



# Subject: Chasing Bruce Springsteen and Chinese Dumplings — Part One

BY JUDI GALLAGHER

Admittedly a Bruce Springsteen junkie, the opportunity to follow him from San Francisco to LA, California laid out the perfect road trip based on venue locations and great food.

Our Mission, to explore new eating spots while spending a good part of the week rocking out. Simple pleasures we know during. Efforts two days of our self-proclaimed California dreaming tour. After all, I have seen Springsteen over 40 times already and like a crispy Peking duck or the perfect pan fried dumplings, the food is as important as the concert itself. I live to rock I rock to eat and San Francisco and the E Street band always deliver.

San Francisco is a food Mecca and once again this visit delivered exceptional Chinese food, (my personal favorite), buttery biscuits and scones, and of course those sour dough loaves as infamous as their bridges and Cable cars.



Crystal Jade main dining room

A huge fan of Mission Chinese and Yank Sing. Our eating trail led us to new discoveries. Staying in Union Square offers an array of nice hotels and loads of good shopping and easily accessible restaurants. First off a late lunch at XO, a highly recommended little Asian inspired restaurant with a popular happy hour and small but incredibly creative menu.

The Shiitake dumplings in oxtail broth could be the area's best.

Rich with the flavors of the tender mushrooms and beefy broth, hint of spice complimented by slivers of minced scallions. Having read about their corn fritters, we also opted for the thick grass-fed hamburger tops with corn fritters serving as bun, more like a corn toast. Messy, spicy and filled with texture, beware this is best to be shared if you have dinner reservations within the next four hours.

Yes, less than four hours later we found ourselves in an Uber headed to Fang, the award winning Chinese restaurant serving northern style steamed pork dumplings in sesame sauce, a signature of Fang, Peking buns, soft and fluffy a taco stuffed with pork and ginger black vinegar sauce, honey apple prawns coated in sweet mayo and paired with five spiced crisped apples creatively prepare by Chef Kathy Fang.



Chef Kathy Fang from Fang Restaurant in San Francisco

## GREAT TASTES OF THE SUNCOAST

Do not let the torn vinyl banquetts fool you, Fang is one of the best in the City by the Bay known for their balance of authentic Chinese and special sauces. They certainly delivered!

Make reservations several weeks in advance. The restaurant is almost always packed and sometimes bought out for private parties.

The next morning we set our sights on the waterfront, especially the Ferry Building. Go towards breakfast time and do go hungry, as this indoor part farmer's market part indoor food stall haven gets quite crowded and you want to optimize your grazing experience. Start at biscuit Bender for The array of homemade buttery gems range from cheddar and chive to Mexican hot chocolate with sea salt. The biscuits are filling so have two halves and save the rest for a midnight snack.

Next up, my favorite cheese stop, Cowgirl Creamery which recently added a side kick grilled cheese bar. We decide on buying a crusty loaf of sour dough bread from Acme to go with Mai tam cheese for a pre-concert nosh and split a four cheese grille sandwich. Make sure you look for the very local San Francisco cheeses that this little spot is known for. Small boutique batches of the creamiest best made cheeses.

We rocked in Oakland that night, returning to San Francisco to a room full of half eaten biscuits, leftover Peking Duck and salami and cheese.

Next to cowgirl creamery you will find The Salume stall, Boulette's Larder, another stop for charcuterri offerings and peppered cured meats. Add a small piece for your picnic portfolio and move on to either the mini slanted door eatery or the giant steamed dumplings sold from giant bamboo steamers from Imperial Tea Court.

Sure we were heading to an elegant dim sum across the street at Crystal Jade, so we showed restraint and tasted only one pork belly dumpling each. Think of it as a band warming up before the big concert. Time for the big show, Peking Duck and dim sum at Crystal Jade Jiang Nan in the Embargo Center.

While this beautiful restaurant had their bumps the first year they opened, I am glad we added them on the list. The space is large and quite beautiful with views of the Bay. When the weather does cooperate there is

alfresco dining, but atypical of San Francisco, the rain was as abundant as the seared pork belly dumplings.

Basically we decided to put our chopsticks in the capable hands of our servers, letting them know ahead that dumplings and Peking duck were our top culinary priorities.

As local Asian families strolled in to enjoy abundant lazy Susan tables filled with colorful steaming dishes, our journey began with dim sum assortments like foie gras dumplings, steamed snow pea shoot dumpling, (my favorite) followed by fried udon noodle with black truffle and mushroom, salt and pepper calamari and three more dishes of assorted vegetables and prawns.

Applewood smoked Peking duck is just as worthy praising and abundance is the style here with a large crispy duck carved tableau de served with traditional housemaid pancake and hoisin sauce.

The second course of duck came as a steaming pot of duck soup, simple flavor with a soft undertone of tomato to balance the acid of the dish.

Dessert is a treat with beautiful steamed pumpkin cake filled with red bean pasta, mango cream with sage and Pomelo and glutinous rice dumpling with grated peanut.

Prices are higher than many places but this is your upscale Chinese with clean lines and more formal service.

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The road trip continues with Part Two as we drive Big Sur and find the best berry biscuit shortcake and more amazing restaurants...



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