

San Francisco

50 NEW DISHES **REDEFINING**
HOW WE DINE

THE
FOOD
ISSUE

BEST CHEFS
OF 2016
THE GREATEST
FARMER
ON EARTH
(IS A DENTIST)
MICHAEL
BAUER'S
BOYFRIEND
PROBLEM



4. Bagel Sandwiches

Wise Sons Bagel & Bakery, Fillmore

A year after a fire destroyed the planned location of Wise Sons Bagel & Bakery, Evan Bloom and Leo Beckerman had to deal with a second conflagration: that of public opinion. Bagels exist to spark disagreement; even before they opened their Fillmore shop in February, Bloom and Beckerman had to shoulder impossible expectations. But the only thing their bagel sandwiches spark is deep pleasure. Case in point is the Bodega Egg and Cheese: A combination of melted cheddar, aioli, and a smooth, fluffy frittata, it hits many primal buttons. As for the bagel itself? It's chewy, dense, and a deserving vehicle for its cargo. It is, in other words, a bagel. **\$7**

5. Mezze Plate

Shed, Healdsburg

When Perry Hoffman assumed his role as Shed's culinary director last September, Healdsburg became that much more enticing. Hoffman has made Shed feel less like a bobo agrarian fantasia and more like a fantastic restaurant that just happens to sell \$49 hand-forged garden shears. Much of his brand of (very local, very seasonal) brilliance is encapsulated in his mezze plate, a Sonoma-specific riff on the appetizer smorgasbord found throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkans. Depending on what's available, you may find beet tzatziki, carrot hummus, or creamy farmer's cheese. It's food that sings a song of joy and color, and of the impossible beauty of the land outside of Shed's front door. **\$15**

6. Herring Platter

Volta, SoMa

Though the humble herring has become fashionable in certain quarters (read: New York), it's still a rare breed in these parts. So that's reason to celebrate Volta, which Staffan Terje and Umberto Gibin opened in January: The French-Scandinavian brasserie's herring platter is freighted with five variations of delectably fatty fish. You'll find it pan-fried, pickled, chopped into a beet salad, anointed with mustard-dill sauce and garnished with curried apples, and as matjes, or soured herring. Each accompaniment amplifies the herring's plentiful charms rather than smothering them, and the fish itself is as supple as a silk glove. **\$19**

7. Egg Hopper

1601 Bar & Kitchen, SoMa

At 1601 Bar & Kitchen, one of San Francisco's only Sri Lankan-inspired restaurants, many of the dishes on Brian Fernando's menu are modernist departures from the food that his Sri Lankan father used to make. One dish his dad would recognize is the egg hopper, a crisp but pliant coconut-milk-and-rice-flour crepe with a chili-flecked egg at its center. It's served with a side of chutney-like onion sambal. You tear off a strip of crepe, dip it in the egg, and scoop up some sambal. The result is a joyous riot of flavors, whether it reminds you of childhood or not. **\$9**



8. Grilled Avocado

Bird Dog, Palo Alto

The wood-grilled avocado is part of the "raw" section of Bird Dog's menu, but its charms are such that no one, not even chef-owner Robbie Wilson, should put this baby in a corner. Served halved with wasabi on the side and its seed hole filled with ponzu sauce, the fruit has become one of the restaurant's signatures since it opened in Palo Alto last November. And that's no surprise: Not only is it the Platonic ideal of avocado; it's also a convincing encapsulation of what good can come when California cuisine is reduced to its essence, and then taught how to fly. **\$14**

9. Kalbi Loco Moco

Aina, Dogpatch

Aina calls itself a "modern Hawaiian eatery," but it could just as easily be described as a cure for the common brunch. While you'll find doughnuts, eggs, and French toast at the sunny Dogpatch restaurant that chef-owner Jordan Keao opened in April, there's nothing rote about them: The French toast is made with taro Portuguese bread, and the eggs—well, the best way to eat them is in the kalbi loco moco. In Keao's version of the Hawaiian staple, they sit sunny-side up on a heap of braised short rib and short-grain rice. Throw in some furikake, pea tendrils, heart of palm pico de gallo, and some hon-shimeji mushroom jus, and you have yourself a brunch to remember. **\$19**

10. Veggie Burger

Amy's Drive Thru, Rohnert Park

When is a burger not just a burger? When it's the burger at Amy's Drive Thru, the 100 percent vegetarian fast-food flagship opened in Rohnert Park last July by Amy's Kitchen owners Rachel and Andy Berliner. A sustainable, organic, non-GMO patty made from grains, vegetables, and mushrooms, it's less a foodstuff than a salvo in the still-nascent but increasingly lucrative battle to revolutionize the fast-food industry. And so it bears emphasizing that it also happens to be really good: flavorful and squishy in all the right places. If that's what revolution tastes like, then long live the revolution. **\$3.69**

11. Buckwheat Cornbread

Old Bus Tavern, Bernal Heights

Old Bus Tavern is advertised as a craft brewery and restaurant. But a more accurate description of the Mission Street spot, which opened last summer, is shrine to superior cornbread. There are many things to love about chef Max Snyder's cornbread—the tender crumb, the sturdy crust—but what really distinguishes it is the substitution of fresh masa for cornmeal and buckwheat for wheat flour. The earthy result is an ideal foil for the honey-miso butter that accompanies it. The butter is topped with chives, sea salt, and puffed buckwheat, a combination that may sound precious but in reality is goddamn perfect. **\$6**