

AT THE Chef's TABLE

Spike Gjerde reveals what to eat and where in Baltimore

What's exciting about our city's food scene is that it feels very homegrown; we're so fortunate when it comes to local ingredients, especially fresh fish and shellfish from the Chesapeake Bay. Oysters are key to Baltimore's history, and there are plenty of oyster bars run by people who really care about the product and the experience. These places aren't hugely glitzy, but they all reflect the personalities of their owners and the different neighbourhoods.



SPIKE GJERDE is an award-winning chef. He manages eight locations across Baltimore, including Sandlot. sandlotbaltimore.com



THE INGREDIENTS

Chesapeake blue crab

With a rich, buttery taste, this local crab is found right on our doorstep and is perfect for broths and soups.

Keepwell Vinegar

These vinegars are produced by two of my pastry chefs, using local ingredients like grapes, apples, ginger, bitter lemon, strawberry and aronia berries.

Maryland tomatoes

Anyone visiting this part of the country should try these red beauties, which are at their rich, juicy best in summer and autumn.

INSIDER'S BALTIMORE

FOR THE BEST BIVALVES

I love the atmosphere at Thames Street Oyster House in Fell's Point, and the menu reflects some of the best fish and shellfish cooking anywhere. It's incredibly consistent, reliable and delicious. thamesstreetoysterhouse.com

FOR A TASTE OF ITALY

Two pizza spots I love are Paulie Gees, which has an emphasis on vegan options and a trophy-lined back bar room, and Verde, which is all about Neopolitan-style pizza and offers an expansive selection of classic toppings. Both places use traditional wood-fired ovens. pauliegee.com/hampden verdepizza.com

FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD DINING

My current top picks are Le Comptoir Du Vin, with its bistro dishes and natural wines, and Orto, which serves wonderful pasta. comptoirbaltimore.com ortobaltimore.com

Must try

Baltimore crab cakes are a food icon. The best are to be found at Faidley's Seafood in Lexington Market; eat them with coleslaw and a cold beer.