

Desserts

Not long ago, most restaurants didn't even make their own desserts; instead ordering in the usual slew of chocolate cakes, cheesecakes, pies, and ice creams from dependable vendors. Maybe a cook would make a dessert soufflé, for a surcharge, of course. With that exception, almost none of the desserts were made to order. No more: Even a small restaurant with 50 to 80 seats, just about anywhere in any city, now has its own pastry chef who turns out stunning, original creations that often come hot to the table, from molten-centered chocolate *tortes* to puff pastry *crostatas* filled with bubbling fruit and topped with housemade ice cream. In fact, one extraordinary restaurant in Barcelona, named **Espai Sucre**, is devoted entirely to desserts *as* a meal. Many of the finest contemporary pastry chefs are women, and names like Sherry Yard of **Spago** in Beverly Hills and Karen Barker of **Magnolia Grill** in Durham, North Carolina, have become iconic inspirations and James Beard Award-winning chefs. **CL**

One of many desserts to choose from at Espai Sucre

