

# OLD RESTAURANTS OF SAN FRANCISCO

SEEKERS of original dinners, where will you dine to-night?  
In Japan,  
China,  
Turkey,  
Italy,  
Mexico,  
Jerusalem,

Or does your capricious palate lead you to the South, to the possum and corn pone? You are in San Francisco, so indicate almost any country on the map in which you wish to refresh yourself with a change of atmosphere, and quicker than Santos Dumont's airship—quicker than ever you could go were you by message and sent by the wire—we will accompany you in your favorite country and await upon your appetite.

In this peninsular city of the Far West we have the peoples of all nations. To be sure, many become Americanized, both in dress and custom, but some cling to the characteristics of their own country, especially as to their food.

While it is an easy matter to don the beautiful garb of the American, it is not so easy to regulate the palate from the foreign concoctions to those of New England, so including the American we have the opportunity, with almost no strain on the imagination, to dine with consistent

symp serve as dessert. The dinner concludes with more tea.

The furnishing throughout this restaurant in Japan is, even to the quaint coke stove, true to their country, and here in the heart of the city, yet secluded spot, all the aristocratic Japanese hold their banquets. Few Americans know of the place and very few are served with dinner even upon application, even with the proffer of extra money, for as Aga Wa, the proprietor, says, it is intended for his own countrymen alone, and the Americans are a great bother to the waiters, who speak only their own language.

Supposing we take a dinner in Turkey. Have you ever been there? It is not so very far; only down on Larkin street, near McAllister. A most conventional location, to be sure, yet it is Turkey, consistent in every detail, from the turbaned servants to the swarthy-visaged guests who repair to this retreat to order a dish of kabob, a la Turk and to inhale the cool smoke of the nargile with Ali Bab, the picturesque proprietor. What a quiasm of difference lies between these two nations, Japan and Turkey. We have just left the busy little Japs and their clean, trim bamboo furniture, their sliding walls, artistic grounds and pure atmosphere. The severity and the daintiness come to us in sharp contrast as we pass the crescent flag at the gate of Turkey and are receiving salutations from the fezzed Ali Bab at the door.

Here is the odor of a thousand perfumes, subdued light, luxurious cushions, voluminous drapes and people who in



INTERIOR OF JAPANESE RESTAURANT.



TURKISH ROOM AT "BABS"



SMOKING NARGHILS.

surroundings in almost any country in the world.

Where will we go first? Japan. Good. Come along to that country of cherry blossoms and temples and see what we will have to eat.

On Ellis street, only a half-block from Folsom, in a tiny alley, so narrow that one would barely notice it, is a strange looking sign—the keynote of Japan. At night it stands out like a silhouette from a back illumination. Turn down the alley; past the sign a few steps will lead to a Japanese gate, with its fitted pieces arranged in conventional design. At this gate we stop and peer with no little curiosity into a real Japanese garden and tea house.

Flanked by a pile of huge brown rocks, from the crevices of which feathery leaves tremble in the wind, a tiny lake sparkles and ripples. A number of Japanese fish (sakana), a foot in length, swim lazily about. Beyond the lake, with flagstones leading down to the water's edge, rises a typical Japanese structure, with a bamboo roof and sliding walls of translucent paper. Its hanging baskets of green, its bowls of gold fish and, last but not least, the "polite boy"—the trade mark of all Japanese business houses.

This little statue of a cross-legged, smiling Japanese symbolizing the old adage, "Diplomacy and politeness in the long run pay the best," sits in conspicuous evidence and adds to the quaint effect. A tiny house to the left of the lake has a bamboo roof and bamboo windows.

Japan—From garden to house, surely we left America when we turned off Ellis street. At the heels of a bowing white aproned native we enter the white matted apartment, scrupulously clean, and take seats at a table which is American as to linen and minor appointments. Being conservative with our Japanese we merely indicate what we desire served—chiku han (luncheon) or yu han (dinner complete). We order the latter and we begin immediately, for the table is already set with bowls for tea.

Seemingly with wireless telegraphy a helper is summoned and makes appearance carrying a pot of boiling water, which is poured into the individual bowls, allowed to remain one moment in order to heat the bowl and slightly cool the water, then the latter is poured into the tiny blue teapot. The Japanese never pour boiling water upon the fragrant leaves; it is always first slightly cooled in the bowls and this preserves all the delicate flavor of the tea.

These bowls of tea are served and thoroughly enjoyed, then a large square zen or tray is brought and placed before each guest. This tray contains the entire dinner for one person and is arranged with the several varieties, which are not removed, but are eaten from the bowls as they are placed on the tray.

Two entrées make appearance, another zen with seven compartments, with variety of fowl. No meat appears in a Japanese dinner. Chopped ice and mulberry

hair-removing attitudes are as much in contrast to the alert little brown men as are their surroundings. Nevertheless if you have a soul for color you will do well to have dinner here, for though you may not fancy little birds roasted in vine leaves, the pastry and the variety of sweets, you will be sure to enjoy to the fullest extent the rich arrangement of light and shade, the harmony of old reds, dull blues and sage greens which brings joy to the esthetic Turk and puts to shame the glaring colors and tawdry trappings of some of the younger nations.

The miniature Turkey which was imported for use at the World's Fair has been brought here for decoration at this odd place. The walls and ceilings are entirely covered with draperies, upon which are designs, no two corresponding, applied. The floors yield to foot pressure with soft toned rugs, embroidered squares cover the tables, upon which are invariably placed tiny coffee cups of exquisite daintiness, the omnipresent Turkish cigarette and pipes, for coffee and nicotine are life to the Turks.

There are not so many of this countrymen in San Francisco—perhaps not more than fifty altogether, counting the Ar-



MEXICAN DINNING ROOM IN LATIN QUARTER.

arrangement of fruit, pieces of bread and thin slices of cheese. We have cinnamon soup, a concoction of seasoned meats roiled in vine leaves, garnished with rice and raisins. We pass over the Paklava pastry, the Kabobs and the fried disks of bread, but with great enjoyment we welcome the Rabat-la-Koum, the lumps of delight, Turkish sweetsmeats and at last Turkish coffee—delicious, fragrant, a beverage to be remembered. The imported berry, which comes to this country in airtight glass cases, is put into the individual grinders and the water grinds and makes the coffee before your eyes. He puts the berry in a tiny brass tube, turns the handle and out comes the coffee ground to the fineness of flour; this is placed in a silver pot, the alcohol lamp flares, the water boils. In three minutes the tiny cups are placed under the faucet and the fragrant amber-tinted fluid pours down. The pasty black sediment caused by grinding the coffee so fine is eaten with a spoon after the coffee has been drained off and is said to counteract all the poisonous effects of the beverage. Pipes, cigarettes, perfumed bowls of water and embroidered napkins are brought by an olive-skinned youth.

Picturesque Turkey! We would fain bide awhile and watch the silver emerald and broderie of the water's coat flash in the candle light, but we must up and on, for more Americans attracted to this foreign world, however small, are waiting for their chicken pashia and staschia.

On the way to Italy we pass Jerusalem and stop a half-hour for matzos and sundry kosher preparations; but this is only luncheon. The real meal is in Italy, and we have chosen that portion of the Latin country near the bay. The picture has changed; no seductive silken draperies and performed air here; no soft, cushiony rugs, no pictures of the Sultan's favorite, no mystery. The floor is sprinkled thickly with yellow sawdust; the round tables are bare of napkin or cover; only the polished wood

reflects the light.

As we enter the low door our eyes involuntarily rest upon the row of shelves to the right, where there are loaves of bread in every design and varying shades of brown. Little breads, French loaves and great round Italian bread with its hard-baked crust; boxes of tagalerini, macaroni, spaghetti and a half-dozen other varieties of paste occupy the shelves, together with the imported canned fish and meats, with their brass labels. We begin to enumerate the variety of straw-covered bottles, when our attention is attracted to the chatter and scraping at the door. It is the lively conversation and the rubber boots of some fishermen, who have come for their evening meal. They inhale a deep breath of the garlic scented, steamy, greasy air, which issues in clouds from the kitchen. The cooking place is so close that we can hear the meat sizzle on the grill, and the fish as it is popped into the hot oil. We forget the variety of odors in watching the bronzed, red-shirted groups along the side tables. Sons of Italy, who catch a fish; stubby beards of three days' growth half hide the soft skin of beautiful warm red-brown. Eyes—where do we see eyes like the Italians—are shadowed by the slouch hats pulled rakishly down, and these are not removed for a mere thing like dinner. The red shirts open at the neck and are rolled up at the sleeves, showing more bronzed skin. High rubber boots, well filled, occupy all the space under the table.

Oh, Italy! I verily believe you are more picturesque than Turkey. We eat our plates of deliciously fat ravioli, the tomato tagalerini and the flaky fish, and watch Italy.

They do not eat as we eat. Our wine is served in celente bottles, which have a cunning arrangement of an inner glass bulb to hold chopped ice; there is poured from thick white pitchers. Our salad is served on a plate, with a fork accom-

panying it; theirs come on in a huge granite bowl, large enough to hold four

portions, and is eaten with the fingers, for none know better than the Italians that a metal fork affects the delicate flavor of the leaf. How they do enjoy their stringy macaroni, their garlic and their wine!

The infectious chatter and laughter restore our appetite, which might otherwise fly before the mixed odors and gray fumes.

France? No, France has been a part and parcel of our city so long that we all know a typical French dinner, so we skip this country and have a meal in Mexico. All who wish to dine in this land of sunshine must journey over to the Latin quarter. It is not far—both the Kearny and the Powell street cars land you there for 5 cents. Why, in San Francisco one can be quite a tourist for \$1, and travel first class all the time. Once in San Francisco's Mexico, look about you and you will never recognize your own country. Strings of chili peppers hang in the windows and at the doors of shops. Cans of chocolate, windows piled with brightly hued cascades and a hundred and one strange and unfamiliar things crowd upon one's vision. Pretty, dark faces, half-lid by rebosos, peep curiously from quaint windows. You are in Mexico! Luna's seems to be the most conspicuous place about, so into the door of Luna's we go and take seats in the back room, with its four tables, its long mirror and its tiny roof windows. A dinner of peppers—that is, almost. Individual water jars, of rich brown with varnished glaze, that is so dear to the artist, are at each table. A pile of tamales, with yellow corn husks, form a pretty contrast to the brown platters upon which they are served. Little glass dishes of imported red peppers—a favorite relish—form another patch of color.

We are amused by a smiling guest who sits at the end table and sends ardent glances in the direction of the pretty senorita, who with all her convent demureness still coquettes a bit with those great limpid eyes, soft, like black velvet. Ricardo, the rather handsome Mexican,

napkin over his arm, walks in with non-balance. Ricardo is as much a part of Luna's as is the meal; he has served snobbish and chile con carne for almost fifteen years, has had his picture taken fourteen times and fourteen times has figured as hero in stories of Luna's.

Mescal, the appetizer distilled from the huge cacti of Mexico, is followed by stuffed peppers, corn pancakes, called tortillas, enchiladas and frioles and a variety of pepper pots, but of all the Mexican dishes there is nothing more delicious to the American palate than the chocolate. Luna's chocolate is famous all over the United States. Smooth, creamy, delicious—cinnamon seasoned chocolate. In all the various ways of preparing the beverage there is none to compare with this. The receipt? Nada—it is a secret well guarded.

—And then, too, the conserved lemon and pineapple is an un-American dainty, transparent and yellow. Truly it takes a Latin dinner for color. No wonder these countries turn out so many artists.

China? Yes, we can have a China dinner, if we so desire. Hang Fong Low's place on Dupont street is Walden Astoria of Chinatown, and there the most epicurean palate can be pleased. Eggs fifty years old for the ancestral and for the American—well, perhaps preserved ginger is the most appetizing.

This typical Chinese restaurant is three stories high; each floor is set with tables, the top being reserved for parties. The banquet hall has beautifully polished floors; the walls are decorated with gilt carvings; an arrangement over the ovens, upon which are three artistic brass kettles each holding galena or more, forms a sort of canopy. A fantastically colored Chinese dragon presides over this portion of the room and its China face looks half defiant as it peers over the guests. Everything is spotlessly clean from cellar to garret. Carved ebony chairs in rows and Chinese slides of the room. Ebony stools are used for dining seats.

A Chinese dinner consists of about seven courses, commencing with China rice whiskey. Pickled eggs, mustard pickles, lemons and a sort of transparent plum, together with nuts and sweetmeats, are placed on the tables before the guests arrive. These dispensed, large china soup scoops are brought, followed by the soup; then comes an endless array of meats, chopped, hashed, roasted, fried, salt, sour, sweet. Shiny roast fowl, brilliantly colored meats of all kinds, then pastry. Dessert is preserved fruit, nuts, sweetmeats and tea—tea in dear little bowls. As we leave the richly furnished banquet hall and walk through the narrow passage to the stairway we stop in admiration of the weird picture framed by the kitchen. The flames burst through the crevices of the old range and surround in mysterious red and brown shadows the white-covered cushions. A vigorously stirring something in a huge brass pot; more brass caldrons cast reflections on the brown-stained walls that are toned to a beautiful softness by time and smoke. What a feast for an artist is this Chinese kitchen.

We have collected a valuable mental gallery to-day in this round of nations. After a Chinese dinner, if one so desires, long cornucopian-shaped cigarettes are brought and a pull at the pipe may be had, for the outfits of nut oil lamp, pipes, matches and opium are placed about on match-covered cushions provided for the purpose. A balcony overlooking the street, and here amid the giant lanterns, the Chinese lilies and dwarf trees, one can stand and view the rows of houses upon which busy Chinamen are attending to the fish drying in the sun, or watering their sky gardens of chrysanthemums.

A glance at the street below sometimes discloses a pretty face looking through barred windows. Mystery! mystery! A Chinese orchestra sits on this balcony and the noise they make to the American ear is not exactly the kind to soothe tired nerves, but then the Chinese think our American music is still in its infancy, so we can shake hands on the subject and say fit for it.

Have you had novelty enough, or would you have a German meal, with covered steins of old brew and blue plates with frankfurter and sauerkraut? If you like such, just for a change, Germany is situated on Turk street, near Taylor. Then the Hungarians and Swiss have their rendezvous, but their cooking is so similar to the Italian and French that we will not stop, but hurry on to the Sunny South.

We have gone the rounds of the nations—we have had every thing but Irish stew and baked beans, Yorkshire pudding and rare roasts, but then almost any restaurant here can cater to the English and American palate—and somehow after all the feasting we unconsciously hum "There is no place like home," and search out a little American place and enjoy a quiet cup of tea, sans noise, sans wine, sans cigarettes, perfume and mix-up things—sans everything but plain and daintily served America.

HARRIET QIMBY.

CHINESE BANQUET TABLE.

ENTRANCE TO JAPANESE RESTAURANT.