

For a relaxed night out with friends to enjoy good food, great wine and lovely atmosphere – where in Dubai would you choose to go?

Most definitely Rivington Grill. Quality and affordable no-fuss food, but where it excels is the very personalised, consistently good service. And of course its location overlooking Dubai's magical fountains never ceases to impress me.

What do you think is Dubai's best kept culinary secret?

Bukhtair – a shack on the beach that serves the most exquisite fresh fish cooked Keralan style. Pomfret, shari, prawns and more, all caught locally. Cheap, cheerful and spotlessly clean. The best way to reach is to take the immediate right turn after Chalet restaurant on Jumeirah Beach Road. Bukhtair is open for lunch and dinner, but dinner is a better option especially with the warmer weather creeping in. Clearly it's now no longer a secret!

Where is your top foodie travel destination?

I have so many, but if I had to pick a favourite, I'd go for Japan. I travelled around the country last summer and loved the variety. Specialty restaurants for sashimi, tempura, teppanyaki, yakitori, kaiseki etc. You're unlikely to find salmon sashimi in Japan, it's considered a very inferior fish.



Finding FooDiva

Looking for a place to dine out this weekend? FooDiva might just have the answer. *Lauren Hills* sits down for lunch and a chat with Samantha Wood, founder and managing director of Foodiva.net, a UAE-based website dedicated to impartial restaurant reviews

In line with our Mediterranean issue – what are your top three Med restaurants in Dubai, and why?

Mediterranean cuisine, strictly speaking, covers such a diverse range of countries that all borders on the Med Sea, from Southern Europe to North Africa and even Middle East,



but to narrow it down I will pick one from Greece, Italy and France.

1. I am half Greek-Cypriot and would have to vote for Elia, a Greek restaurant in Bur Dubai's Majestic hotel. I realise I may be biased, but if you love Greek cuisine or simply want to try good home-cooked food in a relaxed environment, then Elia is an excellent, good value-for-money choice.
2. Italian is a tough category in this town due to the sheer number of restaurants, but actually only a handful truly honour authentic Italian cuisine. My vote goes to Carluccio's.
3. Famed for its French Nicoise cuisine, and its signature salad of the same name, La Petite Maison opened last year at DIFC's Gate Village. Dishes are served from the open plan kitchen as and when they are ready, with the concept of sharing. There are a staggering 22 'hors d'oeuvres' to choose from, plus another 17 'plats principaux' – exquisite food and service, but at a price.



When shopping for top quality ingredients, where do you go for...

Cheese? Jones The Grocer in Abu Dhabi – can't wait for it to open in Dubai. Lafayette Gourmet also has a good selection.

Meat? Prime Gourmet at the Gold & Diamond Park. Currently the only dedicated butchery in Dubai.

Seafood? Carrefour's fish counter.