

Food

# The World's Most Luxurious Foods

By [Joe Harper](#) on April 05, 2018

From caviar and white truffles to a rare delicacy culled from the rivers of Spain's Basque country, these are the globe's most opulent dining indulgences.



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These days the term "delicacy," a descriptor for anything rare, expensive, unusual or just plain gross, is overused. Here, we stick to the most desirable extravagances that don't challenge the palate (or one's eating bravery). We look into why caviar prices are hard to pin down or how the connoisseurship of truffles can depend on nuanced terminology. We explore quality over imitation, where to find the best offerings, and what exactly makes these delicacies so darn tasty.



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## Culatella di Zibello

While Spain's *jamon iberico* might be the world's most recognizable precious ham, American gourmards are growing increasingly infatuated with Italy's *culatella di Zibello*, a salume similar to prosciutto di parma, but with delicate curing requirements that don't allow for it to travel as far. This leads to one pound costing upwards of \$100. Just like prosciutto di parma, it's produced solely in Emilia-Romagna, a northern Italy province and the country's culinary hub. But prosciutto di parma is cured in controlled climates amid the dry, hillside winds of Parma. *Culatella di parma*, on the other hand, is aged in medieval cellars in only eight small villages along the Po river, where it's subjected to the natural environment—still air, foggy, and damp—to encourage *muffa nobile*, or noble mold.

The boneless cut is a volleyball-sized portion from the pig's hind leg (*culatella* literally means "little ass" in Italian). It's seasoned with garlic, wine, salt and pepper before an aging process that can be anywhere between 14 to 48 months, bringing funky, complex flavors with a velvety texture. American interest has surged after the Department of Agriculture loosened import laws last year, allowing for it to appear in specialty stores like the famous Di Palo's in New York's Little Italy (no website; 212-226-1033). Given its volatile reactions to its surroundings, however, we suggest going straight to the source. Massimo Spigaroli is a master producer and serves his best offerings at the two restaurants on his estate, Antica Corte Pallavicina, in the village of Polesine Parmense just outside Parma. Chef Massimo Bottura sources from Spigaroli for his cult restaurant Osteria Francescana in nearby Modena.