

THE DISH/ rabbit

Another white meat is springing forward onto restaurant menus around the country

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● In the case of rabbit, the common quip “tastes like chicken” is actually accurate—with one clarification. As Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall says in his seminal *River Cottage Meat Book*, rabbit is like “a contented, free-ranging farmyard bird, with a bit of depth of flavor and just the subtlest hint of gaminess.” It’s an opinion shared by a growing number of chefs looking toward this other white meat as an alternative to the industrial, factory-farm-raised chicken. Whether fried, braised, grilled, roasted, or turned into a range of pâtés and terrines, it’s clear that rabbit is a runaway hit.

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“When more consumers get past the whole ‘I can’t eat it because it’s so cute and furry’ aspect of rabbit and realize its amazing cooking potential, more people will farm it and more chefs will use it,” says chef Tim Wiechmann of T. W. Food restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Wiechmann imports wild hare (rabbit’s larger cousin) from Scotland during the autumn; in spring, he gets rabbit from such farms as The Big Ox Farm (thebigoxfarm.org) to create dishes like bacon-wrapped loin of rabbit and leg braised in Sémillon with puree of English peas, salad of pea tendrils, and sauce perfumed with peppermint.

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NEW ORLEANS/ Rabbit and duck liver pâté at LÜKE 333 Saint Charles Avenue; 504-378-2840; lukeneworleans.com.... KANSAS CITY/ Braised rabbit with gnocchi at MICHAEL SMITH 1900 Main Street; 816-842-2202; michaelsmithkc.com.... BERKELEY/ Fried rabbit with favas at CHEZ PANISSE 1517 Shattuck Avenue; 510-548-5525; chezpanisse.com.... PORTLAND, OREGON/ Rabbit ragù over pappardelle at EVERETT STREET BISTRO 1140 NW Everett Street; 503-467-4990; everettstreetbistro.com.... NEW YORK/ Rabbit chorizo at BOQUERIA 53 West 19th Street; 212-255-4160; boquerianyc.com —ANDREW KNOWLTON