



Culinary Institute
of America

Bistros and Brasseries

Best of Boot Camp



Learning Objectives

- Describe the origins, dining experiences, and cuisines of bistros and brasseries.
- Discuss the defining elements of American and French-style bistros.
- State characteristics of quick breads, scones, breakfast pastries, crepes and other griddled items.
- Describe the method for producing omelets and poached eggs, and state quality criteria for both preparations.
- Explain the fundamentals of soup, salad, and sandwich preparation.
- Discuss and prepare classical and contemporary bistro-style dishes.

Bistros: Origin

- First bistros appeared in the 1820s
- "Bistro" comes from the Russian word "bystro," meaning "quickly"
- Russian soldiers occupying Paris in 1814 demanded faster service by shouting "bystro!"



Dining Experience



Size: smaller, less than 60 seats

Atmosphere: intimate, casual, warm, friendly, homey, soft lighting, rustic, uncomplicated

Service: informal, slower, relaxed

Price range: more affordable, ranges €10-€20 per dish

Customers: loyal, frequent regulars, some tourists

Bistro Cuisine

Menu: French home-style comfort food, limited options, changes frequently

Alcohol: limited local wines that pair with dishes

Cooking style: simple, rustic, unpretentious

Flavor profile: fresh, local/seasonal ingredients, hearty, rich, fragrant



Bouchons



- Small bistros specific to Lyon, France
- Serve traditionally Lyonnaise cuisine
- Emphasis on meat dishes, high in fat
 - Usually pork
- Strong cultural identity, local customer base and ingredients

Brasseries: Origin

- Meaning “to brew”
- First appeared in 17th century Alsace, France
- Focus on brewing beer and offering hearty meals for factory workers



Dining Experience

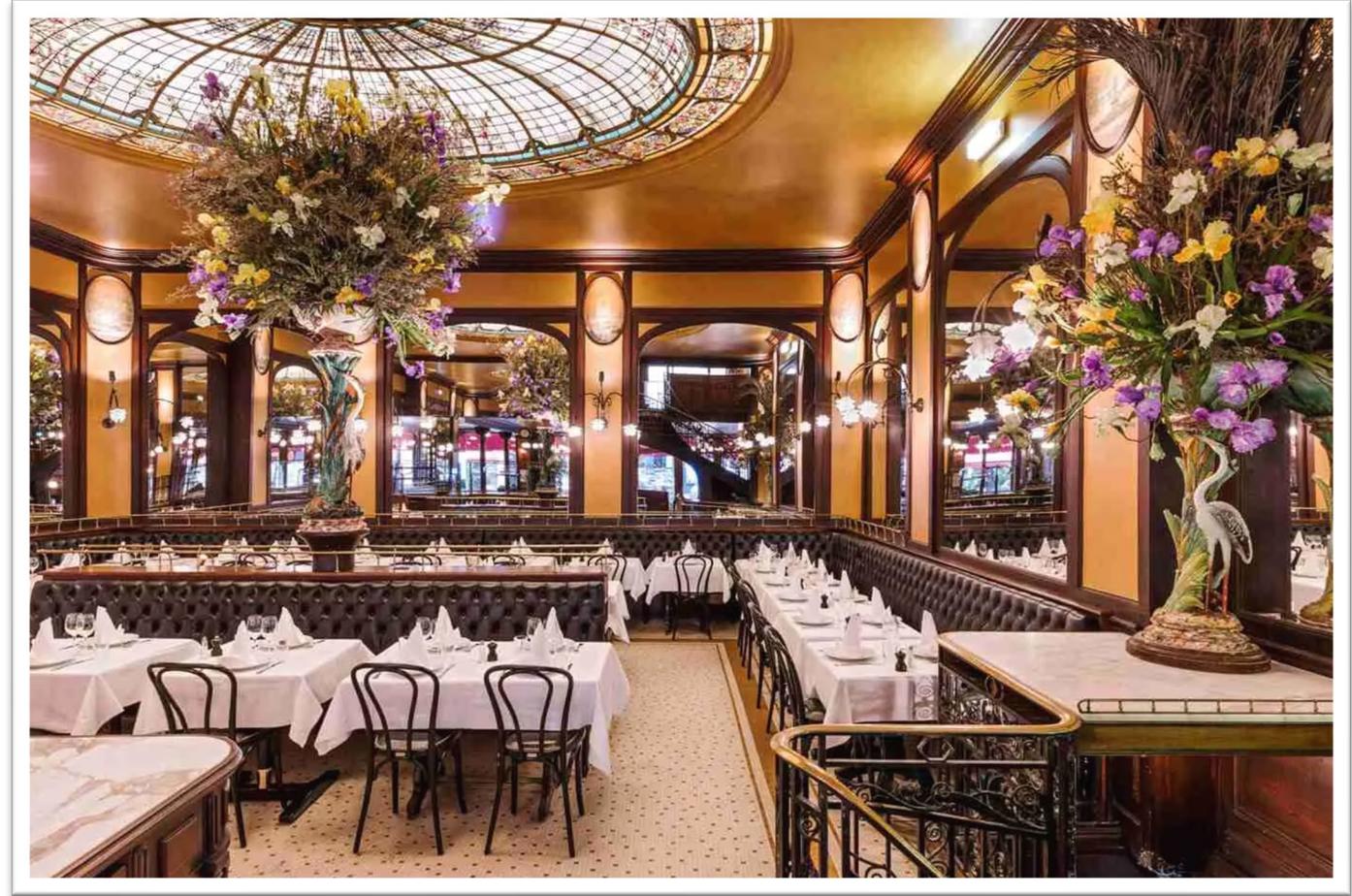
Size: larger, 80+ seats

Atmosphere: comfortable, lively, refined, inviting, warm, soft lighting, classic yet polished décor, elegant

Service: fast, professional, more formal

Price range: more expensive, ranges €20-€30+ per dish

Customers: mix of tourists, regular locals



Brasserie Cuisine



Combines a casual eatery with luxury dining

Blend of traditional/modern

Menu: wider variety of dishes, more expansive, classic French

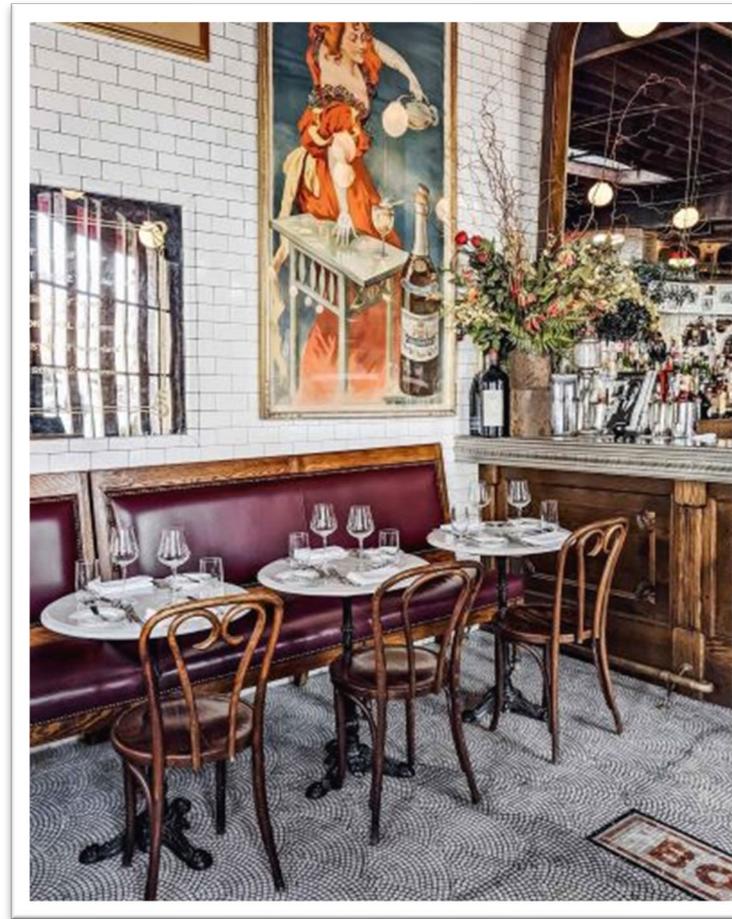
Alcohol: large selection of wine, beer, sometimes spirits

Cooking style: Simple, varied, more refined

Flavor profile: fresh, local produce, diverse, mix of hearty, rich and light, delicate

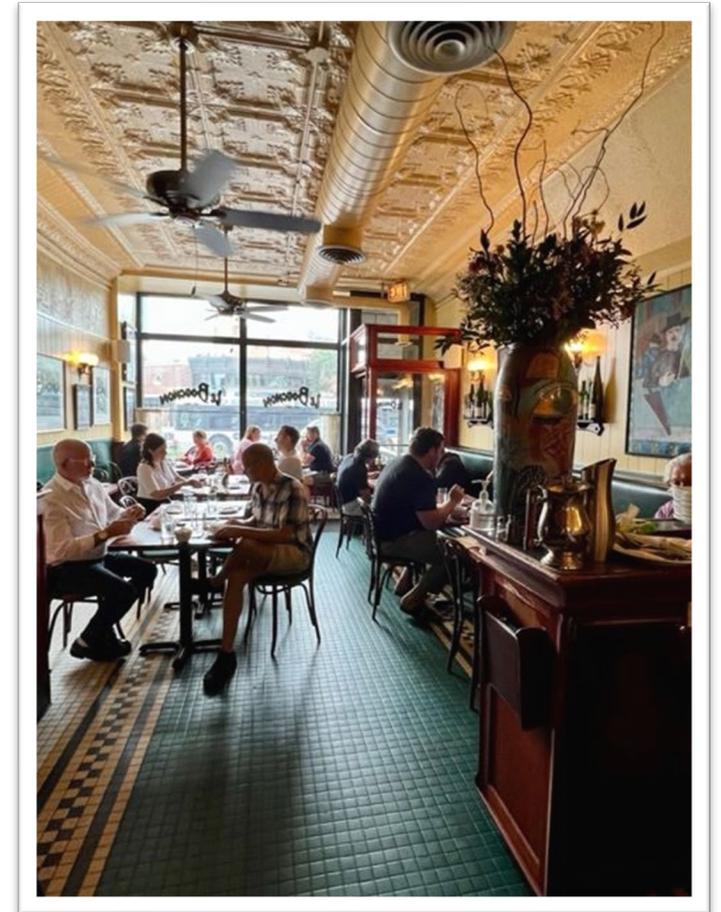
Bistros and Brasseries in the United States

- **Bistro** and **brasserie** generally used interchangeably
- Represents just about any food that's simple, affordable, casual, and fresh

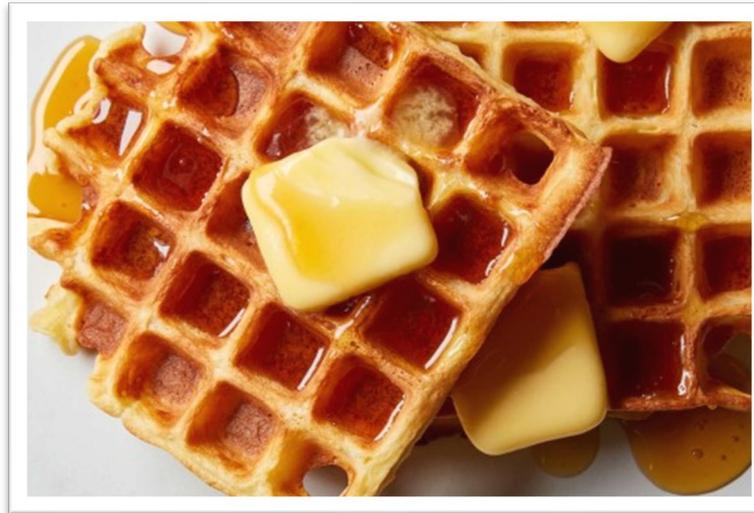


Boucherie: New York

Le Bouchon: Chicago



Griddled Items



- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Crêpes
- French Toast

Quick Breads

- Pourable batter or soft dough
- Tender, delicate texture
- **Leaveners:** chemical (baking powder/ soda) or physical (steam, whipped egg white)
- **Mixing methods:** straight, creaming, rubbing
- **Examples:** Muffins, loaves, pancakes, waffles, scones, biscuits, crêpes



Crêpes



- Thin French pancake
- Straight mixing method; no leavener
- Can be sweet or savory

Quality characteristics:

- Light and tender
- No color to lightly golden brown
- Thin with an even thickness

Specialty Egg Dishes

- Scotch Egg
- Frittata
- Tortilla Española
- Eggs Benedict
- Quiche
- Soufflé
- Toad-in-the-Hole



Omelet: Method

1. Blend eggs with liquid, if using.
2. Heat pan, then add the oil or butter over high heat or in a hot oven; add any appropriate fillings or garnishes at this time.
3. Add eggs and cook until eggs are properly set; add any additional fillings or garnishes, if desired.
 - Stir eggs constantly in beginning for even cooking
 - Shake pan to spread eggs uniformly for best presentation
4. Season omelet, if desired.

Quality Criteria: Omelets



- Delicate, creamy texture
- Pale exterior, no wrinkles
- **French omelet:** barely-set center, soft scramble
- **American omelet:** fluffy

Poached Eggs: Method

1. Bring water, vinegar, and salt to a simmer (180°F).
 - Make sure the liquid is deep enough
 - Vinegar helps eggs to set and prevents excess spread
2. Break the eggs into cups
3. Add the shelled egg to the simmering liquid, working in batches to keep the water temperature steady.
4. Remove eggs with a slotted spoon, skimmer, or spider when done.
 - Hold in ice water until service; reheat in simmering water before serving
 - Trim eggs before serving if ragged

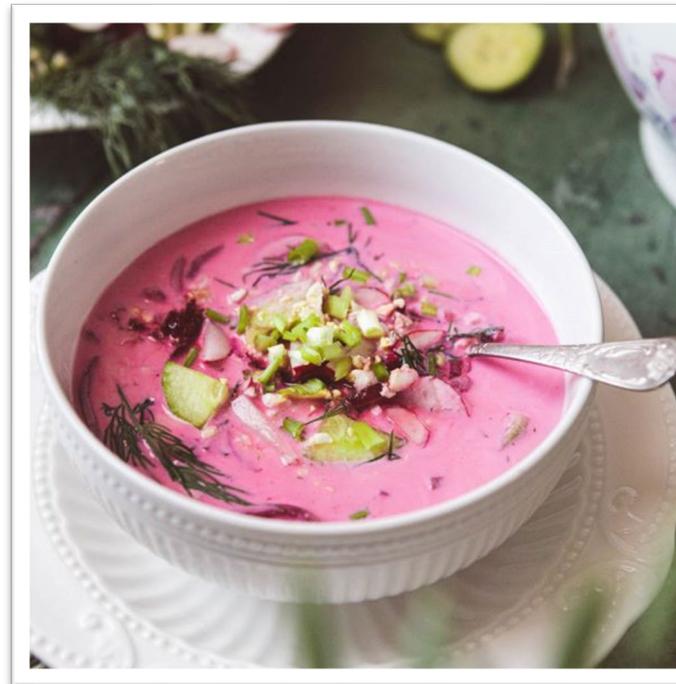
Quality Criteria: Poached Eggs



- Tender, fully cooked white
- Runny, yet warm yolk
- Delicately set
- Compact, oval shape
- Neat, uniform appearance
- Served hot

Soup Categories

- **Clear soups:** hearty broth, consommé
- **Thick Soups:** cream soups, puree soups, chowder, bisque
- **Specialty soups:** cold soups, cultural soups



Cooking Soups



- Soups are simmered, not boiled
 - Boiling causes separation, cloudiness, meats to toughen
- Avoid overcooking
- Taste soups during cooking process
 - Check vegetables for doneness
 - Check flavors, adjust as necessary

Green Salads

- Also known as tossed salad, mixed salad, or garden salad
- Character of salad depends on greens and dressing
- **Dressing:** vinaigrette, emulsified vinaigrette, creamy
 - Must be appropriate for the greens selected
- **Garnish:** vegetables, croutons, nuts, cheese



Lettuces

4 main types: leaf, romaine, butterhead, or crisphead

Storage and Handling

- Thoroughly wash
- Never submerge in water for a long period
- Dry well after washing (use a salad spinner, if available)
- Store in refrigerator in containers with damp paper towels; do not stack deep
- Use within 1 to 2 days



Dressings: Vinaigrettes

Vinaigrette: temporary emulsion

- 3 parts oil : 1 part vinegar
- Flavors of oil/vinegars can vary widely

Emulsified vinaigrette: vinaigrette + emulsifier

- **Emulsifier:** stabilize sauce, contributes flavor
- Eggs, mustard, garlic, fruit or vegetable puree



Dressings: Creamy



Mayonnaise-based: can be “lightened” with whipped cream

Dairy-based: made from sour cream, crème fraîche, mascarpone, yogurt, buttermilk, ricotta, or other soft cheeses

- May be mixed with mayonnaise
- Can be used as dressings or dips

Additional flavoring: citrus, vegetables, pickles, herbs, spices

Composed Salads

- Salad with an additional item as the attraction
- **Main item:** “Featured” item
- **Green:** salad greens, vegetables, or legumes - single or mix
- **Dressing:** right balance and correct proportion to greens
- **Garnish:** any item not listed above; should compliment in flavor, texture, color, size, height, shape, temperature



Salade Niçoise



Originates from the city of Nice

Ingredients: tomatoes, hard-cooked eggs, potatoes, olives, green beans, tuna

Flavor profile: tangy, refreshing, savory, briny

Cooking methods: boiling, searing

Herbs, spices: salt, black pepper, parsley

Sandwiches

Versatile

- Elegant or casual
- Open or closed
- Hot or cold
- Small (hors-d'oeuvre), large (entrée)
- Exemplify global cuisine

Four elements: bread, spread, filling, garnish



Sandwiches



Cold sandwiches

- **Standard deli-style:** sliced meats, mayonnaise-dressed salads
- Clubs/ Triple-deckers

Hot sandwiches

- **Hot fillings:** hamburgers, pastrami
- May be mounded on bread and sandwich topped with a hot sauce
- **Grilled:** Reubens, melts

Sandwich Spreads

- Prevent bread from getting soggy
- Add moisture, help hold sandwich together
- Sometimes spread is included in filling mixture (ex. tuna salad)
- Lend flavor, richness
- Can be simple and subtle, or add texture and flavor



Sandwich Accompaniments & Side Dishes



- **Vegetables:** lettuce, sprouts, pickle spears, olives, carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes
- **Salads:** green salad, composed salad, potato salad, pasta salad, coleslaw
- **Spreads:** aioli, mayonnaise, relish
- **Fruits:** grapes, apples, berries
- Fries, onion rings, potato chips

Croque Monsieur

- Traditional French sandwich
- **Ingredients:** ham, Gruyère cheese, béchamel, mustard
- **Flavor profile:** savory, rich, nutty, slightly salty, tangy
- **Cooking methods:** grilled, baked
- **Herbs, spices:** black pepper, parsley





Culinary Institute
of America

Any Questions?