

Bon Apptit presents chef-led tours in culinary travel offering

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From the Piedmont region of Italy to the Champagne vineyards of France, upcoming tours offer a chance for travelers to take a deeper look at some of the richest food traditions in the world. Image courtesy of Bon Apptit

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Cond Nast-owned *Bon Apptit* is taking an immersive approach to travel and cuisine with the announcement of an exciting joint global venture for a series of Culinary Getaway trips, *Luxury Daily* exclusively presents the launch of the brand's latest travel offering.

This November, fans of the food publication will have the opportunity to partake in a series of chef-led excursions to hot spots across Europe, in a move that marks a first-time partnership between the American food publication and educational travel and study abroad leader Academic Travel Abroad, Inc. *Bon Apptit* exclusively shares the tour's first two stops.

"It's a next-level experience to taste food that was prepared in the same area in which it was grown, prepared by chefs who are innovating but also taking advantage of modern influences," said Dawn Davis, editor-in-chief of *Bon Apptit*, New York.

"And to explore an area with a trip leader who works or has worked in that area, as both [France's Victoria] James and [Italy's Stefano] Secchi have, is to have access to people and experiences that aren't broadly available."

Locavore traditions

France's Champagne region and Piedmont, Italy, two regions whose tours center on intentional approaches to food and wine, comprise the two travel options available by way of new programming from *Bon Apptit*.

With world-renowned chefs leading the way, travelers will get an especially well-rounded look at the perfected art of local eating, from the perspective of culinary connoisseurs themselves.

bon appétit

CULINARY GETAWAYS

The tours connect travelers to local food artists, growers and experts. Image courtesy of Bon Apptit

Taking place from Nov. 4-11, 2023, *Bon Apptit* and ATA's Piedmont trip will be guided by Stefano Secchi, chef and partner at the prestigious Michelin-starred Italian restaurant Rezdra in New York City. The premier voyage provides a firsthand look at the Slow Food movement, as the northwestern Italian area is widely considered to be its birthplace.

Against a background of ancient castles that dot the foothills of the Alps, Mr. Secchi will bring to light these jewels that the Italian region has to offer via his carefully curated itinerary.

From wandering through vineyards that are deemed UNESCO World Heritage Sites, to foraging for Alba's white truffles, to tasting luscious Alpine cheeses, the localized Slow Food traditions will be at the center of the tour.

"Travel to Italy is universally appealing, but there are some regions that, when it comes to food and wine, are extremely rich and relatively under-explored," *Bon Apptit's* Ms. Davis said.

"After working with Stefano Secchi on 'The Best Places to Eat in Italy's Piedmont Region' and tasting his food at Rezdra, I thought Piedmont would attract the food curious looking for something beyond Rome and Florence," she said. "Whether it's the world-renowned wines, the flavor of the hazelnuts, which is unique to this region, the pastas or the white truffles, there are multiple ways to be pulled into this beautiful area of Italy."

Mr. Secchi has trained under some of the best chefs in the world, including Massimo Bottura at the famous Osteria Francescana restaurant in Modena, Italy. He has also worked amid the nation's Piedmont region, cooking alongside Michelin-starred chef Davide Palluda at All'Enoteca.

The next arm of *Bon Apptit's* project, Champagne, France is also on the table, set for Nov. 5-11, 2023.

The winner of the Michelin Sommelier of the Year Award in 2022, specialist Victoria James is leading the trip, bringing in her expertise as a renowned figure in the world of wine.

The "*Forbes* 30 Under 30" star serves as the director of beverage and a partner at Gracious Hospitality Management, the restaurant group behind Michelin-starred Cote Korean Steakhouse in New York City and Miami, as well as the adjacent cocktail bar Undercote and the Cote Wine Club.



Ms. James is also co-founder of Wine Empowered a nonprofit bringing free wine education to women and BIPOC communities. Image courtesy of Bon Apptit

East of Paris, those on the French trip will explore the limestone-blanketed hills that continue to grow distinctive grapes, infusing

wine with regional notes.

The fermented version of wine, Champagne, is a practice in interconnection, as the land and humans unite to bring it forth. Ms. James’ itinerary is grounded in that fact, bringing travelers into intentional visits to vintners across the region.

“For our trip to France, we worked with one of the best sommeliers in the business, Victoria James from Gracious Hospitality,” Ms. Davis said.

“Her knowledge of growers and terroir, of wines throughout France and beyond, immediately piqued my interest,” she said. “We let her guide us in terms of picking a special destination where she had inside access.

“The idea of touring Champagne and drinking the wines of that region -- both sparkling and non-sparkling -- and then drinking wine like a sommelier in Paris’s Left Bank proved irresistible.”

Destination food

Bon Apptit’s food-focused programs arrive at a time of great desire for culturally-appreciative travel.

Those in the industry are starting to amp up culinary destination offerings, as people opt for more mindful vacations. For example, hotel brand Six Senses is debuting a gastronomical week in celebration of Vietnamese food, responding to the increasing demand for a food focus in travel ([see story](#)).



Bon Apptit is showcasing the possibilities of localized food-focused travel on an international scale. Image courtesy of Bon Apptit

Travelers are becoming more mindful, wanting experiences that are socially and environmentally responsible. Recently it was reported that the majority of tourists are actually prioritizing sustainability, fitting aspects such as food justice and the platforming of local voices into their travel plans ([see story](#)).

The *Bon Apptit* tours are set to incorporate this awareness, as demonstrated by the centering of the region’s stories and age-old practices. Rare experiences like these are what give travel the ability to fully immerse people in new places.

“We believe in the power of travel to deepen appreciation of cultures, foster empathy, and fuel curiosity,” said Chase Poffenberger, executive vice president of [Academic Travel Abroad](#) (ATA), Annapolis.

“We’re delighted to be working with *Bon Apptit* to curate compelling culinary itineraries for readers.”