

Our restaurant critic dreams up a day of great meals

# The Boston Globe Magazine

JANUARY 12, 1997

## Dream cuisine

*Globe* restaurant critic  
Alison Arnett plots a day's  
worth of favorite meals

"What I wouldn't give to have your job" is a comment I hear often. Well, yes, eating for a living has its high points, along with a few helpings of drudgery. That comment, though, triggers a reverie of a day spent eating as whim and appetite dictate. It's a restaurant critic's fantasy: a marathon of meals, drawn from Boston's wealth of both new and traditional cuisine.

Planning an eating campaign is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle, so although the list of Boston-area chefs and places I like is long, this day has self-imposed limits. The itinerary must be walkable, the better to work up an appetite, and the pieces must fit together. I dream of a hightoned tour, with an emphasis on refined cuisine and lovely surroundings; I'll save the down-home food for another day. And each restaurant must tell me something about the life of the city.

So after an early-morning trot and a chat with Bernard the bagel man down the street, who treats the family terrier to a biscuit, I'm off.

### 9 a.m. *Breakfast at a window-side table in the Ritz Cafe*

15 ARLINGTON STREET

Sunlight streams in, glancing off heavy silken curtains. At this hour, pours freshly squeezed orange juice. The selections - this is fantasy eating, after all - have a funny name for a concoction so rich that it's almost too smoothness punctuated by the salty smoky notes of something akin to Wonder bread. But it's

### 12:30 p.m. *Lunch at Cafe Louie*

234 BERKELEY STREET

The days of lunching ladies may have gone away the midday hour at this exquisite, almost wretched excess. Chef Michael Schlow's culinary scene, creates a miniature tower of tomato water. A jaunty potato gratin, studded with chanterelles, is plain and elegant.

### 4 p.m. *Tea in the Bristol Lounge*

*Four Seasons Hotel*

200 BOYLSTON STREET

A brisk walk through the wintry Public Garden leads to a pick-me-up. Even on a weekday, the room is filled with a teatime crowd, and we nibble crustless smoked-salmon crackers between our fingers; a miniature, are going down in the corner, waiting to watch the evening fall with the last

### 10:00 p.m.

*Dessert at the bar at Pignoli*

79 PARK PLAZA

Dropping into Pignoli late at night, I find a small, intimate space. All shades of green, with splashes of red, make for a prandial treat. Killian Weigand, the chef, serves an Italian pudding to die for. Made from its semolina base, making it the perfect restaurant. Currants spiked with ginger disappear in minutes.

### 11:45 p.m.

*Midnight snack at East Ocean City, Chinatown*

27 BEACH STREET

Admittedly, there's no reason I need another bite today, and tomorrow's meals will be nothing but consomme. But at the back of my mind hovers the vision of shrimp sashimi, just six little crustaceans plucked live from East Ocean City's saltwater tank. Even at this late hour, this big, brightly lit restaurant is busy with a young, club hopping crowd, ending - or perhaps beginning - their night out...



### 7:30 p.m.

*Dinner at Lala Rokh*

97 MT. VERNON STREET

Food can be a window into another culture. **Lala Rokh**, where Azita Bina-Seibel and her family lovingly create their native Persian dishes, happily enriches one of the city's oldest neighborhoods with a new diversity of flavors. The cuisine here is delicate: a gentle mound of smoky eggplant, roasted with garlic and tomato; irresistible cloves of garlic, aged a year in the sun until they are as sweet as candy; a succulent duck *fesenjan*, or stew, sprinkled with tangy pomegranate seeds and rich with nuts; an outstanding grilled Cornish hen in a lemon-and-onion marinade. On the way out, we view the Persian art and artifacts, feeling we've taken a journey without leaving town.