

GQ Eats: Alan Richman's Five Best Desserts of the Year

After thousands of miles and countless calories, our tireless correspondent names the tastiest this land has to offer

BY ALAN RICHMAN |

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1. Paris-Brest

Balsan, Chicago

Perhaps the tastiest of all great French pastries, created a hundred years ago to honor a bicycle race. Assembled to order, which I've never seen done in a French patisserie. Wheel-shaped choux pastry stuffed with hazelnut mousse and hazelnut nougatine, topped with powdered sugar and toasted hazelnuts. Will have your wheels spinning.

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2. Panna Cotta with Wild Huckleberries

The Walrus and the Carpenter, Seattle

Light, smooth, silken, and barely able to hold its shape. Topped with berries—maybe Washington's greatest culinary asset—poached in white wine. Hard to believe good old panna cotta can be this transcendent.

3. Honeyed Pumpkin Pie

Four & Twenty Blackbirds, Brooklyn

Held my own personal pie-eating contest at this small, celebrated café. Sampled five slices. The winner had the lightest pumpkin filling ever, barely graced with honey. To be fair, the salted-caramel apple pie was almost as profound. Time you knew: Pie is the new cupcake.

4. Salted Butterscotch Pot de Crème

Gjelina, Venice, CA

Comes out warm, with thickened cream quivering on top. What could be more irresistible than salt, butterscotch, and cream, not long from the oven?

5. Sticky Toffee Pudding (*pictured*)

Branch Water Tavern, Houston

Everyone is doing it. Nobody is doing it as well. A miniature Bundt cake enhanced (as usual) with chopped dates, in a sauce tasting of butter rum and caramel, served with housemade pistachio ice cream and a small slab of pistachio brittle. It's not this great in Great Britain.

TAGS

Food + Travel, Alan Richman