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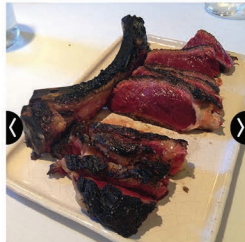
Chef Dream Trips: Spain

Before opening the New York outpost of their cult Boston tapas joint, *Toro*, celebrated chefs Ken Oringer and Jamie Bissonnette toured Barcelona and San Sebastián on a food-and-drink-filled recon mission. Here, they share personal highlights with F&W. [CLOSE](#)



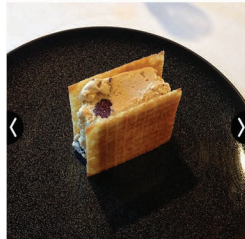
TRAVEL
Gooseneck Barnacles at Etxebarri

Ken: "Perebes weren't on the tasting menu that we ordered, but we had to get some. These were cooked so perfectly over grills—Etxebarri makes all its own charcoal from different woods and it has this crazy-chocolate way of grilling everything. The perebes here were different from any others I've ever had. Usually, they're pretty briny but these were just so fresh and almost sweet. We sometimes serve them in Boston as a special but knew they had to be on the menu in New York, so we spent a ton of time trying to source good ones."



TRAVEL
Steak at Etxebarri

Jamie: "Toward the end of the meal we were all wiped out, and they bring out this giant dinosaur steak. It was so good but I could only take a few bites so we made Ken eat pretty much the whole thing. It was so simple but had the perfect char and was cooked really rare. It was so good it inspired us to do one like it for the new restaurant, so we've gonna have a dry-aged bone-in strip a la plancha for two."



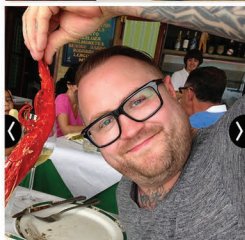
TRAVEL
Smoked Ice Cream Sandwich at Etxebarri

Ken: "They cook everything over grills at Etxebarri, it's amazing. I read about their smoked cod, which I added to the menu when we were there. But this smoked ice cream sandwich was the nothing else I've ever had. The smoke was really delicate and not overpowering, and in between that waffle cookie it was the best end to a lunch."



TRAVEL
Pig at La Cuchara de San Telmo; San Sebastián

Jamie: "One of my friends told me to go here and order anything on the menu with pig. We got the pig's head, feet, tail, then some foie gras thrown in there for good measure since our meal wasn't rich enough. The pig's feet were so sticky, gelatinous and insanely good. There was a layer of crispy, salty pig's skin over everything that we ended up fighting over at the end."



TRAVEL
Carabineros at Sebastián; San Sebastián

Jamie: "The seafood in San Sebastián is some of the best in the world. You could pretty much pick any restaurant by the water, order some fresh seafood and be guaranteed a good meal. We dropped in to this restaurant called Sebastián, right on the beach and ordered these carabineros (deep-sea crustaceans) and some kokotxas (hake chips). They were cooked so simply with some olive oil and lemon, that's it. They don't mess around. The best part was making the heads, the juice tasted like the ocean in the best way."



TRAVEL
Kokotxas at Sebastián

Ken: "Every time I come to San Sebastián this is one of the things I'm most excited to eat. It's so specific to this part of the world, and this was a crazy-good version of it. Kokotxas are hake chips delicately cooked in olive oil and the sauce was thickened to a perfect consistency. We dipped bread in the sauce at the end—I don't think one drop was left on the plate when we were done."



TRAVEL
Outside Etxebarri; Atxondo

Jamie: "This was our first meal in Spain and one of the places I was most excited about. We dropped off our luggage at the hotel in San Sebastián, jumped right back into the car and headed for Etxebarri. We got there a bit early so we got a bottle of Silex and took in the view."



TRAVEL
Mushrooms at Ganbarri; San Sebastián

Ken: "Ganbarri is at the top of my list for best tapas in San Sebastián, and they have the most beautiful mushrooms lining the counter."



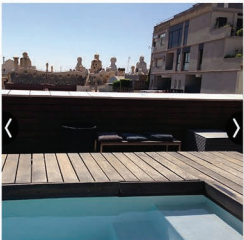
TRAVEL
Oysters at Ganbarri; San Sebastián

Ken: "We ordered them cooked a la plancha then topped with an egg yolk. So simple, but it doesn't get better than that. We're doing this same dish at the new restaurant, with the yolk on the spoon to break over the mushrooms."



TRAVEL
Pinxto at La Boqueria; Barcelona

Jamie: "You have to really want to eat at Pinxto to get a seat, it's wicked crowded and they go fast. But it's worth it. The trips had these sticky pieces of pig's feet that were a welcome surprise. Also, don't skip the stewed chickpeas. I have no idea what they do to get them so perfect, but you just don't get anything like that in the US."



TRAVEL
Omni Hotel Rooftop; Barcelona

Ken: "There were probably only a couple of hours on the whole trip when we weren't eating, and we spent them in Barcelona on the roof of the Omni Hotel. It overlooked one of the Gaudi buildings and is pretty much one of the nicest views in the city."



TRAVEL
Start of Dinner at Pakta; Barcelona

Ken: "I was psyched to check out Albert Adrià's new Peruvian tapas spot. We ordered some pisco sour and the first course was beautiful. One of the best bites was this sweet corn cream topped with cavari."



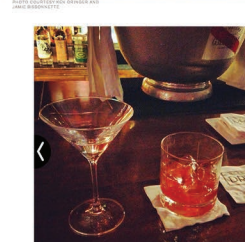
TRAVEL
Gooseberry Tempura at Pakta

Ken: "I loved the gooseberry tempura, so unique. They had that fresh pop and were a bit tart, and it came with a traditional tempura dipping sauce, which was actually unexpected. Also the way they were presented in ceramic on a bed of the house was really smart."



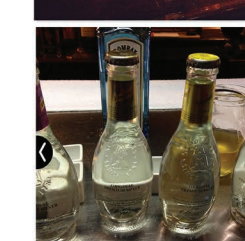
TRAVEL
Bottle of Silex at Etxebarri

Ken: "We carry Silex wine at Toro in Boston, but there's just something different about drinking it in Spain. Vintner Raúl Pérez makes a version that's aged under water, but they didn't have that one on the menu."



TRAVEL
Dry Martini Bar; Barcelona

Jamie: "Dry Martini makes some of the best drinks in Barcelona and it's where we would end up almost every night after dinner. These guys have been making martinis for years, it's a real art, and they have a count for how many they've served. I think it was well over a million when we were there. They also make a killer Negroni."



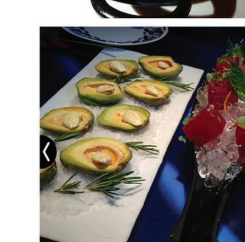
TRAVEL
Gin and Tonic; Barcelona

Ken: "The Spanish take their gin and tonics really seriously and the variety of tonic is amazing to see. You don't get that at bars here that often, but the crazy thing is it's so commonplace for them there. It really inspired us to do a gin and tonic menu at the new restaurant and we are going to be making our own tonic too."



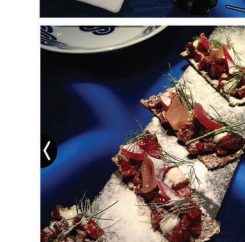
TRAVEL
Rice with Artichokes at Roca Moo at Omni Hotel; Barcelona

Ken: "Our hotel had the restaurant Roca Moo from the El Celler de Can Roca guys and we stayed in there for a quick crash one night on our way to dinner. They had some of the signature dishes from El Celler de Can Roca on the menu, so of course we had to order them as well as some other dishes. One of our favorites was this rice with artichokes served in a cast-iron pan. It was so rich and caramelized, crispy at the bottom."



TRAVEL
Almonds and Watermelon at Tickets; Barcelona

Ken: "We stopped by to see Albert Adrià in the kitchen at Tickets, and had an incredible dinner. It started with these young almonds that were presented like a sorbet. They were so sweet, so fresh. Then the watermelon salad with mint was really refreshing, especially since it was 85 degrees in the middle of summer in Barcelona."



TRAVEL
Nordic Toast at Tickets

Jamie: "This was one of my favorite dishes at Tickets. This veal tartare was dusted with a tart and tangy vinegar powder, and with the bright green dill, the richness of red color of the veal, it was so visually striking."



TRAVEL
Strawberries at Tickets

Ken: "I love how playful this dish was. I know they weren't frozen strawberries, but not sure quite what was in them! The menu read strawberries with three milks, but they just tasted like the brightest strawberries and cream."

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