

Canadian cuisine:

A gourmet's delight

Canada has long been recognised for the excellence of its seafood.



Does the prospect of Malpeque Oyster Bisque, Restigouche Salmon, Chuckwagon Stew or Kitchener Turnip Scallop appeal to your taste-buds? If so, perhaps you should join the 600 000 tourists from the UK who visit Canada every year.

Many of these visitors are drawn to Canada by the grandeur of the scenery, the sheer size of the country and the exuberance of its people. But when they get there, they often find that what they really like is the variety and excellence of Canadian cuisine.

Bridges is typical of the Vancouver waterfront restaurants offering a wide choice of seafood and other dishes in relaxing and comfortable surroundings.



Photo: Tony Libosky

You have only to glance at the Toronto Yellow Pages to discover that Canada's largest city is a gastronomic paradise. The 30-page section devoted to restaurants lists establishments specialising in dishes from China, India, the Middle East, South East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the UK, France, Italy and many other parts of the world.

Modern Canadian cuisine is the result of years of development of cooking methods brought over from Europe and adapted to the circumstances of a new country. The early settlers discovered unfamiliar food sources – buffalo, saskatoons, wild rice, and pinchberries, for example – as well as culinary techniques employed by the indigenous peoples that also were completely new.

Many regional dishes

There are many regional dishes, and each of Canada's provinces has its own specialities. The cuisine of Quebec, for instance, has a decidedly French flavour, with some of its recipes dating back to 1646 when the Ursuline Sisters of Quebec adapted their traditional Norman culinary arts to local ingredients.

The monks of the province, on the other hand, seem to have gone in for cheese-making, a tradition that lives on. One example is Oka cheese made by Trappist monks near the town of that name; another is Ermite cheese which comes from the monastery at St Benoit du Lac. But Fromage de l'Île, a pungent cheese from the Île d'Orléans, is made by the laity – to a secret recipe known to only ten farming families.

No-one should leave Quebec without sampling its celebrated pork dishes. The thrifty settlers