first month of the Roman calendar, March was named after Mars, the Roman god of war, who was also a guardian of agriculture. It remained the first month of the Roman calendar year perhaps as late as 153 BCE, and was Russia's first month until the end of the 15th century. Great Britain and its colonies used March 25 as the new year until 1752, when they finally adopted the Gregorian calendar. Many other cultures and religions still celebrate the beginning of the New Year in March. Holidays celebrated this month: Purim on March 1, Oscar Night on the 4th (ha ha, that's not really a holiday), St. Patrick's Day on the 17th, and Passover starts on March 30, which is also Good Friday. And don't forget to change your clocks and "spring ahead" at 2:00am on Sunday, March 11!

As we noted in last month's newsletter, here are the trips that we are planning travel for in 2018. We have moved the trip to **Santa Fe & Albuquerque** to May 3rd-9th (for which we will try to include a Cinco de Mayo party!); we'll go to **Toronto and Niagara** over the week of July 4th for 5 nights (July is the warmest month in Toronto with temperatures 65-79 max); **Iceland** in late September or early October for 5 nights to try to catch the Northern Lights; and we are going back to **CUBA** for New Year's Eve 2018-2019. This time we will go not just to Havana, but to other parts of Cuba not explored on our last trip. For any of these trips, please secure spaces ASAP.

Our February dinners continue this Sunday the 18th as we head to another new restaurant for the group: **EROS**. With a warm atmosphere and attitude, this Greek restaurant imports fish, olive oil, and cheese from all over the world on a daily basis. Next, on Wednesday the 21st we celebrate the Chinese New Year at **LAND OF PLENTY**, a Michelin Guide favorite, and also a favorite of our founder Art Fischer. We will have a huge Chinese feast with a wide range and variety of different foods – come hungry! Our last event in February is on Saturday the 24th at **CELLINI**, an old favorite of the group in midtown Manhattan with authentic, sure-bet Italian standards. We are never disappointed after dining here, which is why we return year after year.

Our March events start on Saturday, March 3 with a long overdue return to **MARIA PIA**. This Theater District classic has been serving great Italian food for over 20 years and it has been almost 4 years since we dined there. Owned by famous restaurateur Besim Kutjak, this discovery in 2014 for the group was a huge success and they welcome our return. Next on Saturday March 10, we head to **PANAME**, a classic, neighborhood-style French bistro that a mayor of Paris once said was like dining on a corner in France's capital city. Next we go to **STELLA 34 TRATTORIA**, which was rescheduled from January to Sunday, March 18. Owned by The Patina Group (Brasserie 8½, Cafe Centro, Naples 45, State Grill, Brasserie, The Sea Grill) they always serve a top-notch meal. Don't let the location inside Macy's fool you, this is one of the prettiest restaurant interiors we will visit all year. We continue on Saturday, March 24 to **SINIGUAL**, a contemporary haute Mexican restaurant in midtown that comes highly recommended by multiple members. We are excited for our first time visit here. Finally, we head to a Brooklyn chocolate factory on Saturday, March 31 as we sample, make and learn all about chocolate. This event at **RAAKA CHOCOLATE** will guarantee to be an amazing event of sweetness and fun. Please RSVP early as space is limited.

**The following February events are still available for
The Single Gourmet Members and their guests:**

- **Eros (Greek restaurant)**, 447 3rd Ave (at 31st St): Sunday, February 18, 5:30pm optional drinks; 6:15pm dinner \$79 includes 3 courses, glass of wine, tax & tip
- **Land of Plenty: Chinese New Year**, 204 E 58th Street (between 2nd & 3rd), Wednesday, February 21, 5:30pm optional drinks; 6:15pm dinner, \$69 includes Chinese New Year dinner, tea, tax & tip
- **Cellini (Italian)**, 65 E 54 St (between Madison & Park Ave): Saturday, February 24, 6:45pm optional drinks, 7:30pm dinner, \$84 includes 3 courses, glass of wine, coffee/soda, tax & tip

**The following March events are available for
The Single Gourmet Members and their guests:**



Maria Pia Trattoria Italiana
319 W 51st St (between 8th & 9th Ave)
Saturday, March 3rd
7:15pm optional drinks, 8pm dinner
\$75: 3 courses, glass of wine, coffee, tax & tip

For 20 years Maria Pia has been serving fine Italian food to the theater and local crowd in the west 50s. Owned by restaurateur Besim Kutjak who also owns Intermezzo, Lemon Jungle, Il Bastardo, Arte Café, Gallo Nero, Cara Pia, La Carbonara, Zucca, Bocca di Bacco, and **Luna Piena** (which we recently visited), he must be doing something right. *New York Magazine* calls this a “can’t go wrong theater district Italian Trattoria for homemade pastas and satisfying entrees” and Zagat says, “Geared to the pre-theater crowd”, this “reliable Hell’s Kitchen red-sauce joint keeps ’em coming back” with top-notch service and a beautiful garden. We will be dining in that gorgeous outdoor heated garden with a fantastic menu including entrees such as rigatoni pollo azzopoli with chicken and sun dried tomatoes, penne primavera mixed garden vegetables in light garlic and olive oil sauce, chicken parmigiana with tomato sauce and mozzarella, grilled Atlantic salmon with roasted root vegetables, grilled jumbo shrimp skewers with rice pilaf, scallopine piccata sautéed veal loin, white wine, broccoli/potatoes and grilled skirt steak with roasted potatoes and broccoli. Italian desserts and appetizers complete our 3 courses.



Paname (French)
1068 2nd Ave (between 56th and 57th St)
Saturday, March 10
6:00pm optional drinks; 7:00pm dinner
\$79: 3 courses, glass of wine, coffee, tax & tip

Named after the most famous and hip nickname for Paris, which originally came from the Panama hats worn by French men back in the early 20th century, Paname is the brainchild of French Chef/Baker Bernard Ros formerly of Le Deauville and Meli Melo. With over 47 years of experience as a NYC chef, Chef Ros knows his way around a kitchen. Having first started in his

parent's restaurant in Paris, Chef Ros has spent his entire life dedicated to French food. Paname is a classic, neighborhood style French bistro and has received 4 stars on Yelp and 4.5 stars on TripAdvisor. The décor of Paname is French simplicity and the atmosphere is warm and inviting. Ros personally shops for every menu ingredient daily and is the pastry chef for the restaurant. Our menu includes: escargots de Bourgogne, crab cakes, Caesar salad, organic chicken breast with compote d'aubergines, beef Bourguignon, codfish à la nicoise with tomato fondant, sautéed shrimp vadouvan, and Chef's selection of French desserts.



Stella 34 Trattoria
151 W 34th St (6th Floor of Macy's)
Sunday, March 18
5:30pm optional drinks, 6:15pm dinner
\$85: 3 courses, glass of wine, coffee/soda, tax & tip

Listed in Zagat as "Best Dining with a View in NYC" they say "you will forget that you are in Macy's while dining in this stylish midtown respite from the Patina Group, offering upscale Italian fare in airy modern digs with gorgeous panoramic views of Herald Square adding to the charm." *New York Magazine* says, "The

Italian trattoria takes the stark, bright decor of its home base and softens it with just the right dose of panache, with a backlit wine bar, high-backed leather chairs, and a marble-tiled floor coupled with the Neapolitan menu and you forget what country you're in." With a menu developed by Jonathan Benno, executive chef at Lincoln Ristorante and a restaurant group that owns Brasserie, Brasserie 8½, State Grill, and 60 other restaurants, Stella 34 is **Michelin Guide recommended**, 4.5 on OpenTable, and a TripAdvisor top 4% restaurant in NYC. We start with wood-oven-roasted brussel sprouts with cauliflower, golden raisins & pine nuts or veal meatballs with sheep's milk and ricotta, then we choose pollo al girarrosto: rotisserie chicken, spinach, farro crochetta, lemon or wood-oven roasted sea bass branzino "acqua pazza", escarole, artichoke, Italian long hot pepper, tomato, caper berry and linguine ai funghi which is mushroom brodetto, wild mushroom, spinach, stracciatella di bufala. We finished dinner with seasonal cheesecake and tiramisu. On 35th Street off Broadway, there are two dedicated express elevators that go directly to the 6th floor and the restaurant entrance will be there.



Sinigual (Haute Contemporary Mexican)
640 3rd Ave (corner of 41st St)
Saturday, March 24
6:30pm optional drinks; 7:15pm dinner
\$75: 3 courses, glass of wine, tax & tip

A revolutionary approach to Mexican dining, Zagat says that Sinigual "offers all the Mexican standards that you'd expect at this jumping joint near Grand Central which is ideal for a fun business lunch or after-work event; the large, colorful space keeps it group-friendly." This is our first visit here but it

comes highly recommended by some members. In Spanish "sin igual" means "without equal" and it is rare to find a contemporary Mexican restaurant equal in the beauty and food quality as Sinigual. Sinigual strives to create a uniquely elevated culinary experience of the earthy and rustic flavors of traditional Mexican cuisine. Their chefs infuse inspired innovation with fresh and simple ingredients, leaving our senses richly satisfied. The

exhibition kitchen lends an energetic and unobtrusive ambiance to Sinigual's haute dining scene, while a wood-fired mesquite grill sears and seals a sweet smoky zest into their premium selection of beef, poultry, fish and garden vegetables. Sinigual is a feel-good Mexican restaurant in the heart of midtown Manhattan.



RAAKA Bean to Bar Chocolate Making Class

64 Seabring St, Brooklyn

Saturday, March 31

3:30pm-5:15pm at the Raaka Chocolate factory

3pm at Union Square at Capital One (14th & Broadway)

\$75: tour, class, unlimited samples and 3 hand-made bars

Share a car from Union Square (round trip) for an additional \$20

Learn how to make your own artisanal chocolates — from bean-to-bar — with an indulgent visit to Raaka Chocolate, an award-winning chocolatier in Brooklyn. This is one of the best events I have done with Julianne. Learn all about the chocolate making process and sample the chocolate from every process, starting with the just opened pods from their own farm in the Dominican Republic to the different stages of roasted beans to the liquid chocolate and then the final product. The class starts with a tour of the factory, then you'll taste raw cacao from around the world and at different roasting stages, compare unique traits of each growing region, grinding the

beans and learning the secret method to separate the crushed shells from the cocoa, ending with you having dozens of (unlimited) samples and 3 hand-crafted personally made bars to take home. Raaka means "raw" in Finland, and this company teaches you the green and sustainable way they make chocolate. Learn the history of chocolate, the history of this particular company, what defines the percentage of chocolate, according to Raaka (they use no dairy and no fillers such as stabilizers), and how this brand has grown from a small chocolatier in Brooklyn to an international brand. For almost 2 hours we go deep into the process of every stage, from grinding our own beans to pouring and decorating our own bars to watching the machine label and package. This event is for *anyone* who has eaten chocolate and not said "yuck". Note: This class takes place after hours, but in an actual working factory; please wear closed-toed shoes.

To reserve any or all the events please go to our website or call us at (646) 825-0268, email us at events@thesingelgourmet.net or mail checks to: The Single Gourmet, 69 W 9th Street #6A, New York, NY 10011.

1. Eros (Greek restaurant)	Sun, Feb 18	5:30pm	\$79 _____
2. Land of Plenty (Chinese New Year)	Wed, Feb 21	5:30pm	\$69 _____
3. Cellini (Italian)	Sat, Feb 24	6:45pm	\$84 _____
4. Maria Pia (Italian)	Sat, Mar 3	7:15pm	\$75 _____
5. Paname (French)	Sat, Mar 10	6:00pm	\$79 _____
6. Stella 34 (Italian)	Sun, Mar 18	5:30pm	\$85 _____
7. Sinigual (Mexican)	Sat, Mar 24	6:30pm	\$75 _____
8. Raaka (chocolate making class)	Sat, Mar 31	3:30pm	\$75 _____ or \$95 _____ (with Uber car)

REFUND POLICY: Due to restaurant deposit and guarantee requirements, cancellations for dinners are accepted up to ONE WEEK prior to the event. If you cancel 4-7 days prior, you will receive a credit toward a future event, but there will be **no refunds for cancellations made 3 days or sooner for dinners.**

Ticketed events (tours, shows, and ANY non-dinner event) are **non-refundable within 7 days** of the event.

ALL menus listed are subject to change without notice due to restaurant supply.

Please see next page for details about the Albuquerque/Santa Fe trip



TRIP TO NEW MEXICO Albuquerque & Santa Fe May 3rd-9th

\$3595
minus \$250 if flying on your own
minus \$400 if sharing a room

The plans for this trip are coming along! As of now, we will spend 3 nights in Albuquerque and 3 nights in Santa Fe. Highlights of the trip include a day trip to Taos, and another day trip to Sky City, Acoma, a ride on the Sandia Peak Tramway, the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway, the Petroglyph National Monument, the Indian Pueblo Cultural

Center, the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, and the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. Other things in the planning stages are the Museum of International Folk Art, the San Esteban del Rey Mission, the ABQ BioPark Botanical Gardens, and depending on group interest, mineral hot springs with a wine tour! There will be guided tours and plenty of amazing restaurants as well.

We will be staying at 4-star accommodations, and dining at top restaurants that we are working on currently.

Occupied for 5000 years by Native Americans and then by Spanish settlers, New Mexico is known for its extraordinary scenic beauty and rich cultural history. This is the land that has inspired many artists, including Georgia O'Keeffe, and continues to inspire visitors from all over the world. This year's readers' choice winner for Travel+Leisure's **"Destination of the Year"** is Santa Fe, New Mexico, which earned 65% of the vote in an online survey.

Santa Fe was once the northernmost outpost of Spain's empire in the Americas. Most of the downtown area is a designated historic district, and among the pueblo-style architecture, Spanish churches, twisting streets, and tiny boutiques, you'll feel like you're in a completely different country (or time period). Santa Fe has a local culture that's all about healthy living, organic food, and a surprisingly urban sensibility that will make you wonder why more cities don't marry modern life with old-world peace of mind.

FOOD Santa Fe has a reputation as an art town, but lately it's all about the food scene. The city's red-hot art scene is matched only by its cuisine. There are more restaurants per capita here than many major cities, and to make the cut in this town, a restaurant has to impress. The city has a wide variety of cuisines, but the signature flavor is Southwestern. New Mexican food is its own special entity — a mixture of native ingredients, Spanish recipes, and the distinctively smoky red and green chili peppers grown in the southern part of the state.

Santa Fe is also home to Native American food, a centuries-old cuisine in the midst of a culinary resurgence. While indigenous food differs depending on tribe and geographic region — it is united by a collection of staple ingredients and the goal of making the best of what's available, a concept that attuned to farm-to-table times. The pueblo-lined Santa Fe is home to Lois Frank, a Kiowa Nation descendant who literally wrote the book on Native American cuisine called *Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations*, which won a James Beard award. She states, "eight foods that are inherently Native American, that were given to the world, that didn't exist anywhere outside of America in 1491: corn, beans, squash, chili, tomato, potato, vanilla, and cacao." Recently, foodies from all over the world have been flocking to this region.

ART Steeped in the history of the American West, Santa Fe has long captured the imagination of artists and freethinkers, with its pueblo-style architecture and rugged landscapes. But a growing alternative arts scene — driven by the city's outré creative class — is giving newfound edge to the southwestern town.

Santa Fe's boosters like to say that more art is sold in Santa Fe than in any other city in the US (after New York and Los Angeles) — a surprising claim when you consider that the town's population barely grazes 70,000. Collectors from all over the world travel to buy at its internationally renowned summer fairs: the Traditional Spanish Market, the Santa Fe Indian Market, and the International Folk Art Market. Santa Fe also has more than 200 galleries and a dozen museums.

More than a million tourists come each year in search of this Southwestern aesthetic. Santa Fe, a guidebook by longtime resident Buddy Mays, explains that the town's quaint image was deliberately crafted as a means of driving tourism. Beginning around 1912, the year New Mexico was granted statehood, civic leaders sought to

define Santa Fe's architectural style, set restrictions on signage, and draw attention to Hispanic and Native American arts. The idea was to give the city a historic regional identity and the patina of an exotic travel destination. The plan worked. For years, Santa Fe has been trapped inside its own successful branding. Besides the art, there's the ubiquitous turquoise jewelry and the inescapable red and green chili peppers. There's the low-slung, mud-brown adobe architecture, the result of a strict zoning ordinance passed in 1957 that remains in effect today.

Since the early 1980s, when an Esquire cover story called it "the right place to live", and a real estate boom brought a wave of second-homers and celebrities, Santa Fe — or the idea of it, anyway — has been entrenched in the popular consciousness. Countless articles have praised its clean high-altitude air, tasteful old-world aesthetic, and quiet rhythms.



ALBUQUERQUE is New Mexico's largest city, yet it exudes plenty of small-town, desert charm. In this southwest city, the sun shines almost year-round, and the air is scented with sage and piñon. It's easy to relax, but who wants to when there is so much to do? The city is home to amazing attractions, including an array of Spanish and Native American art and culture, exciting outdoor activities, and a vivacious nightlife. Albuquerque seamlessly blends old and new in its offering of an eclectic array of modern attractions and old-world heritage.

Old Town is a culturally diverse 10-block neighborhood dedicated to Albuquerque's Native American and Spanish heritage. The area is home to a number of Southwestern art galleries, including Agape Southwest Pueblo Pottery and Andrews Pueblo Pottery. For collectors, the galleries are a treasure trove of handmade items. Each piece is a testament to the craftsmanship of the Hopi and Navajo Native Americans. For even more historical art, don't miss a visit to Albuquerque's oldest building, the Church of San Felipe de Neri. The church is a must-see for visitors, as it features soaring architecture, local art, and religious art and artifacts.

Albuquerque is a colorful town steeped in Native American and Spanish history that's surrounded by natural beauty. Albuquerque's Spanish-settled Old Town is the city's historic and cultural heart. Centuries-old adobe buildings now house local restaurants, and art galleries and shops surround a tree-shaded, grassy plaza that sees festivals, music and dancing year-round. Thanks to its central location with New Mexico's major airport, Albuquerque makes the perfect home base for exploring the Land of Enchantment. Day trips from Albuquerque include Acoma Pueblo that, along with Taos Pueblo, is the oldest continuously inhabited community in the country. We will take the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway to Santa Fe and pass through the Ortiz Mountains through the art community of Madrid and near-ghost town of Cerrillos. Explore ancient ruins at Bandelier National Monument and Yellowstone-like features at Valles Caldera National Preserve near Los Alamos.

Our itinerary will include a visit to Sky City, Acoma is the oldest continuously inhabited community in North America, sitting nearly 370 feet above the desert floor and offering beautiful views for miles. The hour-long drive from Albuquerque is a winner, too, with spectacular rock formations (is that a sphinx?) under grand blue skies. Friendly tour guides, many of whom grew up here, tell the history of the more than 300 adobe and sandstone structures, which are owned by pueblo women, and take visitors inside the San Esteban del Rey Mission, completed in 1640. Many residents sell their distinct pottery from tables outside their doors. If you're able, take the somewhat steep walking trail down after the tour, instead of the bus, and look for the kissing rocks. Before you go, be sure to read up on etiquette rules, including appropriate dress and camera restrictions.