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**September 2018**

I acknowledge, I admit, yes... am a **terrible** person. Terrible at getting a newsletter out on time! This doesn't make up for it, but the least I can do is extend everyone's membership by one month. I will have the one for October out by September 15.

Last month I mentioned how it seemed like the summer was just flying by... now we keep having day after day of 90+ degree weather, and I'm wondering if it will ever end?!

We start our September with dinner at **I' Trulli** (where Nicola's mother, Dora, prepares hand-rolled fresh pastas daily) on **Saturday, September 8** (hopefully this arrived in your mailbox in time), the night before Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, with a celebrated menu that draws on the regional cuisine of the Marzovilla's homeland, Puglia. The next dinner will take place on **Sunday, September 16 at Obicà**, a favorite of the group where over 30 members dined the last time we were there (yes, that's two Italian restaurants in a row, I apologize, I promise that October will be more diverse!). The next event is a **brunch cruise on Sunday, Sept 23**: sip on unlimited bubbly or get creative at the Bloody Mary bar as the beats keep you dancing the day away.

**There will be at least two, perhaps three more events scheduled for September, but I wanted to get this newsletter in the mail by today (September 4). Those events will appear in the October newsletter, which will be in the mail by September 12.**

For our travel events, one spot remains for the **Iceland** trip, with the price holding steady at \$5095 because airfares have risen only slightly. The promotion from last month is still valid: if you refer someone who is not a current member to join us on this trip, you will receive a \$99 credit, AND your friend will receive a complimentary one-year membership to The Single Gourmet (normally non-members have to join and pay the \$99 membership fee before they join us for a trip). Your \$99 credit is applicable toward your upcoming membership dues, or any event(s) you attend within the next 6 months. **Note: you do not have to go on this trip to refer a non-member and receive the credit.**

**CUBA** for New Year's Eve 2018-2019, still has space remaining. 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. We need 15 people for this trip, but as of yet, have only 6. Do NOT book a flight until I confirm that we have 15 people.

**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.**

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

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**I' Trulli Ristorante (Italian; veg-friendly menu)**  
**122 E 27 St (between Park Ave & Lexington)**  
**Saturday, September 8**  
**6:45 pm optional drinks, 7:30 pm dinner**  
**\$78 includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee, tax & tip**

The last time The Single Gourmet came here was almost 2 years ago, and since then they have hired a new chef, **Ben Smallman**, who last cooked at fine-dining restaurant Gabriel Kreuther. Opened by restaurateur Nicola Marzovilla in 1994, I' Trulli Ristorante is one of New

York City's landmarks of fine Italian dining. General Manager George Hock said, "We're letting Ben go wild in the kitchen, but also staying with the family's idea of what the restaurant was originally supposed to be: Puglian cooking, taking peasant dishes and making them very well." And of course, the pastas are still handmade daily by owner Dora Marzovilla. Zagat rated 23, they say "Rustic but sophisticated, this Kips Bay Southern Italian purveys a trulli special Puglian menu." The Michelin Guide states "Warm, ambient, and widely appealing, this precious restaurant is known for crafting Italian food with a light touch. Neither young nor hip, it's a neighborhood stalwart that still lures locals with its sublime covered garden and charming dining room."

#### **MENU**

##### **antipasti (choice of):**

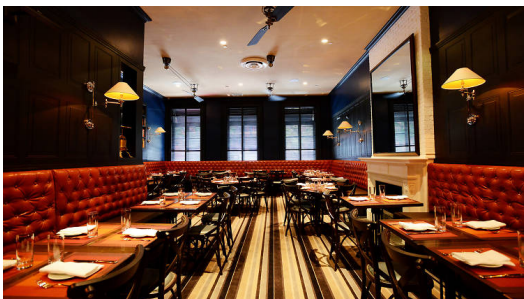
- rucola / arugula, parmigiano, lemon
- stracciatella / housemade mozzarella, heirloom tomato
- polpette / dora's sunday meatballs

##### **secondi piatti (choice of):**

- cavatelli / broccoli rabe, toasted almonds
- orecchiette / in a rabbit ragu
- pollo / organic chicken, broccoli rabe, potatoes
- spigola / black sea bass, caramelized fennel, peas, mushrooms
- tagliata / grilled flatiron steak, market vegetables

##### **dolci (choice of):**

- tiramisu
- ricotta cheesecake



**Obicà Mozzarella Bar (Italian)**  
**928 Broadway (at 21st St, across from The Flatiron Building)**  
**Sunday, September 16**  
**5:45 pm optional drinks; 6:30 pm dinner**  
**\$76 prix fixe includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, tea or coffee, tax & tip**

With a 24 rating on Zagat, Obicà combines Italy's finest artisanal ingredients with innovative presentations. Founded in Rome in 2004, Obicà means "Here we are" for their open kitchen concept. Obicà has expanded worldwide with locations in Italy, England, Dubai, Japan, and the United States. The restaurant has partnered with "Slow Food Association" to commit to food linked with pleasure, culture, tradition and a style of life. Obicà uses mozzarella only made from the creamy and nutritious milk of the water buffalo, hand-made by artisan

producers in the Denominazione di Origine Protetta (DOP) of Campania in Southern Italy (thus meaning it is a protected product.)

## MENU

### Welcome Share Plates:

- Mozzarella – *Mozzarella di Bufala Classica, Mozzarella di Bufala Affumicata Burrata*
- Salumi – *Prosciutto Crudo di Parma DOP, Salame Felino, Speck dell'Alto Adige DOP*
- Verdure – *Pomodorini Datterini e Pesto Datterini Tomatoes, Basil Pesto Carciofini Roasted Marinated Artichokes Verdure Grigliate Grilled Vegetables*

### Mains (choice of):

- Pappardelle al Ragù d'Anatra e Arancia – *Homemade Rosemary Pasta with Tuscan Style Duck Ragu, Orange Zest*
- Petto di Pollo – *Organic Free-Range Chicken Breast Stuffed with Parmigiano Reggiano, Black Truffle, on Wilted Black Kale*
- Branzino – *Sea Bass, Green Beans, Black-Eyed Peas, Cherry Tomatoes*
- Brasato – *Slow Cooked Grassfed Beef, Nebbiolo Wine Sauce, Whole Milled Corn Polenta*

### Dolci (choice of):

- Torta di Capri – *Flourless Chocolate and Almond Cake, Fior di Latte Gelato*
- Tiramisu Ricetta Tradizionale – *Tiramisù Traditional Recipe*



### Bubbles, Beats, & Brunch Cruise

**Pier 15 (78 South St, between John St & Fletcher St, next to the South St Seaport)**

**Sunday, September 23, 12:30 pm – 3:00pm**

**(1:30pm – 2:45 pm cruise time)**

**\$69: unlimited brunch buffet, Mimosas, and Bloody Marys**

With exhilarating views, unlimited drinks, and scrumptious eats galore, this Bubbles, Beats & Bottomless Brunch Cruise is an unforgettable NYC experience setting sail from Pier 15. Indulge in a decadent brunch feast against the backdrop of the Statue of

Liberty, the Hudson River, and the Freedom Tower. Once you board the luxurious yacht, grab a refreshing Mimosa or head over to the make-your-own Bloody Mary Bar. Get things started with a platter of heavenly donuts, followed by the sweet & savory buffet featuring hot Buttermilk Fried Chicken & Waffles, custom-made Frittatas, and other brunch eats and treats. Soak up the spectacular views or get in touch with your inner youth and dance to the beats provided by a live DJ on the lower deck, and of course you can ask me to the dance floor if you need a partner!

**Note: this is a ticketed event, and is non-refundable within 7 days of the event.**

As I wrote above, there will be at least two, perhaps three more events scheduled for September, but I wanted to get this newsletter in the mail by today (September 4). Events in the planning stages: a private tour & dinner at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; dinner & dancing at Swing 46; brunch on Sunday, September 30.

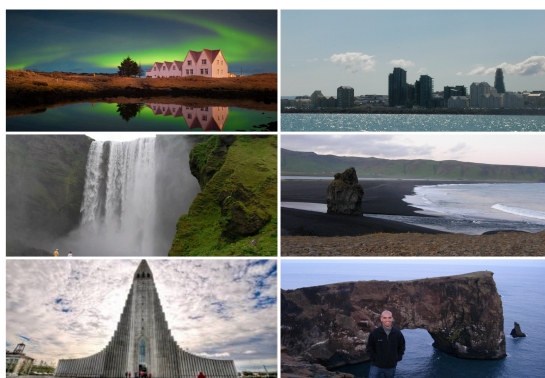
These events will appear in the October newsletter, which be in the mail by September 12. You are also welcome to call me and get an update over the phone.

1. I' Trulli (Italian, Puglia region)	Sat, September 8	6:45 pm	\$78 _____
2. Obicà Mozzarella Bar (Italian)	Sun, September 16	5:45 pm	\$76 _____
3. Bubbles, Beats, & Brunch Cruise	Sun, September 23	12:30 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.**

## ICELAND



### TRIP: ICELAND & THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

October 8-15

6 days, 6 nights

**\$5095**

**(1 spaces remaining as of September 1)**

**FULL PAYMENT DUE upon reservation  
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 after a tour of Reykjavik. Early check-in is available for an additional fee, as are upgrades to larger hotel rooms.*

### **Day 1 – Wednesday, October 9: Reykjavik**

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



### **Day 2 – Thursday, October 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, October 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, October 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, October 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, October 14: Blue Lagoon and Walewatching**

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

### **Day 7 – Tuesday, October 15: Reykjavik and Departure**

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

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## **CUBA**



### **NEW YEAR'S EVE 2018-2019** **IN CUBA**

**December 27 - January 3**

**\$4695 + airfare, visa, Cuban medical insurance  
minus \$375 if sharing a room**

**Includes all meals, hotels, transportation, and tour guides in Cuba  
does NOT include airfare**

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!"

While the trip we have planned is going to be amazing, Cuba is not a luxury destination. It is still very much left as it was decades ago. 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 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!!

### **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 27, 2018 to Thursday January 3, 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 chauffer

#### **Day 1 – Thursday, December 27 / 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 28 / 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 reenactment dates back to 1519 when Havana was enclosed by a tall thick rock wall to protect against 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 29 / HAVANA / CIENFUEGOS / TRINIDAD DE CUBA**

- Breakfast in hotel
- Early departure to Cienfuegos, a beautiful city of French colonial architecture on a scenic ocean bay.
- Visit to Palacio de Valle upon arrival. The eclectic building was erected at a cost of 1.5 million pesos. French, Arabic, Italian, and Cuban artisans worked with marble, alabaster, brass, glass, and ceramic imported from Spain, Italy and the US. 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 30 / 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 31 / 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 / ADIOS HAVANA**

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