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From market stall to must-visit restaurants: How Brindisa took over the UK's Spanish food scene

From a produce stand in Borough Market to restaurants throughout the capital, Brindisa celebrates more than three decades of serving up Spanish cuisine in London

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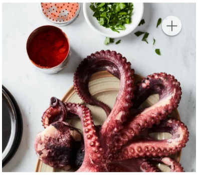
When Monika Linton established Brindisa in the 1980s, Spanish food was still little-known to the general public in the UK. The entrepreneur and food author was determined to bring the bright world of smoky paprika, melt-in-the-mouth jamón ibérico and flavourful sauces to London's palate, and that's exactly what she did.

TAP TO READ THE CARD



Driven by Linton's personal mission and fuelled by exceptional Spanish ingredients, Brindisa's growth was unstoppable. It quickly became a favourite of chefs seeking quality Spanish ingredients, and in 1998 opened one of the first retail shops in Borough Market – at the centre of one of the city's most exciting gastronomic hubs.

Today, the UK's love of Spanish food is due, at least in part, to Brindisa. The name comes from the word 'brindis', the moment guests raise and clink their glasses in a toast. This spirit of celebration is Brindisa's lifeblood today, flowing through its London delis and tapas bars like a fine Spanish wine.

Where to find Brindisa Kitchens restaurants in London

In 2004, the company went a step further on its endeavour to showcase authentic Spanish cuisine, entering the restaurant industry itself after decades of supplying great chefs. This evolved into five tapas bars (Soho, London Bridge, South Kensington, Battersea and Richmond), and Kitchen Bar in Borough Market. Each has the spirit of a local Spanish bar, with similarly authentic food. The dishes are practically identical to those found in Spain: diners can tuck into traditional delicacies such as Galician-style octopus, hand-carved acorn-fed jamón ibérico, huevos rotos and patatas bravas, all beautifully presented on stoneware bowls and wooden platters. Names are in Spanish, with English translation underneath. Many ingredients are artisan-made and meticulously sourced – if any bear a quality seal such as Protected Designation of Origin or Geographical Indication, it's indicated clearly. Knowing the Zamorano cheese was produced by Vicente Pastor or ham comes from Señorío de Montanera enhances the enjoyment of your meals, and also raises the profile of Spanish food suppliers on the British market

Bringing together all regional specialities

Variety is the spice of life, and part of what makes Spanish food so special is the diversity of its regional dishes. Despite some commonalities, each area of Spain boasts its own unique flavours and techniques. Brindisa honours this incredible variety with frequent dinners themed to the specific cuisine of each Spanish region. With paella masterclasses, Sherry Week tastings and popular celebrations such as Catalan calçotadas (traditional barbecues that include grilling giant spring onions), Brindisa proves its commitment to showing curious London diners Spain's exceptional gastronomic heritage.

Create a Spanish feast at home, Brindisa-style

Today, thousands of people a week visit Brindisa's Borough Market stall and Balham shop. It's impossible not to be seduced by these enlivening spaces with their hand-carved wafers of jamón ibérico, colourful tins of fish and incredible selection of cheeses. Brindisa also has an online store with excellent store-cupboard staples including sardines, bonito tuna in escabeche, jarred speciality pulses and beans, uniquely spiced brava and romescu sauces, organic rice, cheeses and olive-oil biscuits. One order, and you'll find yourself well on the way to recreating a traditional Spanish pantry at home.

With the festive season advancing, Brindisa is the ideal place to find gifts. Perhaps a paella kit (including traditional pan), a recipe book to recreate favourite Brindisa dishes at home, or a hamper overflowing with Spanish Christmas treats? And almost everyone appreciates a gift card to choose their own Spanish selection.

Brindisa's pioneering commitment to showcasing Spanish cuisine in London earned it a place on ICEX's Restaurants from Spain list. This certification guarantees the authenticity of Spanish products and recipes in other parts of the world, and firmly cements Brindisa's reputation as the home of Spanish food in London.

Discover the list of restaurants that bear the "Restaurants from Spain" label here

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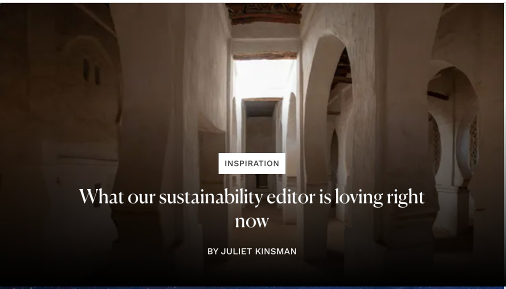
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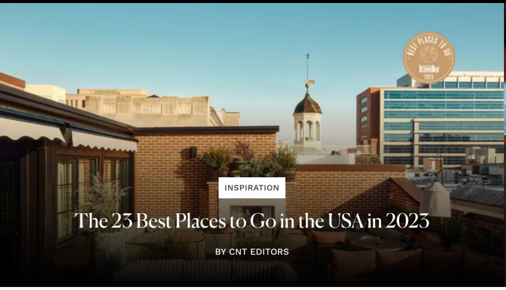
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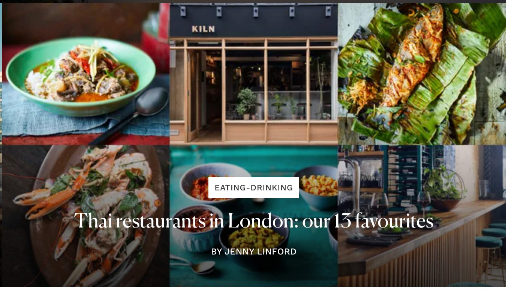
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