

SUMMER 2018

DEPARTURES



Japanese Idyll

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Lisbon Eats

Perched on the edge of Europe, the Portuguese capital combines local and global flavours to create one of the world's most exciting culinary scenes.

By Ann Abel



Left: cod with chick peas and coriander at 100 Maneiras; above: the warehouse-chic surrounds at Cantina Peruana

THE PORTUGUESE JOKE that eating is their national sport. This is a culture that takes food seriously. It's not only acceptable to spend your lunch discussing what you'll have for dinner; it's expected. That longstanding appreciation of a good meal, combined with Lisbon's fizzy new energy as a reigning capital of cool, has led to a deluge of ambitious restaurants opening this year.

"Now is the time to promote Portuguese cuisine: we have great-quality products and very talented cooks who are fighting to show how Portugal influenced other cuisines, with things like tempura, for example," says Ana Músico, a former food journalist and cofounder, with Paulo Barata, of the annual *Sangue na Guelra* (blood and guts) gourmet festival. "Our gastronomic identity is



The heritage-imbued Santa Clara 1728 hotel

in our roots, being the groundwork for all cooks. In the past three years there's been a lot more emphasis on Portuguese ingredients. Chefs want to cook 'our things' and are researching and looking for unique, genuine products from small farmers. Portugal is a small country but it has a high integrity of produce, so why not take advantage of it?"

That doesn't mean the culinary scene is all bacalhau and caldo verde. Instead, chefs are out to show they can compete on the world stage. That's certainly the case with JN&QUOI (jnquoi.com) an ambitious multiconcept restaurant – including a formal dining room graced with a faux dinosaur skeleton, a lively bar, shops from Assouline and Ladurée, and a men's fashion store – that quickly became the talk of the town when it opened last summer on Avenida Liberdade. It's still humming along, thanks in part to a popular new Saturday-night DJ series, but now it's joined by the buzz for the new Prado (pradorestante.com), helmed by 26-year-old chef António Galapito, who once worked with Michelin-star chef Nuno Mendes in London.

Meanwhile, established chefs are expanding their empires at a rapid clip. José Avillez (of the two-star Belcanto) recently added the cabaret Boco (becocabaretgourmet.com) and



Henrique Sá Pessoa at his new Tapisco restaurant

a collaboration with South American hotshot Diego Muñoz, **Cantina Peruana** (cantinaperuana.pt), to his multiconcept Bairro do Avillez space. He's also the brains behind new casual **Cantina Zé Avillez** (cantinazeavillez.pt), where rustic local dishes are served in a warm, inviting dining space.

Henrique Sá Pessoa of Alma opened a casual Portuguese-Spanish spinoff, **Tapisco** (tapisco.pt), with the best vermouth list in the city. Kiko Martins of the beloved A Cevicheria added the clean-eating **O Watt** (+351 21 136 9504) in the electric-company building with the idea of serving food to provide energy, prepared with no sugar, butter, or frying. And all three are among the chefs to open outposts at the brand-new Gourmet Experience at **El Corté Inglés** (elcorteingles.pt), a cut far above the typical mall food court.



From top: the bright dining room at JN&QUOI; ceviche nikkei at Cantina Peruana



A warm, spacious bedroom at The Lumières



Looking out into the harbour from the Verride Santa Catarina

But it's not just the local stars. Foreign and homegrown upstarts are adding to the city's upscale ethnic restaurant scene, which had been lacking. The pan-Asian **Boa-Bao** ([fb boabao.pt](https://www.facebook.com/boabao.pt)) is modelled on a Vietnamese food market and takes its concept so thoroughly that the cocktail menu is designed like a passport. Recently imported from Berlin, **Chutnify** ([chutnify.com](https://www.chutnify.com)) offers a healthier take on South Indian street food, particularly dosas. The haute Asian tavern **Soão** ([facebook.com/soao.tabernaasiatica](https://www.facebook.com/soao.tabernaasiatica)) opened this spring after the Portuguese chef spent 15 years studying Japanese cuisine and he and the managers spent weeks eating their way through Bangkok, Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Macau.

Rounding out the major openings are **Pesca** ([restaurantepesca.pt](https://www.restaurantepesca.pt)), a

temple of super-fresh seafood from chef Diogo Noronha (a *Time Out* chef of the year in 2015); **Optimista** ([fb facebook.com/restauranteoptimista](https://www.facebook.com/restauranteoptimista)), which is designed like an art gallery and is known for its oxtail fritters and Japanese-accented, umami-rich Portuguese dishes; and **O Mariscador** ([fb facebook.com/omariscador](https://www.facebook.com/omariscador)), Rodrigo Castelo's bid to jump from the popular Taberna Ó Balcão in Santarém to the capital, and to compete with classic shellfish halls like Ramiro.

Finally, all eyes are on enfant terrible chef Ljubomir Stanisic and his project of moving his **100 Maneiras** ([fb 100maneiras.com](https://www.100maneiras.com)) into a new space that will help him win the overdue Michelin star his wide-ranging tasting menus deserve.

Hotel Highlights

Even Lisbon's new hostelries take their gastronomy seriously

The Lumières, at the edge of Principe Real and Chiado, is a love letter to Portugal, with everything inside made by Portuguese craftspeople and two restaurants from star chef Miguel Castro e Silva, Lumni and Mercado. [thelumières.com](https://www.thelumières.com)

Santa Clara 1728 is residential in feel, occupying an 18th-century building in the historic Santa Clara district that is also the proprietors' home. Guests staying in the six sophisticated suites gather at a long table for communal homemade breakfasts and lunches. [santaclara1728.com](https://www.santaclara1728.com)

Le Consulat in Chiado is something between a five-star hotel and serviced apartments. Its 12 suites are decorated with art from Lisbon's top galleries, and its Taberna Fina restaurant is André Magalhães' fine-dining counterpart to the popular Taberna Rua das Flores. [leconsulat.pt](https://www.leconsulat.pt)

Verride Santa Catarina occupies a renovated town house at the edge of Bairro Alto and Principe Real with 19 rooms and suites, stylish common areas, a top-floor terrace with 360-degree views of the city, and an ambitious contemporary-Portuguese gastro bar called Suba. [verridesc.pt](https://www.verridesc.pt)