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July 2018

When I was in high school, and throughout college, I had a problem. A really bad problem. It was a scourge that I tried hard to be rid of, but without much success, and it was (and still is) one of my worst enemies. At times it produced flashes of brilliance, but most often, it just caused me frustration. What was this problem? **Procrastination**. Combined with the **fear of failure**. Back when I was in school, I managed to study for exams and crank out papers (or get extensions), and still do reasonably well in spite of myself. Unfortunately, that conditioned me in a way that to this day, does not serve me well at all.

To understate the obvious, my efforts to plan events for The Single Gourmet in a timely manner could use some improvement. I've been feeling a bit overwhelmed since Aaron fully stepped back, but I am feeling better about things as of late. Going forward, things will be different. In the meantime, I thank you all for your patience. Now... on to the rest of the newsletter.

The suicide of Anthony Bourdain, world-renowned TV host, storyteller, writer, and of course, celebrity chef, on June 8 was a tragic loss for food lovers and the world in general. I wrote this in an email that I sent that morning, but many of you do not receive the emails, and it also bears repeating: feelings of loneliness and despair can happen to anyone, even the rich and famous. If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, please seek counseling and help. Life is precious.

How to get help: Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255

On a lighter note, summer is finally here! Although I never complain about it (because that's how much I hate the cold!), heat can be deadly – be sure to keep covered, cool, and hydrated. If for some reason your apartment is not cool on a hot day, if you live in the 5 boroughs, call 311 (NYC's information line) to find the public cooling center nearest you (usually a library, senior center, or community center), where they will have air conditioning, and you can spend the day until the evening when the temperature cools down.

We start our July on Wednesday the **4th of July** at an annual favorite of the group: **DOCKS SEAFOOD GRILL**, serving the freshest seafood for more than 25 years in Midtown Manhattan in a great atmosphere. From there, we will walk to Tudor City Place to watch the Macy's fireworks that will take place on the East River from 9:25-10 PM. July continues the following Sunday, the 8th, at **GENE'S**, an almost 100-year old NYC landmark restaurant in Greenwich Village with impeccable service, a great menu and a very loyal clientele of "90% regulars". The following Sunday (the day after Bastille Day), we will feast upon lobster at **Brasserie 8½**. Known for its amazing French food, during the summer, they have **lobster nights** on Sundays and Mondays, so we will be taking advantage of that. On Sunday, July 22, we will be

celebrating a couple of birthdays (including mine!) at **FRANKIE & JOHNNIE'S**. Whose is (are) the other birthday(s)? Come and find out! Finally, we will dine in midtown east at **GENTE** on Saturday, July 28.

ICELAND is almost full, 17 out of 19 spots are full, with just the restaurants and some evening activities remaining to be planned. Please note that **the date has changed**, and we will now **depart on October 8 and return on October 15**. The price in the last newsletter was not determined, and between now and then I sent out an email specifying a price of \$4995 if the deposit was received by May 31, and more if received afterward. If you receive the printed newsletter only, and you want to come to Iceland, I will honor the \$4995 price through July 15. This price includes round-trip airfare on Delta ("main cabin"), hotels, tours, most meals, 1 glass of wine with every dinner, tips, and premium entrance to The Blue Lagoon. Upgrades to the flight are available.

CUBA for New Year's Eve 2018-2019, is set! We will leave NYC on December 27, for an 8-day trip, returning on January 3. This time we will go not only to Havana, but to other parts of Cuba not explored on our last trip such Cienfuegos and Trinidad.

For any of these trips, please secure spaces ASAP. If you have not received an email or a phone call from me confirming your interest in a trip, please let me know. If you have already paid a deposit, there is no need to re-confirm.

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

*if you are viewing this newsletter online or on your computer,
you can click the underlined event title to go to the event page on our website*



4th of July at DOCKS Seafood Grill

633 3rd Ave (corner of E 40 St)

Wednesday, July 4

5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:45 pm dinner

\$72 prix fixe: 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip

We continue a popular 4th of July tradition at Docks. Just 3 avenues from the waterfront fireworks, we are close enough to walk, but far enough from the crowds. Macy's will have barges located on the East River from 23rd St to 42nd St, and those who want to walk over and investigate the bright skyline can all do so. Zagat rated for "reliable fish and bivalves galore with professional servers and a high-octane social scene." **Bonus:** for the optional drinks before dinner, Docks has happy hour on the 4th of July from 3-7 PM with select wines for \$7, draft beer for \$4, and well drinks for \$6 (\$7.50 on the rocks).

MENU:

One glass of red or white wine and...

Appetizers (choice of):

- Mussels mariniere
- New England clam chowder
- Charred kale salad with pickled mango, spiced cashews, crispy plantains

Entrées (choice of):

- **BBQ Amish Farm Chicken** Saffron potato salad
- **Faroe Island Salmon** Peruvian potato puree, grilled collard greens, lemon caper butter
- **Cedar River Farms Skirt Steak** French fries, coleslaw

Desserts (choice of):

- Chocolate Pudding
- Key Lime Pie

... and coffee or tea



Gene's (French-Italian)

73 W 11th St (corner of 6th Ave)

Sunday, July 8

5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:45 pm dinner

\$71 prix fixe: 3 courses, glass of wine, coffee, tax & tip

This Old World Italian has been satisfying Greenwich Village locals since 1919. With impeccable service, a great menu and a very loyal clientele of “90% regulars,” Gene’s manages to be packed on a nightly basis. The kitchen, run by longtime veteran chef Hector Delgado,

highlights snappy renditions of Italian and French favorites. Almost the entire kitchen staff has been there for 30 years. Be prepared to walk into a classic, almost 100-year old NYC landmark restaurant and to walk out satisfied and filled with delicious food.

MENU:

A glass of wine (a red Chianti Reserve, a Spanish white Verdejo, or a Pinot Grigio)

Primo piatto (choice of):

- Mussels Possilipo
- Baked Clams Oreganata
- Homemade Mozzarella w/ Roasted Peppers and Prosciutto
- Spinach Salad with Mushroom and Bacon

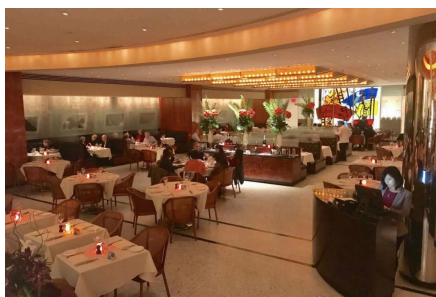
Secondo Piatto (choice of):

- Fish of the day (mostly likely salmon or bass)
- Linguine in White Clam Sauce
- Broiled Shrimp alla Gene’s
- Broiled 16 oz. Sirloin Steak Maitre d’Hotel
- Stuffed Veal Chop Valdostano

Dolce (choice of):

- Chocolate Mousse Cake
- Profiterole au Chocolate
- Ice Cream or Sorbet
- Fresh Melon or Pineapple
- Poached Pair in Raspberry Sauce
- Creme Brulee

... and coffee/tea



Brasserie 8½ (Lobster night)

9 W 57 St (between 5th & 6th Ave)

Sunday, July 15

5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:45 pm dinner

\$88: 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip

Zagat rated 22 for “how great it is to make an entrance down a sweeping stairway at this subterranean Midtown brasserie that provides delicious French fare and cordial service in charming

environs with fine art on display; it's a decorous nexus for conversational dining." Winner of Trip Advisor's 2015 certificate award of excellence and 4.5 stars on Open table review site, this is a can't miss event at a famous and fabulous restaurant.

MENU:

Appetizers (choice of):

- Heirloom tomatoes tartine
- Octopus cocktail
- Crisped zucchini blossom;

Lobster entrée (choice of):

- Broiled lobster
- Surf & turf
- Lobster salad

Dessert (choice of):

- Classic crème brûlée
- Raspberry mousse cake
- Warm molten chocolate cake
- Daily selections of ice creams and sorbets
- Fresh fruit & berries



Frankie and Johnnie's Steakhouse

320 West 46th (between 8th and 9th)

Sunday, July 22

5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:45 pm dinner

\$89: 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip

In the heart of the Theater District this restaurant is a celebrated Broadway fixture. A New York institution, Frankie & Johnnie's Steakhouse is one of the city's oldest continued dining establishments in NYC having first opened as a speakeasy in 1926. Listed in Zagat's "8 Old-School Steakhouses to Try in NYC". ***Bonus: this evening we will celebrate a couple of birthdays (including mine) with birthday cake. Whose is (are) the other birthday(s)? Join us and find out!***

MENU:

A glass of red or white wine or a glass of beer, and...

Appetizers (choice of):

- Soup of the day
- Corn bisque
- Caesar salad
- Frankie and Johnnie's salad

Entrees (choice of):

- Petite filet mignon
- French style chicken breast
- Broiled salmon
- Lobster ravioli

Dessert (choice of):

- Apple strudel a la mode
- New York cheesecake

... and coffee or tea



Gente (Italian)

320 West 46th (between 8th and 9th)

Saturday, July 28

6:45 pm optional drinks, 7:30 pm dinner

\$86 prix fixe: 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip

Join us in Midtown for Italian cuisine directly inspired by owner and executive chef Jay B. Mitchell's hundreds of visits to Italy. "The trick, I believe," wrote a reporter for Short and Sweet NYC, "is when combining local produce with

unmatchable Italian staples, Gente manages to produce the essence of a 'local' Italian dining experience in a neighborhood notorious for grab-and-go commuter clientele".

MENU:

Antipasti combo:

- Carcofi alla judea and heirloom tomatoes with buratta

Pasta (choice of):

- ravioli with spinach & ricotta
- multigrain spaghetti with zucchini & pine nuts

the pasta course will be paired with a wine tasting of a Sauvignon Blanc (white wine) from New Zealand

Entrée (choice of):

- Filet of sole al'Italienne
- Grilled salmon
- Chicken picatta with vegetables
- Veal Milanese

the entree will be paired with a wine tasting of Multipuciano D'Abruzzo (red wine) from Italy

Dessert (choice of):

- Tiramisu
- Macedonia fruit salad

... and coffee, tea, espresso, or cappuccino

To attend an event, email us at events@thesingelgourmet.net, call us at (646) 825-0268, or mail a check to: The Single Gourmet, 69 W 9th Street #6A, New York, NY 10011.

1. Docks (seafood)	Wed, July 4	5:45 pm	\$72 _____
2. Gene's (French-Italian)	Sun, July 8	5:45 pm	\$71 _____
3. Brasserie 8½ (lobster)	Sun, July 15	5:45 pm	\$88 _____
4. Frankie & Johnnie's Steakhouse	Sun, July 22	5:45 pm	\$89 _____
5. Gente (Italian)	Sat, July 28	7:30 pm	\$86 _____

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 4-6 days prior, you will receive a credit toward a future event, but there will be **no refunds for cancellations made 0-3 days before a dinner**. 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.

ICELAND!



TRIP: ICELAND & THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

October 8-15

6 days, 6 nights

\$5195 (\$4995 until July 7)

(2 seats remaining as of June 24)

FULL PAYMENT DUE JULY 1 or later

**includes airfare, hotels, tours, most meals,
1 glass of wine with dinner, tips,
and entrance to The Blue Lagoon
minus \$350 if flying on your own
minus \$300 if sharing a room**

This itinerary is 95% complete, and we will go all around the island to survey the spectacular scenery that the island has to offer. This includes amazing waterfalls and black sand beaches, huge craters and small geysers, the classic Golden Circle, a whale watching expedition, and we will end the trip with a day of luxury at the Blue Lagoon.

By the way, yes that is me (John) in the photo on the bottom right; I visited Iceland for a week back in the summer of 2009, during the time of year when they call it the land of the midnight sun.

DAY “ZERO”: FLIGHT FROM JFK AIRPORT IN NEW YORK TO KEF IN ICELAND

NOTE: this will be a 6-hour, non-stop, red-eye flight, leaving JFK at about 9 PM, on October 8, arriving at about 7 AM October 9. We will check into the hotel in the afternoon. Early check-in may be available for an additional fee.

Day 1: Wednesday Oct 9: Reykjavik

Arrival in Keflavik airport early in the morning and transfer to hotel in Reykjavik. After arrival in Reykjavik, a 4 hours city tour. Part of it is on foot stopping at restaurants tasting Icelandic cuisine. Overnight Hotel Alda, Reykjavik.

Day 2: Thursday Oct 10: South Coast of Iceland

Here the journey to the countryside starts. Today we'll enjoy the beautiful south coast of Iceland. We'll see two waterfalls, Seljalandsfoss and Skogafoss. After lunchbreak we are going glacier hiking on Sólheimajökull. After the glacier we will head to the black sandy beach of Reynisfjara, stop at the village of Vik, and experience the moss in Eldhraun lava. Overnight: Hotel Hekla, Vik.

Day 3: Friday Oct 11: Glacier Day

This is glacier day, with a drive east from Kirkjubæjarklaustur to Skaftafell and Jökulsárlón. We take a boat ride duck boat on the Glacier Lagoon, and explore the Diamond Beach, with icebergs on black sand. Overnight: Hotel Hekla, Vik.

Day 4: Saturday Oct 12: The Golden Circle

Today we'll head west and explore the sights of the famous Golden Circle. First we stop at Kerið crater. We'll see the big and beautiful Gullfoss waterfall and visit the nearby Geysir geothermal area with the spouting hot spring Strokkur. Further west we'll visit Þingvellir, where Icelanders established their parliament in 930. The parliament

is located in the Rift Valley, between North American and Euro-Asian tectonic places. Overnight: Hotel Hamar, Borgarnes.

Day 5: Sunday Oct 13: Snæfellsnes Peninsula

On this day we'll drive to Snæfellsnes Peninsula, where we'll see magnificent beaches, and possibly some seals at Ytri Tunga, lava formatted bird cliffs at Arnarstapi, and a black pebble beach at Djúpalónssandur. In the northern section of the Peninsula we'll see Kirkjufell, the most photographed mountain in Iceland. Overnight: Hotel Alda, Reykjavik

Day 6: Monday Oct 14: Blue Lagoon and Whalewatching

Today we will dip into the biggest hot tub in the world. Blue Lagoon visit is an experience of a lifetime. In the afternoon we are going whalewatching from Reykjavik harbor. Overnight: Hotel Alda, Reykjavik.

Day 7: Tuesday Oct 15: Reykjavik and Departure

Leisure time in the morning in Reykjavik. Transfer to the airport early in the afternoon

CUBA!



NEW YEAR'S EVE 2018-2019
IN CUBA

December 27 - January 3

\$4695 + airfare, visa, Cuban medical insurance

\$4325 if sharing a room

Includes all meals, hotels, transportation, and tour guides in Cuba

Hola Señoras y Señores, we are returning to Cuba for New Year's Eve! Two years ago, Aaron pioneered this trip and everyone raved about it. On this trip we will land in Havana, and travel to cities that we did not visit the last time.

The doors to Cuba are not as open as they were before the change of administration of the US government, but it is still possible to go, and it is a privilege to be able to go now while Cuba is still open to us. However, as time goes by, it probably will be more open to tourists, and things will change as more Americans go down to visit. If you missed the trip two years ago, come this time so you can say, "I got to go while it was still, well, Cuba!"

Know that while the fabulous trip the agency has planned for us is going to be amazing, Cuba is not a luxury destination. It is still very much left as it was, stuck in time. There are no chain stores, no ads, few signs and it is basically a commercial-free zone. Cuba is culturally, historically, and politically rich, but not in terms of standard amenities you might expect. There is little internet connection, and international cell phone service is minimal. US credit cards don't work in Cuba, so converting cash at the airport is necessary. So much is happening now, and it is a going to be one of these trips where you'll tell yourself "wow, so close and yet, so far..." OK? So, now that this is out of the way, go get yourself a Cuba Libre and read on the fabulous itineraries we have for you!!

IMPORTANT NOTES ON FLIGHTS AND TRAVELING TO CUBA:

- Cuba WILL SELL OUT quickly for the New Year's Eve time period. Our tour company is holding onto a block of rooms, but they MUST have a headcount as soon as possible or they will release these rooms. This is not a trip where you can decide you want to join in November. **We need an accurate exact headcount by the end of July, and the tour company requires a minimum of 15 people.**
- We hired an authorized tour company (the same one as last time) who is putting together a marvelous adventure for us. We fall under the "people-to-people" category of approved travelers, making us official students of the Cuban culture. Our trip and tours were designed with The Single Gourmet members in mind, meaning that we will always be on private tours, with our own chauffeur and guides, and our learning experiences are much broader than the "daily talks" other tours offer.
- This information is taken directly from the US embassy website in Havana: "Travel to Cuba for tourist activities remains prohibited by statute. However, the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has issued general licenses for 12 categories of travel. Individuals who meet the regulatory conditions of the general license they seek to travel under do not need to apply for an additional license from OFAC to travel to Cuba. The 12 categories of authorized travel to Cuba are: family visits; official business of the U.S. government, foreign governments, and certain intergovernmental organizations; journalistic activity; professional research and professional meetings; educational activities; religious activities; public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions, and exhibitions; support for the Cuban people; humanitarian projects; activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes; exportation, importation, or transmission of information or informational materials; and certain authorized export transactions." The travel affidavit form we will have you fill out is about that. You will check our category which falls under "Educational Activities," people-to-people travel.
- We will give you more details about things such as medical insurance and cash in the coming weeks.

ITINERARY (subject to minor changes)

HISTORY AND CULTURE PRIVATE TOUR

- Discover the heart and soul of the Cuban society
- Eight days and seven nights in the Pearl of the Caribbean
- Thursday December 27th, 2018 to Thursday January 3rd, 2019
- Accommodations
 - Hotel Nacional 5 stars, Havana
 - Hotel Jagua, 4 stars, Cienfuegos
 - Hotel Meliá Cohiba, 5 stars, Havana
- Fully escorted by full time expert English-speaking Cuban guide
- Luxury tour coach and full time chauffeur

Day 1 – THURSDAY DECEMBER 27th / Hello Cuba

- Arrival at Havana's José Martí International airport
- Change money into Cuban Convertible Pesos while waiting for your luggage
- Meet your guide and bus driver after you exit Cuban customs
- Enjoy a group welcome dinner with your guide and tourmates at restaurant La Guarida

Day 2 – FRIDAY DECEMBER 28th / FUSTER STUDIO/MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

- Breakfast in hotel
- Visit Partagás Cigar Factory
- We'll feast on a delicious lunch hosted by José Fuster, one of Cuba's most important ceramists and painters at his whimsical studio in Jaimanitas, just outside of Havana.
- Visit the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, which exhibits Cuban art collections from the colonial times up to contemporary generations. Its first director and well-known architect, Emilio Heredia, founded it in 1913. After frequent moves, it was finally placed on the block once occupied by the old Colon Market. In 1954, a new Palacio of Bellas Artes was opened. The original Palace was recently reconstructed and a second building was taken over for the Museum.
- Return to hotel

- Dinner tonight at private restaurant Mediterraneo Habana
- **EVENING HIGHLIGHT:** We witness a most dramatic ceremony – El Cañonazo – the Firing of the 9PM Cannon at the Fortress of San Carlos de la Cabaña. This enchanting colonial reenactment dates back to 1519 when the city of Havana was enclosed by a tall thick rock wall to ward off attacks from pirates and the English. The cannon firing signaled the closing of the city gates for the night. If you were outside at the time, you were in “vedado” or the forbidden zone. Today Vedado is an important cultural hub and beautiful section of modern Havana.

DAY 3 – SATURDAY DECEMBER 29TH / HAVANA/CIENFUEGOS/ TRINIDAD DE CUBA

- Breakfast in hotel
- Early departure to Cienfuegos
- Cienfuegos: Cuba’s loveliest city of French colonial architecture on Cuba’s most scenic ocean bay.
- Visit to Palacio de Valle upon arrival. The eclectic building was erected at a cost of a million and half pesos. French, Arabic, Italian and Cuban artisans worked with marble, alabaster, brass, glass and ceramic imported from Spain, Italy and United States. The entrance is primitive Gothic style and leads to a dining room of Mudejar influence, which imitates the famous Patio of the Lions, of Alhambra, in Granada.
- Lunch at Casa Prado private restaurant.
- Coach tour of the city of Cienfuegos
- Guided walking tour of Cienfuegos historical center: Paseo del Prado, Plaza José Martí, Tomás Terry Theater, Casa de la Cultura, The Cathedral
- Check in at hotel Jagua
- Dinner at a private restaurant

DAY 4 – SUNDAY DECEMBER 30th / CIENFUEGOS/TRINIDAD/ UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

- Breakfast at hotel
- Departure to Trinidad. Walking tour of Trinidad. Declared a national monument by the Cuban government and World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987, this city is very much as it was four centuries ago; the beauty of its baroque architecture and cobblestones squares harking back to a bygone era when Trinidad was a key player in the Caribbean slave trade. It has the spectacular Valle de los Ingenios, a unique Sugar Mill Valley, beautiful churches and public squares, the most important of which is Main Square, considered the second most important square in the country, after Havana’s Cathedral Square.
- Stroll around beautiful Plaza Mayor, visit Museo Arquitectura Colonial. Enjoy time at a local artisan street market with splendid woodcarvings, fabric art, crochet pieces, and straw work.
- Lunch at Sol Ananda private restaurant
- Meet with the Santander family, well-known potters who have made unique pottery for over 100 years. Break into small groups to talk with different family members as they complete their pottery and/or ceramic items, and ask questions about the different techniques and offer comments about the resulting products.
- Visit the Valle de los Ingenios where once Sugar Mills stood.
- Return to Cienfuegos
- Dinner at Villa Lagarto private restaurant

DAY 5 – MONDAY DECEMBER 31ST / CIENFUEGOS / BAY OF PIGS / HAVANA

- Breakfast in hotel
- Departure to Havana
- En route visit Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs)
- Visit Museo Playa Girón to learn about the CIA backed invasion of Bahía de Cochinos
- Lunch at Hostal Enrique in Playa Larga
- Continue to Havana
- Check in at hotel
- Special: Enjoy a ride in old American classic cars to New Year’s dinner and show at the Cathedral Square

DAY 6 – TUESDAY JANUARY 1

- Breakfast in hotel
- In Hotel Florida special presentation and dialogue: “Overview of Cuba’s Society” today by a Havana University Professor.
- Group lunch at La Bonita private restaurant
- Departure to Santa María Beach to enjoy the afternoon
- Dinner on our own

- Evening highlight: Enjoy a performance by Buena Vista Social Club at Café Taberna

DAY 7 – WEDNESDAY JANUARY 2 / HEMINGWAY

- Breakfast in hotel
- Visit Finca La Vigía (House and farm of Ernest Hemingway Museum)
- Visit Cojímar, small fishing Village one of Hemingway's favorite's places
- TOUR HIGHLIGHT: Cooking class and lunch prepared by private restaurant El Ajiaco
- Return to hotel.
- Farewell dinner at private restaurant La Foresta
- EVENING SPECIAL "¡Noche de fiesta Cubana!" party and dancing class with live music at Club Chévere

DAY 8 – THURSDAY JANUARY 3 / HAVANA/HOME

- Breakfast in hotel
- Check-out of hotel.
- Transfer to José Martí International Airport for flights home.