

Adventures in the Culinary World

To eat, one must have a place to eat. This apparently obvious truism is discovered anew by each Caltech frosh, wrenched suddenly away from the free room and board system ("home"). Where does he go? With three years of intensive culinary research under my belt, I can hopefully attempt to answer this question.

The Student Houses

Specializing in Oriental cuisine, this delightful villa often lives up to its proud motto: "Virus Fortudinus Ealmay Mortuay Unchmay." ("The Hearty Man Ate a Condemned Meal.") Spanish decor and unique waiting service have combined to attract a steady and devoted clientele. Nine months out of the twelve, three meals a day, the Houses are filled to capacity with happy starch-consumers.

Actually, despite much grumbling, the food is generally palatable and sometimes even mildly delicious. Breakfasts are simple but bountiful: eggs, orange juice, now and then a rasher of bacon. Lunch revolves around the "extended meat" dish — chopped beef on noodles, chopped turkey on noodles, chopped noodles on noodles (Friday).

Meat and potatoes comprise the time-honored evening formula. The meat varies from very good (steaks, a la infrequent), to fair (chicken, roasted in original feathers), to poor (Sunday lamb). The potato, food of a thousand guises, provides the real variety. Mashed, fried, sweet, baked, chopped, flung, heaped — the potato-smith's cunning knows no bounds.

An integral part of each Student House meal is the announcement period. Dinner without announcements can be as unsatisfying as dinner without dessert. They may be very serious and momentous — "I'm proud to introduce to the House Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, visiting us as part of the Leaders of America program." More often, though, they tend to be mildly facetious — "We, the men of blank blank alley now challenge the uncouth denizens of such and such alley to battle in these manly sports of yore: Hitchhiking for distance, and broomstick throwing for number of Atheneum members. An Atheneum member shall be defined as . . ."

Though the members of the Houses pay in advance for 21 meals a week, very few are sedentary enough to consume that number. Rather, the Houses serve as a jumping off place for further adventures in the culinary world. On certain unforgettable days this jumping-off may reach lemming proportions.

Sunny Italy

Nestled down on picturesque Rosemead Boulevard, Sunny Italy does one thing extremely well: pizza. It's a strange but true fact that pizza was actually invented by the Italians. But, of course, this makes scant difference in this great land of ours. Irishman, Oriental, and Republican alike can be found here, revelling in the hundreds of pizza varieties. Starting with plain cheese pizza, one can work his way up to the apex — super combination pizza. Laden with anchovies, pepperoni, hamburger, mushrooms, it is served still steaming from the oven's heat. It burns the fingers (the only correct way to eat pizza, of course) but gladdens the palate.

Warning: Sunny Italy is not recommended for Saturday night stags. At this time the place fills with young couples from the surrounding high schools. Sour grape juice tends to spoil the delicate pizza flavor.

Chef's Cafe

Here is a definite case of split personality. By day Chef's is just one more innocuous short-order shop. Cleaner than most, it offers good basic food and prayers on the back of its menu. The "Daily Double" provides satisfying fare for under one dollar, a rare phenomenon nowadays.

Nighttime is a different story. Open *all night* (you may have to wait in line at 3 a.m.) it is heavily frequented by traveling salesmen and the Pasadena Playhouse crowd. Someone has estimated that the average hair length of its male clientele runs to something over 2½ inches.

The women here are often quite pretty, made up heavily or not at all, and sometimes openly affection-

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ate to their escorts. For twenty-five cents (the price of a vanilla pudding) you just can't beat the floor show.

Dino's

Another Italian restaurant, but completely different from Sunny Italy. Orders here run more to spaghetti, lasagna, ravioli, and other Mediterranean unpronounceables. The food is authentic (according to local gourmets) and, even more important, delicious. Specialty of the house is minestrone soup, thick enough to eat with a fork.

Dino's is perhaps the perfect place for a small mid-week date. Greeted at the door by the friendly head-waiter (who makes it a point to remember names) you are led to a high-backed green booth, softly lighted and quite comfortable. No one rushes the meal, and the place is virtually empty after midnight. A perfect setting for the old heart-to-heart talk. Ah, a glass of wine, a breadstick, and thou.

Bob's

A recent crisis has occurred in the average Techman's life: Big Boy hamburgers now cost 50c, a full nickel more than the old reliable price. If this had happened my freshman year, I'd be about \$5 poorer now.

There are actually two Bob's in Pasadena, near Bob's and far Bob's. But only the insensitive patronize far Bob's, and I'll not mention it again.

Among other attractions, Bob's publishes its own free comic book, readily available as you enter. In past months there's been quite a competition over solving the Big Boy crossword puzzle. Record time is now under 20 seconds. Lately the trend has shifted toward trying to break the Big Boy code. This is now nearly accomplished (a triumph for American science), and there have even been (unverified) rumors of dirty words concealed in the dialogue.

No one has ever successfully analyzed the contents of a Big Boy hamburger. However, I do feel it is my duty to quench a nasty rumor. There *is* meat in them, or at least something that gives the fleeting illusion of meat.

No discussion of Bob's would be complete without mention of the waitresses. Almost immaculate in their black and white uniforms, they tend to be young, sometimes pretty, and surprisingly cheerful considering the work they do. My thanks to them for many an enjoyable 50c meal.

Near Bob's has recently undergone interior redecoration, the predominant color now being pink instead of green. This is really too bad. The green interior had a certain coziness not usually found in the mass-production hamburger trade. But then I suppose

there's something about pink that makes people eat like mad.

Le Bayou

A refuge for those too proud for Bob's. Actually, at the drop of 75c they will serve up the biggest, most succulent hamburger in Pasadena. They also offer steaks, Spanish food, ribs, etc., but no Techman in recorded history has been rash enough to sample these exotically priced items. This may explain the rather unenthusiastic reception given large groups of students arriving during rush hour (7 p.m.).

For those who have reached majority, Le Bayou also offers stimulating liquid refreshment. Smugness reaches its all-time high on the face of legal-voter Techman nursing a beer with his hamburger, while his junior companions have to content themselves with milk.

Raarup's

The Ford family of the hamburger trade, Mr. Raarup, Mrs. Raarup, son Pete Raarup, and Mrs. Raarup-the-younger dish out Californiaburgers for only 40c each (highest meat-to-money ratio in the neighborhood).

Open only during the daylight hours, Raarup's often does yeoman work providing respite from a disastrous Student House lunch. As the carloads of queasy students begin to arrive, Mrs. Raarup will announce in her cheerful Texas twang, "Must be another tuna-in-gelatin day at Caltech."

The Caltech Coffee Shop

Our own beloved Greasy. (Mrs. Lyall says she doesn't mind "Greasy," but "Greezy" is definitely faux pas.) This is perhaps the only institution on campus known equally well to the faculty members, students, and hired personnel. As you wander among the tables carrying your 90c lunch (generally excellent), intriguing bits of conversation float by:

"... and of course, as soon as I thought of calculating the neutrino cross section ..."

"... convergent! How can anyone in his right mind assume convergence on a ..."

"... yeah, that's the one, the secretary in the black whatchamacallit. What a ..."

Perhaps you're not interested in a complete meal. Eighteen cents still buys a good piece of pie and a half hour off from lab. You dine in the company of such celebrities as Dr. Feynman, Dean Strong, and Officer Newton, to mention only a few. Pie, science, and secretaries — an unbeatable combination.

— Brad Efron '60