

# CAN'T MISS DISHES

A look at 20 of P-Town's preeminent entrees

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If there's one thing we can hang our aprons on here in Portland, it's our thriving restaurant scene. From tried-and-true culinary hot spots like Higgins to up-and-coming new kids like Lauro Kitchen, there's no end of options for our city's food aficionados. But with so many possibilities, where do you start? Well, here at *PDX Magazine*, we've been noshing our way through the local food scene for a while now, and along the way we've come across some must-have meals that you simply must try. So strap on your bib, slip into your most comfortable pair of elastic waistband pants and get ready for a guided tour through 20 of Portland's most excellent entrées, both over and under \$20.



**Tabla Ravioli (\$14)**

*Tabla (200 NE 28th Ave, 238-3777, [tmbistro.com](http://tmbistro.com))*

Tabla co-owner Adam Berger learned a lot about Mediterranean cuisine while living and cooking in Italy. When he opened Tabla in 2003, he introduced a recipe he'd first experienced while living with an Italian family in Tuscany. The restaurant's namesake dish, Tabla Ravioli, soon became a favorite. It's easy to see why. The dish is simple, unique and splendid.

A ricotta and chopped chard filling is spread on top of Tabla's homemade pasta to create a nest for the egg yolk that is placed in the center. The top layer of pasta is added, and then the entire ravioli is carefully poached. The poppy seed butter and shaved cheese, which are added after it's poached, enhance the flavor and texture of the dish.

Pay close attention while you're eating the ravioli so you don't miss the egg yolk's slow creep from the center—there's no doubt that next bite is going to be a good one. Though with Tabla's homemade pasta holding it all together, even the bites without the filling are pure pleasures. It's dinner theater for only \$14. For another \$10, you can get Tabla's famous three-course dinner, which can include the ravioli. With a deal like that, dinner at Tabla might just get you through the winter with a smile on your face.

**Muu Paa Kham Waan (\$12)**

*Pok Pok (3226 SE Division St, 232-1387, [pokpokpdx.com](http://pokpokpdx.com))*

Pok Pok has evolved from a take-out shack into a take-out shack meets gourmet Thai restaurant meets whiskey lounge. So it makes sense that their must-have dish is considered a Thai drinking food. The main ingredient in Muu Paa Kham Waan is charcoal-grilled boar collar meat. The meat is rubbed with garlic, coriander root and black pepper then glazed with soy and sugar. The final touches are chilled mustard greens and spicy chili-lime-garlic sauce. This \$12 treat is only available for dinner, so get there early or be prepared to have a whiskey while you wait.

**Smoked Duck, Tasso and Gulf Shrimp Jambalaya (\$18.50)**

*Acadia (1303 NE Fremont St, 249-5001, [creolapdx.com](http://creolapdx.com))*

The word on the street is that Acadia serves the most authentic New Orleans cuisine on the West Coast. You can find out for yourself for less than \$20. Their creolized take on jambalaya—which contains smoked duck, Tasso ham and gulf shrimp with andouille sausage, peppers and duck essence served on fettuccine—costs just \$18.50. Acadia also serves traditional Cajun jambalaya, made with rice, every Monday night. For both versions of jambalaya, the andouille sausage is shipped in twice a week from Comeaux's in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. It doesn't get any more authentic than that.

**Moussaka of Grilled Eggplant (\$16)**

*Lauro Kitchen (3377 SE Division St, 239-7000, [laurokitchen.com](http://laurokitchen.com))*

Lauro Kitchen is your friendly neighborhood bistro with great

food and great prices, and their vegetarian moussaka is no exception. Created by Chef de Cuisine Jennifer Buehler, the first layer of this dish is grilled eggplant, which imparts a great smoky flavor. The next layer, instead of the traditional lamb, is spiced lentils, followed by another layer of both eggplant and lentils. Finally, it's topped with bechamel sauce, baked until golden brown and sprinkled with feta. And don't worry if you can't eat it all—moussaka only gets better after a night in the fridge.

**Pollo al Prosciutto (\$17.50)**

*Fratelli (1230 NW Hoyt St, 241-8800, [fratellucucina.com](http://fratellucucina.com))*

When it comes to the local restaurant scene, 6-foot-8 chef Paul Klitsie is undeniably big man on campus. For the past decade, Klitsie has made Fratelli one of the best Italian joints in town thanks to his use of fresh, local ingredients and his passion for simple and delicious dishes that stay true to the roots of Italian food. One of the mainstays on his menu—the Pollo al Prosciutto—consists of seared Draper Farms chicken wrapped in prosciutto and served with parmesan polenta and mushroom jus. It's a perfect example of the masterful dishes that have made Fratelli so popular over the years. —SE [PDX](http://PDXmagazine.com)



Tabla