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**November 2018**

November is when you really start to feel the chill in the air, and sometimes it even snows. This Thanksgiving I will give thanks that my first trip with the group (to Iceland) was successful... and it didn't snow on us! I am also thankful to have met all of you and for the support so many of you have given to me in this time of transition for the group.

What an amazing trip! It was not without its hiccups, but for the most part everything went smoothly. The views were stunning (waterfalls, geysers, walking on a glacier and black sand beaches, snow-capped mountains, the North America - Europe continental rift), the food was amazing, the weather wasn't rainy or too cold, and everyone had a great time (unfortunately, Iceland was not cooperative enough to let us see the Northern Lights). Hopefully you will join us on trips we have planned in the future!

October dinners continue on with **Russian Samovar on Sunday, October 21**. When we went there last year, it was very popular with over 35 people in attendance enjoying delicious food and live music, and on **Sunday, October 28**, we will have dinner at **Morso**. This Italian gem owned by the famous and highly successful restaurateur Pino Luongo hits all the right marks.

November starts with dinner on **Sunday, November 4 at Kellari Taverna** (in midtown near Grand Central Station), a Greek restaurant with amazing food that is always welcoming to our group. The next couple of dinners are on **Saturday nights: November 10 we go to Zio**, an elegantly appointed, modern restaurant in the heart of the Flatiron district, and on **November 17**, join us at Chef Richard Sandoval's hot spot, **Pampano** to celebrate Mexico's Revolution Day (which actually happens a few days later). For **Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 22**, we return to **Etcetera Etcetera**, who has welcomed us in the past. Finally, on **Sunday, November 28**, come for dinner and swing dancing at **Swing 46**, where Sarah Hayes (a friend of one of our members) will be performing.

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**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 as Cienfuegos and Trinidad. **NOTE: Previously I said that 15 people were required for this trip. I have contacted the tour operator and asked for pricing for 8 people. If the pricing still works, the trip will go forward. I will know by the end of day, Monday, October 22.**

**For this trip, please secure your space 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 October events are available for  
The Single Gourmet Members and their guests:**

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**Russian Samovar (Russian)**

**256 W 52nd St (between Broadway & 8th Ave)**

**Sunday, October 21**

**5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:30 pm dinner**

**\$79 includes 4 courses, 1 glass of wine, tea or coffee, tax & tip**

Last year when we went here, we had over 35 people! Michelin guide recommended: “This hot spot caters to hockey players, Russian intelligentsia, and vodka aficionados alike. Russian Samovar is both quirky and elegant, with musicians tickling the piano and violin. The staff is attentive, sweet, and can walk you through delicious

fare.” The restaurant was founded in 1986 by Russian poet Joseph Brodsky with entrepreneur Roman Kaplan and famous Russian ballet dancer Michael Baryshnikov. Frank Sinatra once owned the restaurant and had many concerts here and often spent time with his friends here. It kept its charming tradition to become a favorite place for Russians and a home for famous Russian poets and writers.

Our menu starts with a traditional Russian chicken, potato, and vegetable salad, or caviar-style eggplant served on brown wheat toast corners, or a traditional beet and vegetable salad. The second course is borscht or a chicken soup. Our third course is a marinated chicken thighs, beef stroganoff or grilled salmon. Traditional Russian cake or ice cream for dessert.

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**Morso (Italian)**

**420 E 59th St (between 1st Ave & Sutton Pl)**

**Sunday, October 28**

**5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:30 pm dinner**

**\$78 includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, tea or coffee, tax & tip**

Zagat rated 4.4. They say “Pino Luongo knows what he’s doing at this classy East Midtown oasis, a dependable source of marvelous Italian cuisine served by staffers who genuinely care; the contemporary room features Pop Art on the walls and a dramatic view of the Queensboro Bridge from the outdoor terrace.” Morso is a culmination of a life in food and a passion for culinary excellence.

With the essence of his Tuscan homeland at heart and a truly original style of cooking; Pino Luongo shaped the Italian menus that we now consider classic, with restaurants including Le Madri, Mad 61, Coco Pazzo, Tuscan Square, and Centolire. For Morso, his values remain unchanged; great, seasonal ingredients skillfully prepared, and shared with family and friends.

Our menu includes appetizers of Buffalo mozzarella with red & yellow tomatoes & basil; or mixed greens with grilled vegetable salad with red wine vinaigrette. Our entrees are farfalle fiore de mare which is bow-tie pasta, chopped buffalo mozzarella & raw tomatoes, topped with salmon roe; or roasted salmon with pickled fennel & radish salad with a mustard dressing; or pollo martini, which is parmesan encrusted chicken breast with white wine, caramelized baby carrots & string beans; or veal scaloppini saltimbocca which is veal with artichokes, fingerling potatoes, roasted cherry tomatoes, white wine sauce, prosciutto and melted fontina cheese. We end with desserts of decadent chocolate cake or homemade sorbets.

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

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**Kellari Taverna**

**19 W 44th (between 5th and 6th Street)**

**Sunday, November 4**

**6:00 pm optional drinks, 7:00 pm dinner**

**\$77 includes a 3-course Greek Feast, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip**

Zagat says, “Mouthwatering displays of fresh fish on ice beckon at this sophisticated Midtown Greek seafood offering next-flight-to-Athens-quality cooking”. The dining room decor evokes a subterranean wine cellar designed with contemporary elegance. Kellari which means, “cellar” in Greek, features the traditional Greek taverna specialties and an eclectic selection of contemporary Hellenic savory “mezedes.” A recent article, states “Kellari Taverna is the epitome of classic Greek cuisine with the perfect balance of authenticity and elegance. You can find classic Greek and Mediterranean dishes at Kellari. Moreover, the food is as welcoming as the hospitality that you will receive. As you enter Kellari and sit at the bar, the words “Enter as Strangers, Leave as Friends” are printed on placards. It is this feeling of warmth and hospitality that pervades the entire experience at Kellari, a cozy Midtown gem with wood-beamed cathedral ceilings, and walls warmed in sunset hues.” Our menu will be shared plates of Greek salad, an assortment of spreads with pita, spanakopita, fillo pies filled with fresh spinach, herbs and feta, and fried calamari; we will have a choice of entrées: lavraki (sea bass) fillet, Amish chicken tomato and fresh herb orzo pasta, Faroese salmon, or lamb Yiouvetsi; and shared desserts.

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**Zio Ristorante**

**17 W 19 St (between 5th & 6th Ave)**

**Saturday, November 10**

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

**\$86 includes hors d'oeuvres at the bar, 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip**

This is one of the most gorgeous restaurants that I have seen in a long time. Zagat rates it 4.3, saying “this welcoming Flatiron restaurant turns out classic Italian dishes with a little twist with its spacious modern setting and friendly service it’s no wonder it’s considered a local gem.” Zio Ristorante is a dining destination in the heart of the Flatiron District delivering a lively atmosphere in a warm setting and beautifully appointed open kitchen. Zio weaves daily organic homemade pastas with seasonal ingredients into inspired culinary combinations influenced by Mediterranean flavors. 4 stars on Yelp, 4.5 on TripAdvisor. Pre-dinner hors d’oeuvres at the bar, then our meal consists of a choice of mixed green salad, veal meatballs, or fried calamari and zucchini to start, then choose homemade pasta orecchiette pomodoro or pan-seared chicken breast parmigiana, topped with homemade mozzarella, and served with roasted potatoes or filet of sole in white wine and caper sauce with spinach, followed by tiramisu or sorbet for dessert. This was one of our most popular dinners our last visit in 2017.

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**Pampano (Mexican) – a Richard Sandoval restaurant**  
**209 E 49th St (between 2nd & 3rd Ave)**  
**Saturday, November 17**  
**6:30 pm optional drinks, 7:30 pm dinner**  
**\$82 includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine/beer/margarita, sangria, coffee/tea, tax & tip**

A Richard Sandoval masterpiece!!! Monday, November 19 is Revolution Day in Mexico, so we're going to Pampano to celebrate. Zagat-rated 4.4 where the food "hits the high notes" Chef Sandoval, a Bravo's top Chef Master, is known for taking gourmet Mexican and Latin flavor to a new level. Zagat writes, "Refined Mexican dishes highlighting excellent seafood are the stars at this classy East Midtown restaurant." With over 30 Latin restaurants across the United States, Europe, Mexico, and the Middle East, Richard Sandoval is a global pioneer. Nine of his restaurants have been voted best in their category. He was nominated for James Beard Outstanding Restaurateur. Over 4 stars on all review sites, and the Michelin Guide 2017 states, "Nothing screams you need a trip to Acapulco like a stressful day in midtown, and we've got your remedy: Pampano, a popular Mexican seafood restaurant, offering two types of oases for the weary worker: downstairs, you'll find a lively bar with a few small tables to enjoy their botanas menu; upstairs, you'll find a transporting, beachy dining space with whitewashed ceilings, wicker chairs, lazy ceiling fans, and an outdoor patio." We dine here often with groups of over 30 each time. One of the best!

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**Etcetera Etcetera – Thanksgiving**  
**352 W 44th Street (between 8th & 9th Ave)**  
**Thursday, November 22**  
**5:00 pm optional drinks, 6:00 pm dinner**  
**\$92 includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, coffee/tea, tax & tip**

The Michelin Guide writes that Etcetera Etcetera is "putting out seriously solid, well prepared food," as a "hip and modern breath of clean, fresh air in the theater district... modern and contemporary, Milan meets Miami sensibility." With 4 stars on Yelp, Zagat says 23 for food and "splendid." "With its sleek, gorgeous interior and friendly staff, Etcetera Etcetera has become a heavenly haven and shimmering neighborhood fixture for discriminating New Yorkers," and is favorite of one of our members who sings open mic cabaret here. Owner and Manager Daniele Kucera, who co-owned Vice Versa for many years, puts his spin on contemporary Italian meals that will leave you wanting more and more and more and more... (and more) etc., etc.

Our Thanksgiving meal will start with a choice of baby arugula salad with avocado, hearts of palm, pine nuts, shaved Pecorino cheese or butternut squash soup with sour cream; main course choices of homemade pumpkin cappellacci with butter, and sage and candied fruit, or turkey with sausage and chestnuts stuffing, sweet potato au gratin and cranberry sauce, or oven roasted Atlantic salmon with sautéed spinach, olive oil, mashed potatoes and white wine sauce. We finish with a dessert choice of apple tart with vanilla cream and caramel-brandied sauce, or classic pumpkin pie with meringue.

***NOTE: for Thanksgiving, there will be no additional fee for guests.***

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**Swing 46 (dinner & swing dancing with live music)**  
**349 W 46th St (between 8th & 9th Ave)**  
**Sunday, November 25**  
**6:00 pm optional drinks, 6:45 pm dinner**  
**8:30 pm live music & swing dancing**  
**\$71 includes 3 courses, 1 glass of wine, tax & tip**  
**+ \$15 entertainment fee if you stay for the band**

Join us for a great meal and a live Big Band at Swing 46 Jazz and Supper Club. NYC's swing dance community raves about this supper club, and our members love it! If you want to Lindy

Hop, Jitterbug, Waltz, or Freestyle we will be doing it all. If you do not know how to swing dance, dance lessons are included and offered in between the band break. "Nice casual" is the dress code (no sneakers or jeans). We ate here two years ago and even if you don't dance, the food was great, the band was incredible, the music spectacular, and the dance lessons were all well worth it! For appetizers, we will choose from fresh mozzarella with basil, ripe tomatoes and a balsamic glaze, organic field greens homemade sage vinaigrette, or Caesar Salad crisp romaine, herb croutons shaved parmesan cheese; for entrees choose from: Angus hanger steak, BBQ ribs, roast half chicken, salmon filet, Prince Edward Island Mussels, vegetarian pasta primavera, or rigatoni and shrimp. For dessert, we have a choice of warm chocolate brownies with fresh cream or fresh fruit sorbet.

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1. Russian Samovar (Russian)	Sun, October 21	5:45 pm	\$79 _____
2. Morso (Italian)	Sun, October 28	5:45 pm	\$78 _____
3. Kellari (Greek)	Sun, November 4	6:00 pm	\$77 _____
4. Zio (Italian)	Sat, November 10	6:30 pm	\$86 _____
5. Pampano (Mexican)	Sat, November 17	6:30 pm	\$82 _____
6. Etcetera Etcetera (Thanksgiving)	Thu, November 22	5:00 pm	\$92 _____
7. Swing 46 (dinner & swing dancing)	Sat, November 28	6:00 pm	\$71 or \$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.**

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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 Senoras 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 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!!

### **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
- Fully escorted by full time expert English-speaking Cuban guide
- Luxury tour coach and full time chauffeur

#### **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 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, 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 classic American 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 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 / ADIOS HAVANA**

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