

dinela

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## Swine of the Times



By Tara de Lis  
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It's a swine of the times — pork is everywhere these days. No menu is complete without some form of it, be it belly, Kurobuta chops, charcuterie, bacon, guanciale or lardons, the options are endless.

At **Animal**, it's more than popular, it's developed a cult following. Ironically located in the heart of the mostly kosher Fairfax District, pork is a part of many dishes on the daily-changing menu, most notably featured in the pan-seared pork belly with spicy kimchee and chili soy, and the now infamous dense bacon chocolate bar — yes, pork even for dessert. Co-owner Jon Shook explains, "People got infatuated with the way we use pork in a lot of different things. We change the menu daily, but the stuff that stays on are all of the pork products."

Belly is also a staple at **The Foundry on Melrose**, where Chef/Owner Eric Greenspan definitely plays favorites with his proteins. He jokes, "You have one lead sleg dog; all the rest are just cute little puppies." It's no surprise when you sample his open-face "Cuban Reuben," an outstanding study in contrasts, supple belly playing off of creamy Gruyère, Dijon mayo and tangy pickled red cabbage.

Asian fusion restaurants are getting in on the action, too. Hipster Korean joint **Shin** offers DIY-style, extra-thick sliced belly that you can grill at your table. Manhattan Beach's trendy new **Sashi: Sushi + Sake Lounge** Chef Makato pairs braised belly with Japanese congee, a completely unique approach to two traditional ingredients.

Silver Lake's boutique coffee house **Lamill** does an Asian-style BLT. It's consulting chef Michael Cimarusti's favorite thing on the menu. He named it after his daughter, Bella, and says,

“It has everything she loves — pork belly, arugula, tomatoes, even the juice the pork belly was braised in.”

Now that Angelenos have accepted belly, once considered too foreign and fatty, other restaurants are getting even more exotic. **Osteria Mozza** is known for pig’s trotters (feet), head cheese (taken from the jowls) and lardo (back fat from large hogs). Chef Matt Molina elaborates, “We sell a decent amount of it based on the reputation of Mario [Batali] in New York and people who’ve read [his cookbooks].”

Ben Ford takes it a step further at his **Ford’s Filling Station**, where whole pig dinners are available by advanced reservation. They range from 12 to 14 pounds, most of which is prepared confit-style, but also includes fried eyeballs, ribs and more, first broken down, then reassembled for presentation.

But pork doesn’t have to involve a whole meal, let alone a whole pig. Snacking on charcuterie is big, too. **Lou** wine bar took LA by storm with its brown sugar-glazed bacon “pig candy.” Newbie **Palate Food + Wine** serves a signature “porkfolio” plate with cuts such as prosciutto, soppressata and speck.

The lifting of restrictions on Spain’s famed jamon Iberico has created a demand for it at tapas bars like Joe Miller’s **Bar Pintxo** and the new **The Bazaar by José Andrés at The SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills**.

Bohemian bistro **Ivan Kane’s Café Wa s** is serving large boudin blanc sausage, the very clean-tasting, bloodless cousin of boudin noir. Chef Alex Reznik has this theory on the pork consumption: “People are trying to save a dollar, and pork is very inexpensive. It was a staple in the ‘30s and ‘40s, but then our parent’s generation overcooked pigs because they were afraid of trigonosis. It didn’t taste as good because it was always dry. Now, farmers are really taking great care of their pigs.”

For those who aren’t content just to have pork on the plate, **8oz Burger Bar** Manager, Ryan Wingo, has created a smoky bacon Bloody Mary, a winning mix of browned bacon-infused 42 Below vodka with all the usual fixings, plus a bacon garnish.

Animal, 435 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, 323.782.9225

The Foundry on Melrose, 7465 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, 323.651.0915

Shin, 1600 Wilcox Ave., Los Angeles, 323.464.4100

Sashi: Sushi + Sake Lounge, 451 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach, 310.545.0400

Lamill Coffee Boutique, 1638 Silver Lake Blvd., Los Angeles, 323.663.4441

Osteria Mozza, 6602 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, 323.297.0100

Ford’s Filling Station, 9531 Culver Blvd., Culver City, 310.202.1470

Lou, 724 N. Vine St., Los Angeles, 323.962.6369

Palate Food + Wine, 933 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale, 818.662.9463

Bar Pintxo, 109 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, 310.458.2012

The Bazaar by José Andrés at The SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills, 465 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, 310.246.5555

Ivan Kane's Café Wa s, 1521 Vine St., Hollywood, 323.466.5400  
8oz Burger Bar, 7661 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, 323.852.0008