

# GRUB STREET



## 103 Beautiful Dishes: The Most Visually Exciting Food in America Right Now

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April 29, 2015

Recently, an [Instagram account](#) went big when an anonymous cook began posting images of junk food plated to look like fine-dining. The dishes are funny, and the idea seems to have resonated because the cook responsible also managed to nudge at some prevailing clichés of restaurant cooking: Earthenware dishes; ingredients scooped up along the rim of the plate; bold, random splashes of sauce. Ideas that are so commonplace at this point that they're easily replicated — even when they're being applied to rejiggered corn dogs and Cheetos.

In reality, of course, the greatest chefs don't simply ape existing trends and repurpose their dishes to match — they use the visual aspect of cooking as a way to display their own distinct ideas. Here's proof: Grub Street reached out to chefs around America and presented them with a simple notion — tell us about the most beautiful dish you're serving right now. Once the chefs gave us their choices, Grub Street dispatched photographers with a similarly straightforward directive: Make these beautiful dishes look as drop-dead gorgeous as possible.

There was no way to include every single restaurant we wanted, only because there are so many talented chefs doing so many amazing things. But the resulting 100-plus photographs on this list nevertheless demonstrate not only the restaurants' technical expertise and commitment to innovation, but also the breadth of just how many ways "beautiful" can be interpreted. We were looking for splendor, eye-popping precision, and the kinds of dishes that remind you what happens when very smart, hyper-talented people spend every waking moment thinking about ways to push things forward. We think we got that, but you should, by all means, just take a look for yourself.



### **Insalata Crudo e Cotto, Green Asparagus, Tonnato, Cured Egg**

[Quince](#), *San Francisco*

The dish begins, as many do at the 11-year-old restaurant, close to home, in chef Michael Tusk's rooftop garden. From there it heads first to Italy, incorporating a tuna spuma and salt-cured egg served in sculptable tin plates from Japan.