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GOOD EATS

A Secret Global Supper Club Heads South

By Elizabeth Hutchison

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In 1966, Truman Capote hosted his legendary black-and-white ball—inspired by the famous Ascot scene in *My Fair Lady*—for some five hundred guests in the Plaza’s Grand Ballroom. In the 1990s, Sean “Diddy” Combs threw his first white party in the Hamptons on the 4th of July. And, each August since 1994, art lovers in New Orleans have hosted the inaugural White Linen Night as a fundraiser for the city’s Contemporary Art Center.

Twenty seven years ago, Francois Pasquier invited a handful of friends for a decidedly simpler al fresco dinner in Paris. But his had a twist—he too asked that guests, wear head-to-toe white but as means to find each other before walking to an undisclosed dining destination. The dinner, appropriately christened **Le Diner En Blanc**, was such a success Pasquier vowed to do again the next year. This time guests would invite friends, who would in turn invite their friends, and so on.

Culinary Community

#golime #playtime #chowtime

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Diner En Blanc at the Louvre Museum in Paris. (Photo by Cour Carree)

Since then, the Paris event, once limited to word-of-mouth guests only, has grown organically to include more than 15,000 people from backgrounds as diverse as the international concourses at the Charles de Gaulle airport. Paris landmarks the likes of the Eiffel Tower, the Champs Elysees, Notre Dame, and Versailles have all served as surprise open-air venues for Le Diner en Blanc in the past.



From left: Diner En Blanc in Honolulu, Paris, and Mexico City. (Center photo by Magdalena Martin)

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As word of the unique affair spread, additional cities appealed to host their own. Today, the pop-up potluck has gone global, expanding to upwards of sixty cities—from Mumbai to Mexico City, Madrid to Moscow—and to more than twenty-five countries on every continent that isn't an ice cap. The latest addition to the world-wide lineup? [Charleston, South Carolina](#). “Charleston’s food rich culture makes it the perfect home for this type of event,” says Holy City co-host Bryer Davis. Plus, Charlestonians have rarely met a party they didn’t like. The location for the October 15 gathering is still under wraps, and the folks with Diner en Blanc aren’t giving anything away—not until minutes before the event. As guests arrive, tables will be arranged in long communal banks, so friends and strangers mix and mingle. You’re responsible for your own picnic spread, but if your neighbor’s pimento cheese or deviled eggs look particularly appetizing, we’re sure they’ll share. Just ask. You’re in the South, after all. We’re a friendly bunch.



The table setting at Diner En Blanc in San Diego.

If you want to join, here's how it works:

1. To participate, add your name to the waiting list for the ticket lottery [here](#).

2. If you secure a ticket, remember, the dress code is strict: all white duds from head-to-toe.
3. Fair warning. It's a rain or shine event. There's no backup date.
4. To ensure that the location is kept secret until the last possible moment, guests are asked to meet at assigned departure locations and are then escorted to the final destination by Diner en Blanc volunteers.



Diner En Blanc in Guadalajara.

What to bring:

1. You'll need to haul your own table, chairs, and linens (all white). If you don't have your own, you can arrange to rent them through Diner en Blanc.
2. Pack picnic provisions. That means proper stemware, utensils, and white plates, too. If you'd prefer to leave the cooking to the pros, you can order pre-stuffed baskets from Charleston restaurants [Butcher and Bee](#), [the Daily](#), [Ted's Butcher Block](#), and [Caviar and Bananas](#).

3. Don't forget your wine and/or champagne. Beer and liquor are not allowed. (The idea *did* originate in France.)

Other Southern host cities include [Charlotte](#), [Houston](#), [Atlanta](#), [Dallas](#), [Miami](#), [New Orleans](#), [West Palm Beach](#), and [Washington, D.C.](#) Check the Diner en Blanc [website](#) for dates.

Don't see your city? Fill out an application on [the site](#) for the opportunity to throw your own bash.



A picturesque Diner En Blanc in Honolulu.

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