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June 2018

First, a huge apology. This newsletter is very late. Aaron has been a great mentor, and I have quite the pair of shoes to fill. Taking over the day-to-day running of this group has been very much a learning experience for me. There have been a few bumps in the road, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your patience with me, I truly do appreciate it.

There has been little interest in **TORONTO & NIAGARA**, so I'm sorry to say that trip is not going to happen in July (however, I will look into doing it perhaps in August). **ICELAND** is looking great, with the itinerary almost finalized. Spots for this trip are almost sold out, so book soon!

CUBA for New Year's Eve 2018-2019, is also looking great. 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. Again, the itinerary is almost finalized, there may be a few minor changes from what is listed here. The price will be posted soon.

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 in which you are interested, please let me know so that I can ensure that your name is on the list.

Last month I tried eliminating the glass of wine included with dinners. That turned out not to be so popular; going forward, wine will be included, or perhaps once in a blue moon, it will be an option.

We start our June on Sunday the 10th with a restaurant we went to when it first opened, **PARDON MY FRENCH**, now a popular neighborhood French-fusion restaurant filled with Parisian flair. On Tuesday, June 19, we visit the Theater District and cozy, romantic French country atmosphere at **LE RIVAGE**. We finish the month on Sunday, the 24th with a tour of the **MANHATTAN ART & ANTIQUES CENTER** on 2nd Ave & 55th St, a treasure trove of all that is beautiful, fascinating and unique for sale, and boasting three floors of antiques, fine art, decoration, silver, jewelry, European, Asian African art, and antiquities. After the tour we will walk a few blocks south to **THE SMITH** for brunch.

Continue to following pages for dinner events

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



Pardon My French (French)
103 Avenue B (between 6th & 7th St)
Sunday, June 10
5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:30 pm dinner
\$77 prix fixe includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, tax & tip

<https://thesinglegourmet.net/event/pardon-my-french-june-2018/>

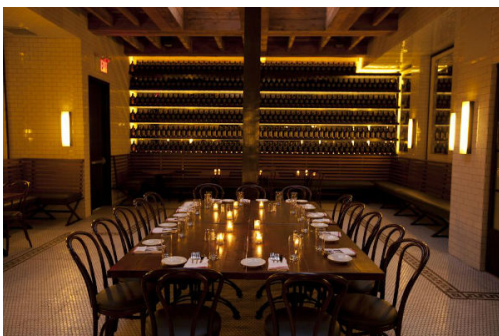
Zagat rates PMF a high 4.3 stating this is “a remake of the famous East Village restaurant Casimir by the same owners, this New Wave French bistro offers delicious small plates and upscale entrees until the wee hours, the inviting, softly lit setting oozes charm and includes a speakeasy spiffy cocktail bar.” TimeOut Magazine says, “the charming and surprisingly spacious spot continues to draw crowds from near and far for its modern riffs on French bistro classics.” Four stars on Yelp. This is 2 avenues east of 1st Ave between 6th and 7th street. We had many venture to Virginia’s in Alphabet city and it was WELL worth it, this too is worth the visit to the East Village. PMF is closer West than Virginia’s by a very long avenue. We start off with appetizers of octopus a la plancha, whole bibb lettuce, and burrata maison; entrees: NY strip steak, pan-seared salmon, roasted chicken, and cauliflower steak; dessert features a choice of chocolate tarte, crème brulee, and lemon meringue tarte.



Le Rivage (French)
340 W 46 St (between 8th & 9th Ave)
Tuesday, June 19
6:30 pm optional drinks, 7:15 pm dinner
\$68 prix fixe: 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip

<https://thesinglegourmet.net/event/le-rivage-2018/>

Le Rivage offers a cozy, romantic French country atmosphere in the heart of the Theater District. Traditional French cuisine is expertly prepared for your pleasure with fresh flowers embellishing each table, and the food is cooked with a family tradition and quality passed down through three generations. Our menu here will include Caesar salad, moules farcies, and potage de legumes to start, followed by a choice of almandine trout, seared North Atlantic salmon, chicken cordon bleu, or boeuf Bourguignon, and finally bread pudding, crème caramel, or chocolate mousse for dessert.



MAAC tour and The Smith Midtown (brunch)
1050 2nd Ave (between 55th & 56th St)
Sunday, June 24
1:00 pm tour, 2:15 pm brunch
\$69 prix fixe: 2 courses, 1 brunch drink, tax & tip

<https://thesinglegourmet.net/event/maac-the-smith-2018/>

We will start this Sunday with a tour of the Manhattan Art & Antiques Center. Located in Midtown Manhattan, it is the nation’s largest fine art and antiques mall with 100 galleries and over 40 categories representing America’s top dealers in every category or arts and antiques. MAAC is a

treasure trove of all that is beautiful, fascinating and unique for sale. Boasting three floors of antiques, fine art, decoration, silver, jewelry, European, Asian African art, antiquities, and other decorative arts and objects, including brass, glass, coins, clocks, books — this is a “must visit” for antique and art lovers, collectors, interior decorators, or those just looking to be visually inspired. Afterward we will walk to a few blocks south The Smith for brunch. A casual American Brasserie in an upbeat location, this overlooked gem gets high marks all around: 4.6 stars on OpenTable, 4 stars on Yelp, and in the top 7% of restaurants overall in NYC. Our menu starts with burrata, kale & quinoa salad, mixed baby greens, or fruit & berries, and our entrée is a choice of truffled local mushroom toast, egg white omelette, vanilla bean French toast, BLT + egg, the smith benedict, or avocado toast.

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.

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|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|------------|
| 1. Pardon My French (French) | Sun, June 10 | 5:45 pm | \$77 _____ |
| 2. Le Rivage (French) | Tue, June 19 | 5:30 pm | \$68 _____ |
| 3. MAAC & The Smith
(art & antiques, then brunch) | Sun, June 24 | 1:00 pm | \$69 _____ |

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.

Continue to following pages for travel events

ICELAND!



TRIP: ICELAND & THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

October 8-15

6 days, 6 nights

\$4995 if \$1,000 deposit is received May 31 or earlier

\$5395 if \$1,000 deposit is received June 1 or later, if there is still space

FULL PAYMENT DUE JULY 1

includes 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

<https://thesinglegourmet.net/event/iceland-2018/>

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.

We also need deposits for this trip ASAP, because Iceland is very popular, especially in early October, so in order to fully confirm, please do so by emailing us your full exact name and your date of birth as printed on your government-issued ID. Even if you have sent them before, please send them again to confirm you are coming. We will then take a \$500 NON-REFUNDABLE deposit for the airfare, along with a signed waiver/release.

CUBA!



NEW YEAR'S EVE 2018-2019
IN CUBA
December 27 - January 3
\$TBD

<https://thesinglegourmet.net/event/cuba-2018/>

Hola Senoras y Senores, 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 also 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 June, preferably the end of May.
- As of this writing, DIRECT flights to Havana from NEW YORK are daily. However, to make your trip smooth, we strongly recommend you fly with the group. You don't need to know all the details now, but we will take care of all the details, including making sure you know what documents to bring, and what paperwork you have to file.
- We hired a legal tour company (the same one as last time) who is putting together a marvelous adventure for us. We say "legal" because they have to be authorized agents of Cuba and the US to take on US citizens and residents on an approved trip. 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 Fúster, 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. This museum 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's also brags spectacular Valle de los Ingenios, a unique Sugar Mill Valley.
- It contains beautiful churches (such as the Great Parish Church, a neoclassical edifice built in 1892) and public squares, the most important of which is Main Square-surrounded by buildings of great beauty and historic and architectural interest and 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 so that Licensed Travelers can talk with different family members as they complete their pottery and/or ceramic items. Licensed Travelers will 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

DAY 7 – WEDNESDAY JANUARY 2 / HEMINGWAY

- Breakfast in hotel
- Visit Finca La Vigía (House and farm of Ernest Hemingway Museum)
- Visit Cojimar, 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.