



Q: Seattle's a pretty casual city. How does that influence restaurants?

If you're into eating and drinking and touring and having a good, normal, casual time, [and] you're not looking for fancy chi-chi Las Vegas stuff, we're a great city for that. If you're looking for the Las Vegas stuff, you're not going to find that here.

It is part of what we do. Does it affect it? You always get affected by your surroundings. I believe that, strongly. Yeah, it does affect it, but not in a negative way. It is what it is and that's your surroundings. As soon as you're aware of that, that's what you do. You play with your surroundings. It's not an issue to me. I think there's room for every-one standard-wise. You can go from the most serve-yourself casual place all the way up to Canlis. We do have a spectrum that is there.

You need to have, obviously, shellfish and fish in Seattle, so oysters, salmon—you must have salmon if you come to Seattle, obviously wild salmon.

Q: Is Seattle a good place to be a chef?

I think it's the best place in the country because of, again, going back to the goods. When you look at the proximity that we have of all the product here, the availability that we have, it's so incredible. I want to be a chef here, for sure.

Q: Sum up the Seattle food scene for me.

Real, seasonal, local.

We're definitely one of the best cities to cook in. I'm pretty sure some other cities would say that, too, but we have the goods to back it up. And that's what makes it so great. It's a fun city to cook in. It's really, really, really fun. Its not boring, that's for sure.

» For Thierry's full interview, go to wheretraveler.com

THE RISE OF THE LOCAVORE: Farm-to-Table Restaurants Take Off in Seattle

BY MEGAN HILL



Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market opened in 1907 with the tagline "Meet the Producer," aiming to connect farmers and fishers directly with consumers. This was a new model for shoppers, who previously bought produce from a wholesaler who charged higher prices and kept farmers at a distance. The market exploded with popularity, and it is now one of Seattle's most visited tourist attractions.

But the market isn't just there for show. Pike Place—like Seattle's other, smaller neighborhood farmers markets—still allows shoppers to shake hands with the people who have grown the broccoli or caught the salmon they're buying.

Restaurant patrons, too, are increasingly eager to tap into the bounty that surrounds Seattle. They're finding there's value in triplicate when it comes to being a locavore: They support the local economy, encourage sustainable practices and tap into extraordinarily fresh and flavorful products. As Seattle diners clamor for locally sourced menus, chefs are responding in kind, developing creative menus that rotate with the seasons.

A fixture of the farm-to-table scene is Seattle chef Tamara Murphy, whose Terra Plata restaurant (terra-plata.com, 1501 Melrose Ave., 206.325.1501) embraces seasonality and local sourcing to such a degree that she tweaks her menu on a daily basis. Murphy has sourced from local farms since the early '90s, developing deep connections with local purveyors. She estimates about 80 percent of her menu is sourced from local farms during peak season. All of her seafood and other meat comes from the Pacific Northwest, as close to home as possible.

Terra Plata's airy, rustic space is topped with a rooftop deck and robust garden, which for much of the year bursts with herbs, vegetables and a few experimental plants like quinoa. "I think we have the best garden in town, for sure," Murphy said. "We use it all, but we can't use it exclusively. It supplements what we source from local farms," Murphy said.



Porkchop & Co.



Hajime Sato of Mashiko

Newcomer Paul Osher opened Porkchop & Co. (eatporkchop.com, 5451 Leary Ave. NW, 206.257.5761) after relocating from Los Angeles, where he said the robust farmers market scene helped him learn to cook with a wider variety of ingredients than what he could find at the supermarket. For Osher, sourcing from local farms is a logical part of running a great restaurant. "First, the quality of the produce makes it a self-evident value. The food just tastes better. On the one hand, that makes our job easier. On the other, beautiful produce makes us work harder to do it justice in the kitchen," he said. "It's also important for me to source things from people and not nameless companies. Building those relationships adds depth and meaning to our work, and I think they make for a more sustainable business."

That model drives the dishes at Mashiko (sushiwhore.com, 4725 California Ave. SW, 206.935.4339), a West Seattle sushi restaurant focused on sustainability. Chef Hajime Sato changes the menu frequently to reflect what's in season and available as close to his dining room as possible.

"Sushi isn't usually associated with local food, which is really sad," said Sato. He forgoes the use of fish that must be flown in from halfway around the world and refuses to tap into declining fish populations. Sato wants his diners to experience the bounty of local waters, tasting what's unique to the Pacific Northwest. "These days, in the sushi world, you can go to New York or L.A. or Hawaii, and they basically serve exactly the same thing. It's so boring because it's basically the same fish," he said.

Sato sources his fish from an array of local purveyors who know what's fresh now. It's more work for Sato, but the flavorful final product is worth his while—and the diners'.