



Off the Menu: Staff Meals from America's Top Restaurants

Marissa Guggiana

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Marissa Guggiana spent months on the road, interviewing, travelling, photographing, and sharing staff (or family) meals at more than fifty of America's top sustainable restaurants from coast to coast.

For every lunch or dinner service, there is a staff meal. The best chefs in the best restaurants take their limitations—affordability, ingredients, and time—and create meals worthy of their compatriots. Ranging from small plates to multi course extravaganzas, the concept is simple: A well-fed staff is a happy one.

Guggiana looked for chefs that sourced locally, thoughtfully, with a big eco-picture in mind and a well-fed staff at their heart. The result is simply unprecedented: a no-holds-barred trip behind the kitchen door, introducing you to every chef, sous-chef, line cook, server, bus boy, bartender, hostess, sommelier, dishwasher, and manager—all of whom you will come to adore. *Off the Menu*, an homage to cooking with love and leftovers, makes accessibility a delight. Lush, colorful, homegrown, and delicious, it is packed with lessons, tips, substitutes, anecdotes, and American wine and beer suggestions.

At Vetri in Philadelphia, we get a family recipe from Chef Marc Vetri's father and at Anne Quatrano's Bacchanalia, we are whisked into the adjoining Star Provisions, described as a "culinary dream shop," for bahn mi sandwiches. We go from gumbo to hot dogs, chicken and biscuits to duck and lettuce wraps, Tuscan kale salad to Chile Verde. It's all here.

The icing on the cake is the chef's profile: Guggiana's own Escoffier Questionnaire, is a playful epicurean take on the Proust questionnaire. Who better to recommend the best coffee shop or the perfect restaurant for a splurge, than the top chefs in the country? Find out where Paul Liebrandt of Corton goes for an after-work meal and the go-to-guilty-pleasure treat of Chef Michael White of Marea. The restaurants included vary from vegetarian to rustic, old-world Italian cuisine, from Asian-fusion to contemporary Mexican, from Scandinavian to Oyster bar. These are the meals that make a staff a family and family part of the staff.

Inside *Off the Menu* you will find 100 recipes from more than 50 of the nation's top restaurants. Each entry includes profiles of the restaurants, Q&As with the chefs, behind-the-scenes trips to the kitchens, and dining out tips, restaurant tricks, and cooking techniques from the cream of the culinary crop. Pull back the curtain on the staff meal, and find new, exciting ways to feed your family from the best in the business.

- More than 50 Profiles of America's Top Restaurants.
- "Escoffier Questionnaires": Interviews with America's Best Chefs.
- Behind-the-scenes at America's best restaurants, featuring tips and tricks from the nation's best chefs.
- More than 150 delicious, affordable, family-style recipes refined for the home cook.
- More than 150 photos.

A selection of the Good Cook Book Club.



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