

CHEF'S TOP TABLES

Join us on an expert-led culinary tour around the world as a chef in the know gives us his picks for eating out on a global scale



Celebrity CHEF MASAHARU MORIMOTO is one of the key players in facilitating the widespread admiration and enjoyment of

Japanese food in Western culture. He was the original chef at Nobu in New York in 1994, and opened his first eponymous restaurant in Philadelphia in 2001. Today, his roster of restaurants are located in Mexico City, Bangkok, Las Vegas, Maui, and more. Look out for his new concept at Dubai's Renaissance Downtown Hotel, which opens this month.

HIROSHIMA, JAPAN Chinchikurin

Hiroshima, my hometown, is famous for its okonomiyaki (savoury Japanese pancakes) and there are countless eateries that pay homage to this fabulous dish. I think Chinchikurin (chinchikurin.com) is one of the best. They've recently made their way to the US and I hope that they will continue to spread this 'taste of home' widely abroad.

WHAT I RECOMMEND: *The okonomiyaki is a must-try, but they also have really good spicy dipping noodles.*

TOKYO, JAPAN Ginza Kyubey

In my opinion, this is one of the best sushi restaurants in Japan – it's outstandingly good. While it's a prestigious and traditional restaurant, you do not feel compelled to follow customary sushi eating rules. And the ambience is very warm and welcoming. If you ever stay in Tokyo, go to Ginza and try this place, just make sure you make a reservation.

WHAT I RECOMMEND: *Everything.*

An assortment of sushi at Morimoto Napa



NAPA, US Morimoto Napa

Napa is known for its great food and grape and it attracts foodies from far and near. I feel flattered that my restaurant and food is well received there, and it's one of my favourite places, too. When I created the menu for Morimoto Napa (morimotonapa.com), I wasn't necessarily trying to match it with grape varietals, I just did what I always do, which is to try to capture the characteristics, the culture, and the history of the location and absorb them into my dishes. And as a result, they just happen to go great with grape. Napa is a special place for me. It keeps giving me new inspirations.

WHAT I RECOMMEND: *Tuna Pizza is one of my signature dishes that you can find at any Morimoto outlet in the world. And this approachable dish is suitable for everyone, even those who have never tried raw fish before.*

BEIJING, CHINA Quanjudé

This well-established restaurant has over 150 years of history and it's famous for Peking duck. The birds are roasted in a large hearth by nationally qualified artisans. Overall, the price point is very reasonable and you can make a hearty meal of this real traditional delicacy. This dish features on the menu at one of my own locations and we are continually trying to make our version match that of Quanjudé.

WHAT I RECOMMEND: *Can you guess?*

ON MY BUCKET LIST

I would love to try **Kamimura** (kamimura-niseko.com) in the ski town of Niseko in northern Hokkaido, Japan. It offers contemporary French cuisine inspired by the region's natural beauty and local ingredients.