

# Chic Eats

By Stephanie Levin-Gervasi

*American Way - Sojourns*

People literally go out of their way to enjoy alfresco dining in San Francisco. Inventive restaurateurs have turned nondescript alleys between the city's financial towers and Chinatown into havens for chic eateries with outdoor seating. Savory scents tempt unsuspecting pedestrians to detour down the back streets, where they're surprised with tasty international fare.

A case in point: At Cafe Claude [7 Claude Lane; 415-392-3515], nicoise salad, croque-monsieur, and homemade pate rank among the lunch favorites. Besides its French food, this bustling establishment also uses live jazz to attract diners on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

For Irish lore, head to The Irish Bank Bar & Restaurant [10 Mark Lane; 415-788-7152], a quiet place with a handful of small iron tables outside. Many patrons order the shepherd's pie, which comes laden with mashed potatoes.

Just down the block, Belden Place [right] offers dining choices galore. At Cafe 52 [52 Belden Place; 415-433-5200], try the Mediterranean Mezza Platter, a filling meal that combines the best that region has to offer (baba ghanouj, hummus, pita bread, rolled grape leaves, and a Greek salad). Vic's Place [44 Belden Place; 415-981-5222] features burgers and fat French fries. Plouf [40 Belden Place; 415-986-6491] specializes in mussels steamed seven ways. Cafe Tiramisu [28 Belden Place; 415-421-7044] serves perfectly sculpted Italian extravaganzas with panache. Sam's Grill & Seafood Restaurant [corner of Bush Street and Belden Place; 415-421-0594] is one of the city's culinary institutions.

*Bon appetit!*