

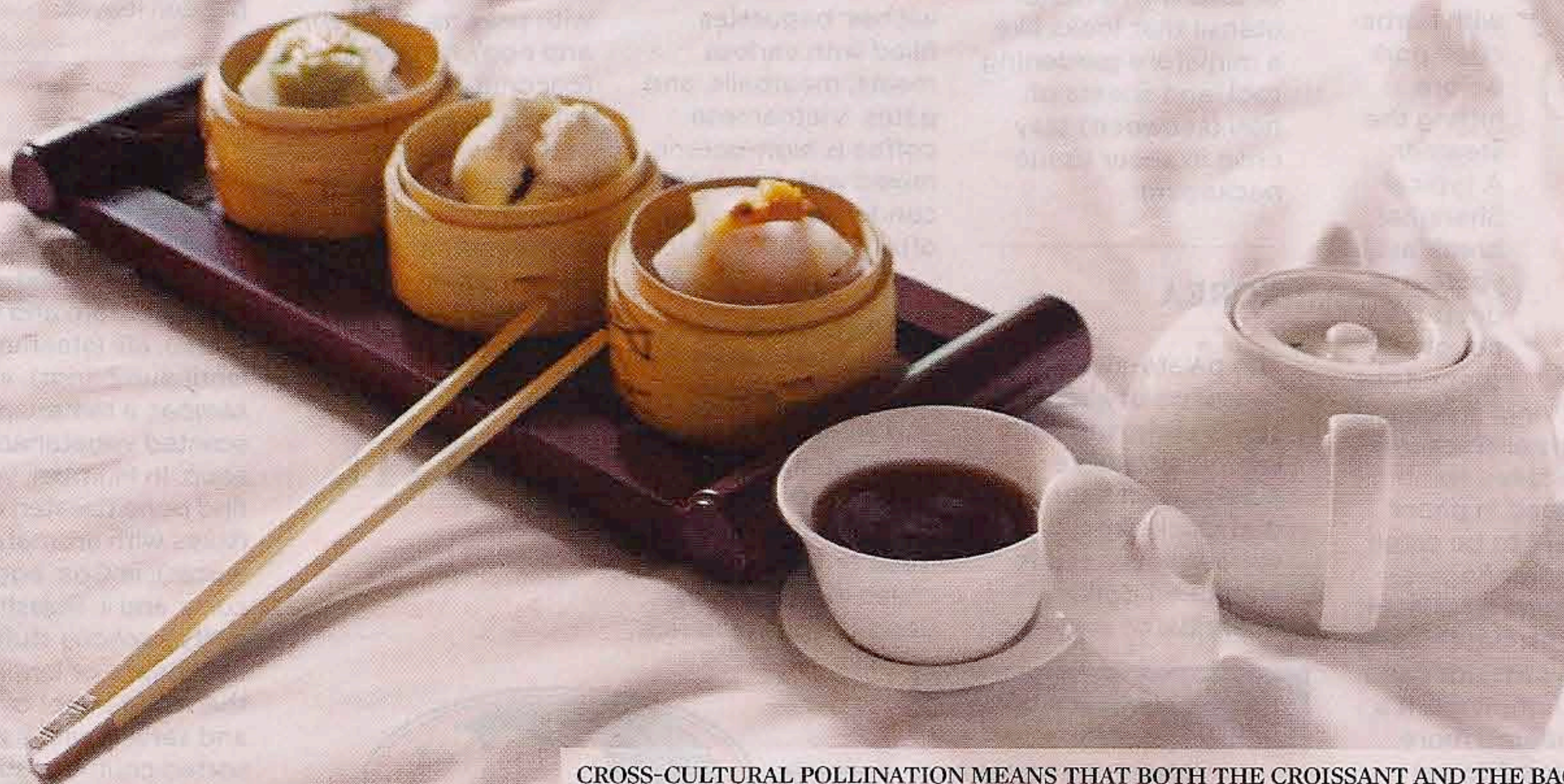
STRATEGIES

TRAVEL SMARTER

T+L
GUIDE

HOTEL BREAKFASTS AROUND THE WORLD

THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY IS ALSO A WINDOW ONTO LOCAL CUISINE. T+L OFFERS A REGION-BY-REGION PRIMER ON WHAT TO EXPECT—AND ORDER—ACROSS THE GLOBE. **BY AIMEE LEE BALL**



The Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong's dim sum breakfast spread, in a Harbour room.

CROSS-CULTURAL POLLINATION MEANS THAT BOTH THE CROISSANT AND THE BAGEL have traveled far from home, and the “continental breakfast” still reigns supreme at hotels all over the world. But only in Japan will the morning meal offer *dashi-maki tamago* (a rolled, soy-flavored omelette), and only Costa Rica can stake a claim to delicious *chorreadas* (corn pancakes). Confronting an array of exotic ingredients, it's easy to go for the familiar, but breakfast offers a chance to eat as the natives do, to celebrate the customs and traditions that make travel so illuminating, and to start the day, literally, with local flavor. Read on for a taste of the world's best morning fare.

Asia



**PARK HYATT
TOKYO**

**SIGNATURE
BREAKFAST**

Grilled fish, rice, miso soup, fruit, pickled vegetables, tofu, and green tea. 877/875-4658; parkhyatt.com.

CHINA

When it comes to the Chinese breakfast, the sheer number of regional variations can be intimidating; but regardless of where you are, the steamer is an essential tool. For *chawanmushi*, eggs are beaten with chicken broth, soy, and sake then steamed until silky, while buns are filled

with barbecued pork before hitting the steamer. A typical Shanghai breakfast is *youtiao*, a deep-fried doughnut shaped like

a hot dog; Taiwanese fritters and sesame-seed cakes come wrapped in paper and are to be eaten with your fingers. Dim sum, a hallmark of Cantonese cuisine, always includes shu mai dumplings. It's considered more "modern" to eat congee with a ceramic spoon rather than slurped from a bowl; one of the most unusual condiments for this rice porridge is "century eggs" that have been "cooked" in an alkaline mix of clay, ash, lime, and salt.

1,000

Number of pieces of dim sum created each morning by the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong.

JAPAN

The classic bento box meal includes miso soup, grilled fish, a rolled omelette, rice, Japanese pickles, and green tea. You may scoop squares of tofu with a metal utensil that looks like a miniature gardening tool, and sheets of nori (seaweed) stay crisp in sheer tissue packaging.

KOREA

The palate-awakening sensation of kimchi starts early, when it's served alongside porridge with shredded chicken or various soups made with dried pollack, beef ribs, or seaweed.

VIETNAM

The centerpiece here is *pho*, the fragrant (and nearly impossible to pronounce) noodle soup with star anise, cinnamon, cardamom, and basil. A spicier variation is *bun bo hue*, with lemongrass, banana blossoms, shrimp paste, and—wait for it—chiles. Locals also favor *banh mi* sandwiches: baguettes filled with various meats, meatballs, and pâtés. Vietnamese coffee is high-octane, mixed with sweetened condensed milk and often poured over ice.

THAILAND

Rice noodles (flatter and wider than those in pad thai) appear with mouth-tingling condiments such as fresh or preserved chiles in vinegar. In Bangkok, jasmine rice

is boiled as *khao tom* or fried as *khao pat*, with shrimp, pork, or chicken.

INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

The morning meal in Bali, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur reflects the hegemony of rice. Variations include *nasi goreng* (fried rice with prawns, chicken, and egg), *nasi lemak* (coconut-infused rice with crisp anchovies), and *bubur ayam* (rice porridge with chicken, egg, and shallots). For the sweet tooth there's *pisang goreng* (banana fritters with palm sugar).

SINGAPORE

Another soup-for-breakfast culture, with offerings that include floating fish balls or wontons. *Tau suan* (mung-bean soup) topped with slices of fried dough is a morning dessert. Toast is slathered with *kaya*, a coconut-egg jam that may be shockingly green from the addition of vanilla-scented pandan leaves.

INDIA

Traditional South Indian breakfast means *masala dosa* (lacy crêpes filled with spiced potato and turmeric), *idli* (steamed lentil dumplings), and *sambar*, a tamarind-scented vegetarian soup. In Mumbai, you'll find *pohe* (beaten rice flakes with aromatic spices); in Goa, egg curry; and in Rajasthan, puffy *kachoris* stuffed with beans or lentils, then fried in hot oil and served with assorted chutneys such as mint or coriander. The legendary breads of India include fluffy puris, flaky *parathas*, and soft buns called *pao bhaji*, served with a vegetable curry. The drink of choice is yogurt lassi, either sweet or salted. »

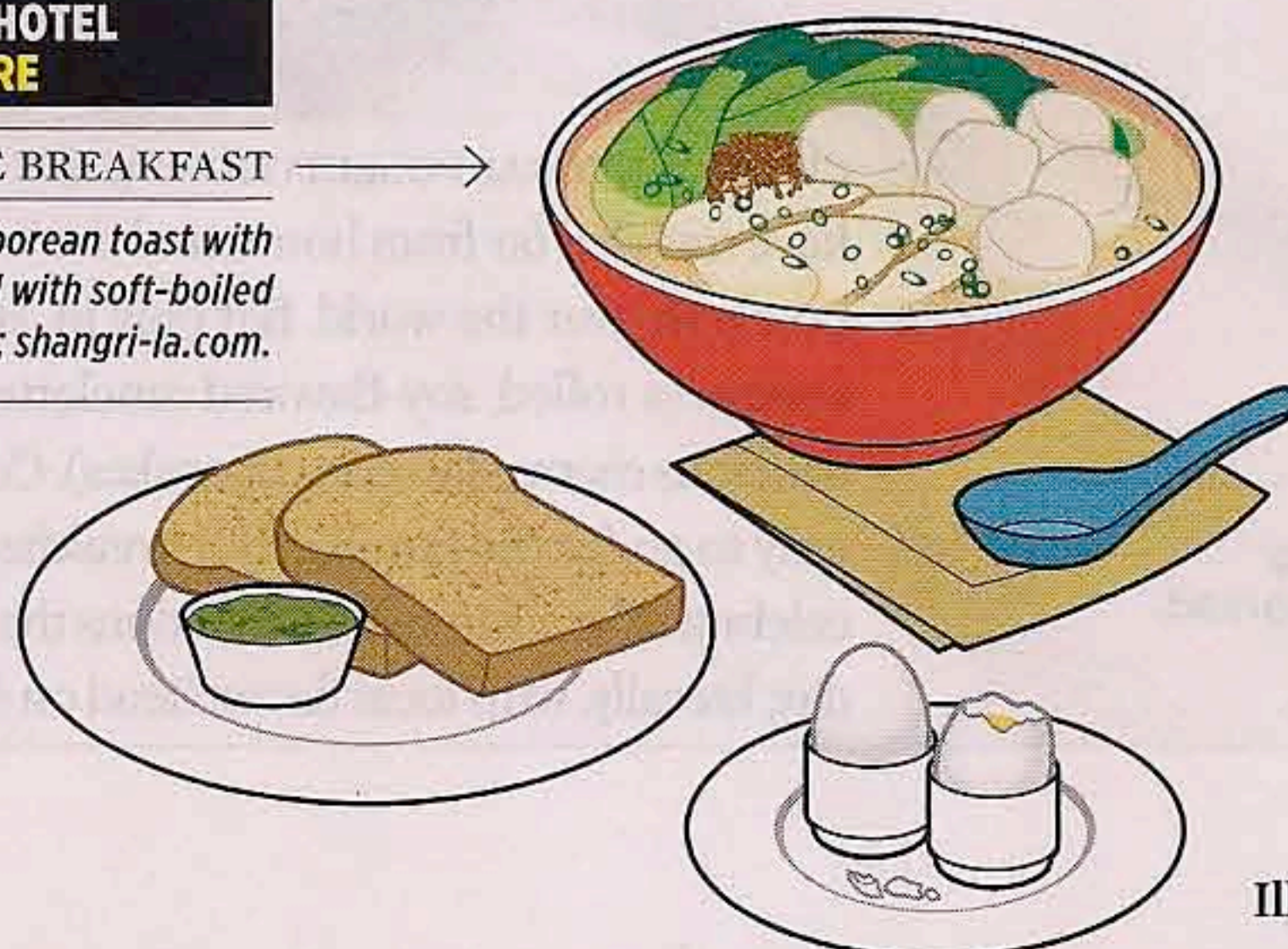
4 a.m.

The time that breakfast prep begins at the Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai.

**SHANGRI-LA HOTEL
SINGAPORE**

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Fish-ball soup and Singaporean toast with green kaya jam, served with soft-boiled eggs. 866/565-5050; shangri-la.com.



GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

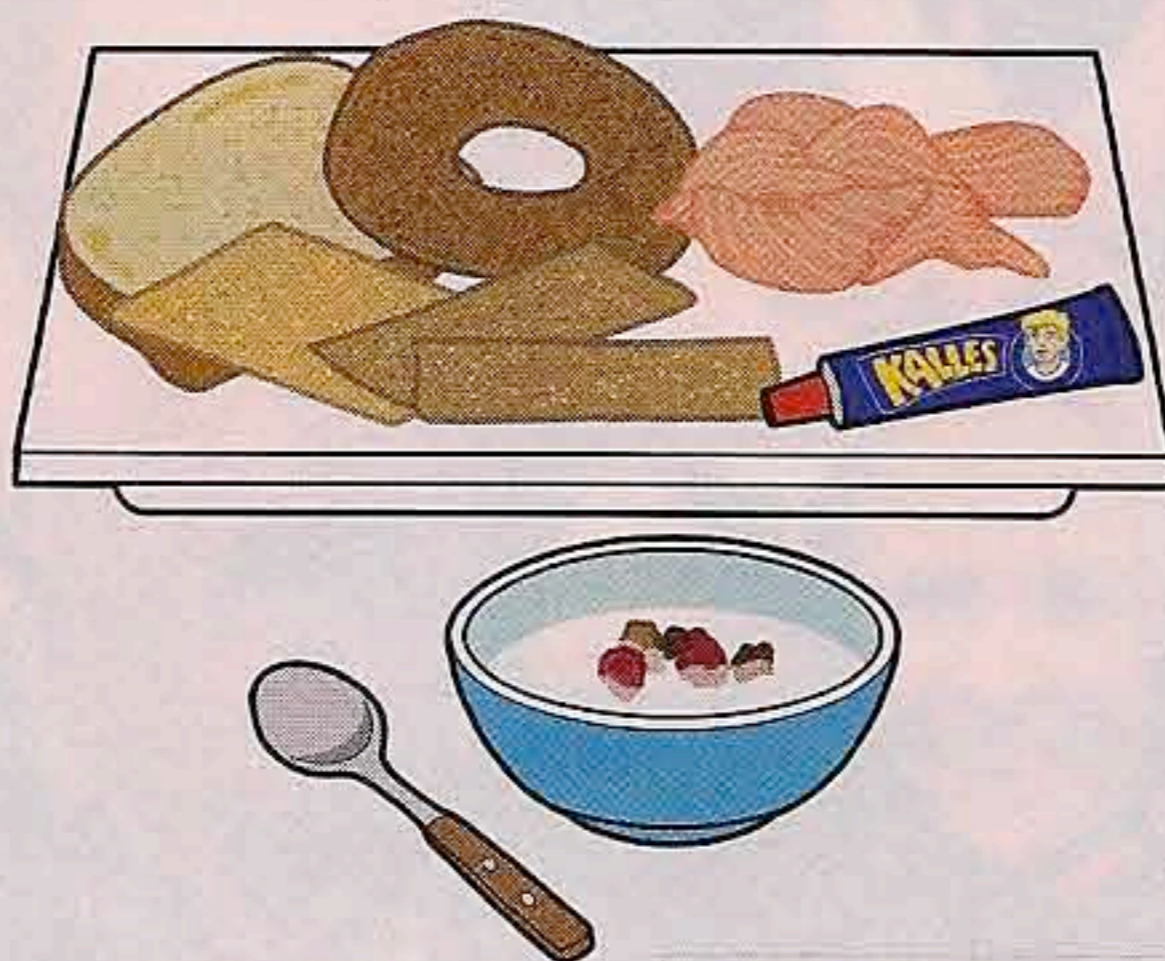
If you're feeling adventurous, the British Isles may be the ticket. Irish black pudding is made of curdled and boiled pig's blood, mixed with chunks of pork fat and stuffed into a sausage casing. The Scots have an equally formidable tradition: haggis—sheep's liver, heart, and lungs mixed with oatmeal and suet, then simmered in the sheep's intestines. Tamer palates might prefer the classic English breakfast, with eggs, bangers (sausages) or streaky bacon, tomatoes, and mushrooms. It's often called a fry-up for good reason: just

about everything on the plate is fried, including the toast. The Brits may add baked beans or bubble and squeak (potatoes mashed with cabbage).

SCANDINAVIA

Filmjök tastes something like a peace accord between sour cream and buttermilk, but it's eaten like yogurt, in a bowl with cereal. The champion of the Nordic bread basket is *knäckebröd*, or crispbread, and Swedes start the day

1,945
Pounds of gravlax and herring consumed each year at the Berns Hotel, in Stockholm.



BERNS HOTEL STOCKHOLM

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Knäckebröd with a tube of fish-roe paste, yogurt-like filmjök, and gravlax. 800/223-5652; berns.se.

500 Number of cups of espresso served daily at the Hotel Principe di Savoia, in Milan.

with fish roe (smoked or not), made into a spreadable paste with mashed potatoes, according to a centuries-old recipe (also sold in tubes by IKEA stores all over the world).

CENTRAL EUROPE

The Czech "Bohemian" breakfast (similar to those in Austria and Hungary) may include cold cuts, terrines, and *hermelin*, a soft cheese sometimes pickled with oil and herbs. If you're lucky, you'll find *palacinka*, the local version of crêpes.

TURKEY

A luscious clotted cream called *kaymak* accompanies many pastries—it's the *mit Schlag* of Turkey. Marmalades called

SOUTHERN EUROPE

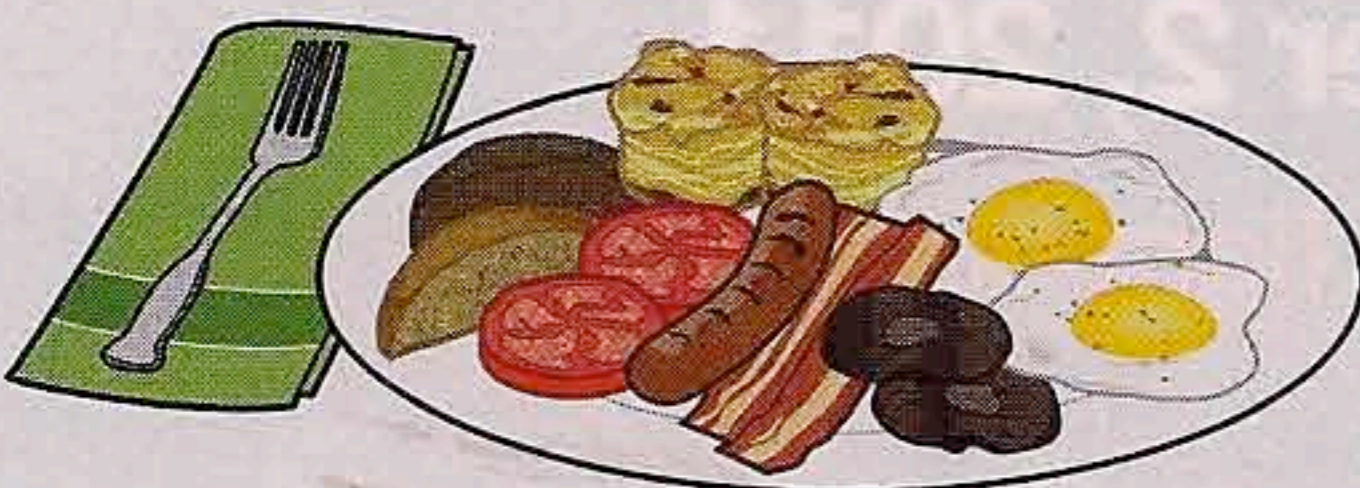
recel are made with whole preserved fruits such as green figs. Phyllo stuffed with spinach, beef, or feta is shaped into square, triangular, or cigarette-shaped *börek*. The egg dish *menemen* is related to the Israeli *shakshuka*, sometimes with the addition of black olives.

Aside from the requisite *caffè*, an Italian breakfast spread might include cured meats (Parma ham; mortadella from Bologna) and cheeses (pecorino in Rome; smoked *scamorza* in Puglia). In Spain, potatoes, onions, and eggs are cooked in olive oil and formed into a fat, round

tortilla española, from which slices are cut all day long. The slightly more decadent Spanish breakfast is deep-fried churros dunked in bittersweet hot chocolate. In Greece, one look at the contented sheep and goats grazing on any mountain tells you there will be great feta. Breakfast pies are made with phyllo dough and cheese and spinach or wild greens.

RUSSIA

The morning porridge has kasha (buckwheat groats) as its base. But that's breakfast for the hoi polloi. To eat like the czars, choose *syrniki* (fried cheese pancakes) with sour cream and honey or blini with red caviar. >>

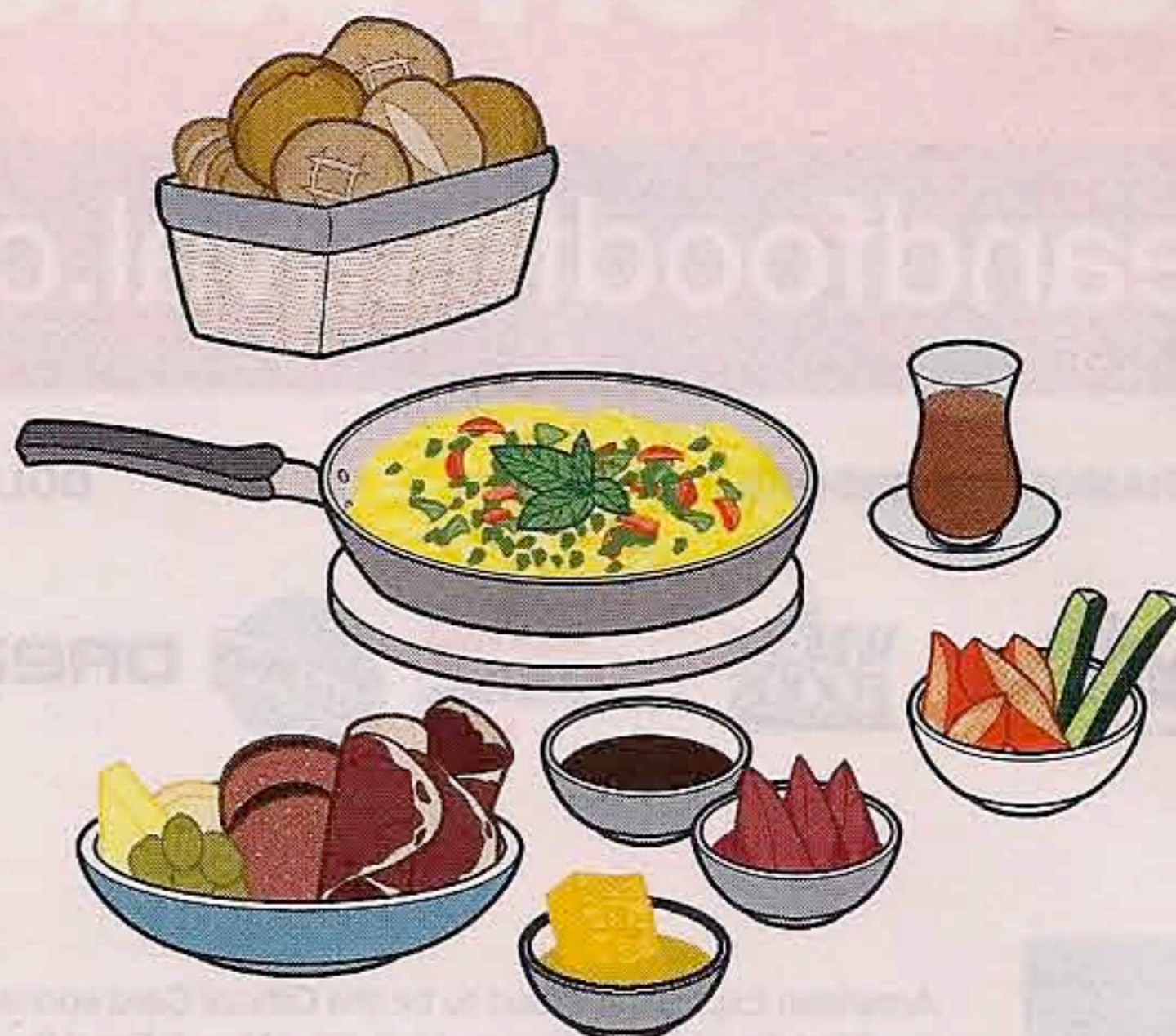


DYLAN HOTEL DUBLIN

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

A full Irish breakfast of black and white pudding, rashers (bacon), sausage, hash browns, fried eggs, and roasted vegetables. 353-1/660-3000; dylan.ie.

Europe

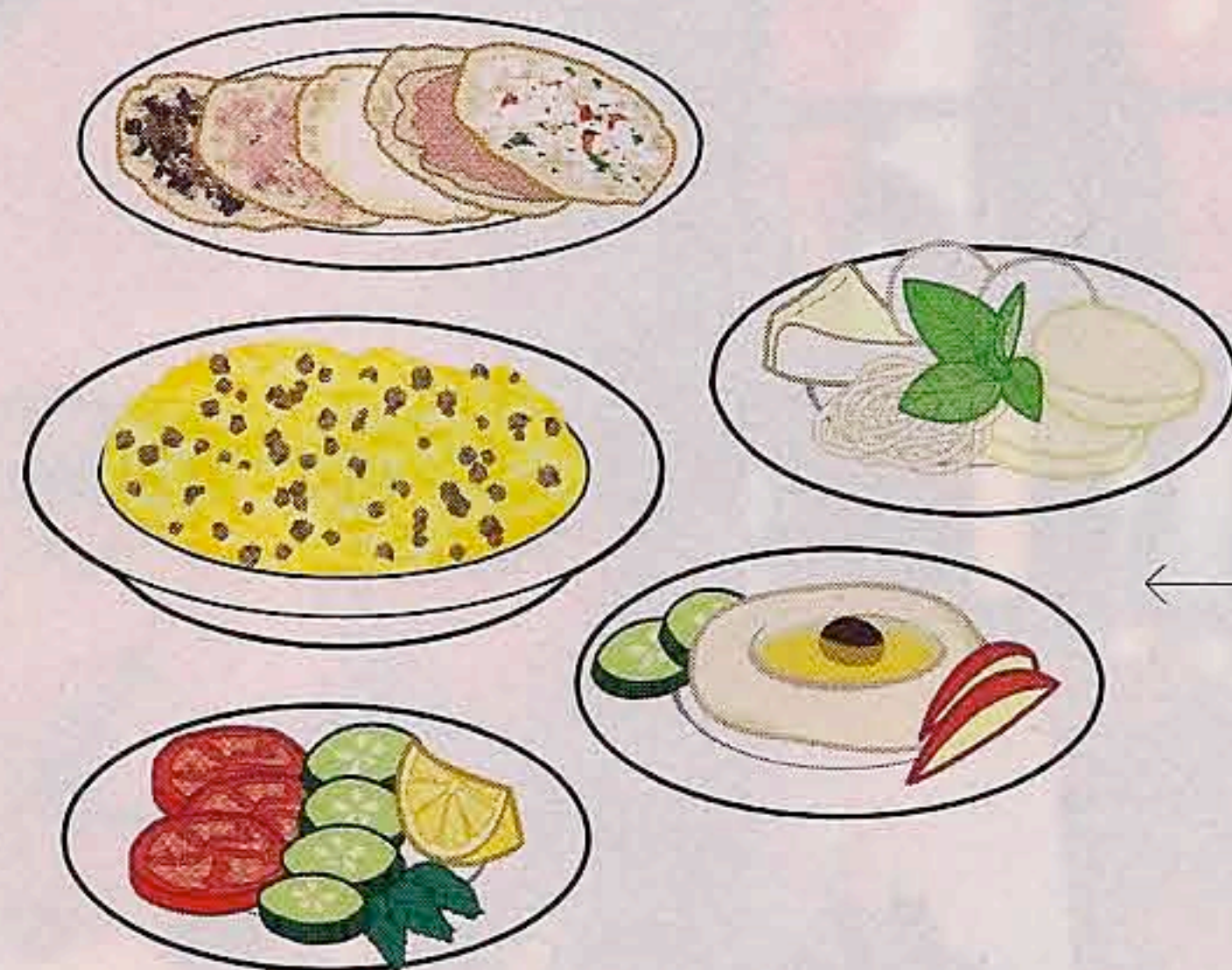


ÇIRIĞAN PALACE KEMPINSKI ISTANBUL

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Menemen and Turkish bread with cured meats, cheeses, olives, and a variety of spreads (sour cherry, honeycomb, and quince). 90-212/326-4646; kempinski.com.

Africa AND THE Middle East



**FOUR SEASONS
HOTEL BEIRUT**

**SIGNATURE
BREAKFAST**
Cheese-, meat-, and vegetable-topped manakish, eggs with awarma, local cheeses and vegetables, and labneh with olive oil. 800/332-3442; fourseasons.com.



FAIRMONT NILE CITY CAIRO

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST
Ful medames stew, with Arabic breads, chili powder, cumin, vegetables, and olive oil. 800/441-1414; fairmont.com.

EGYPT

This cradle of civilization can also lay claim to one of the most popular dishes of the region: *ful medames*, slow-cooked fava beans mashed with olive oil, parsley, garlic, and lemon juice. Here, it's mopped up with Arabic breads similar to pitas. The local rendition of cream

of wheat is *belila*, served hot or cold and sprinkled with shredded coconut.

ISRAEL

In Israel, the lavish morning buffet (salads; fresh fruit and vegetables; cheese; smoked fish; baba ghanoush) dates from the beginnings of the kibbutz, when workers fueled up for the day ahead. The popular *shakshuka* (eggs poached in spicy tomato sauce) was introduced by Tunisian immigrants.

LEBANON

As with the rest of the Middle East, the morning meal centers around spreads such as hummus or baba ghanoush with pita bread, the thick yogurt called *labneh*, and salads of peppers or cucumbers. Here, you'll also find the pizza-like *manakish* (baked dough topped with spices, meats, or cheese) and eggs with *awarma* (minced meat).

**SOUTHERN
AND EASTERN
AFRICA**

Mandazi are the doughnuts of Tanzania and Kenya, usually hole-less, sometimes with ground nuts added to the dough, and served with locally grown coffee or chai; chapatis are similar to warm flour tortillas. A tooth-achingly sweet pastry native

to Cape Town, South Africa, is *koeksister* (like a doughnut dipped in syrup), eaten with extra-strong *moer koffie* or rooibos tea, which is naturally caffeine-free and grown only in South Africa. Variations on cornmeal mush are called *ugali* in the east and mealies in the south. Franschhoek salmon, from the waters off the Western Cape province, is smoked and served with eggs. »

**UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES**

An Arabian breakfast may include *halloumi* cheese, with a flat bread called *saj* that is twirled like a pizza, shaped on a round pillow, and baked on a domed metal griddle. Don't expect a western omelette: the local favorite is filled with fresh coriander and marinated olives.

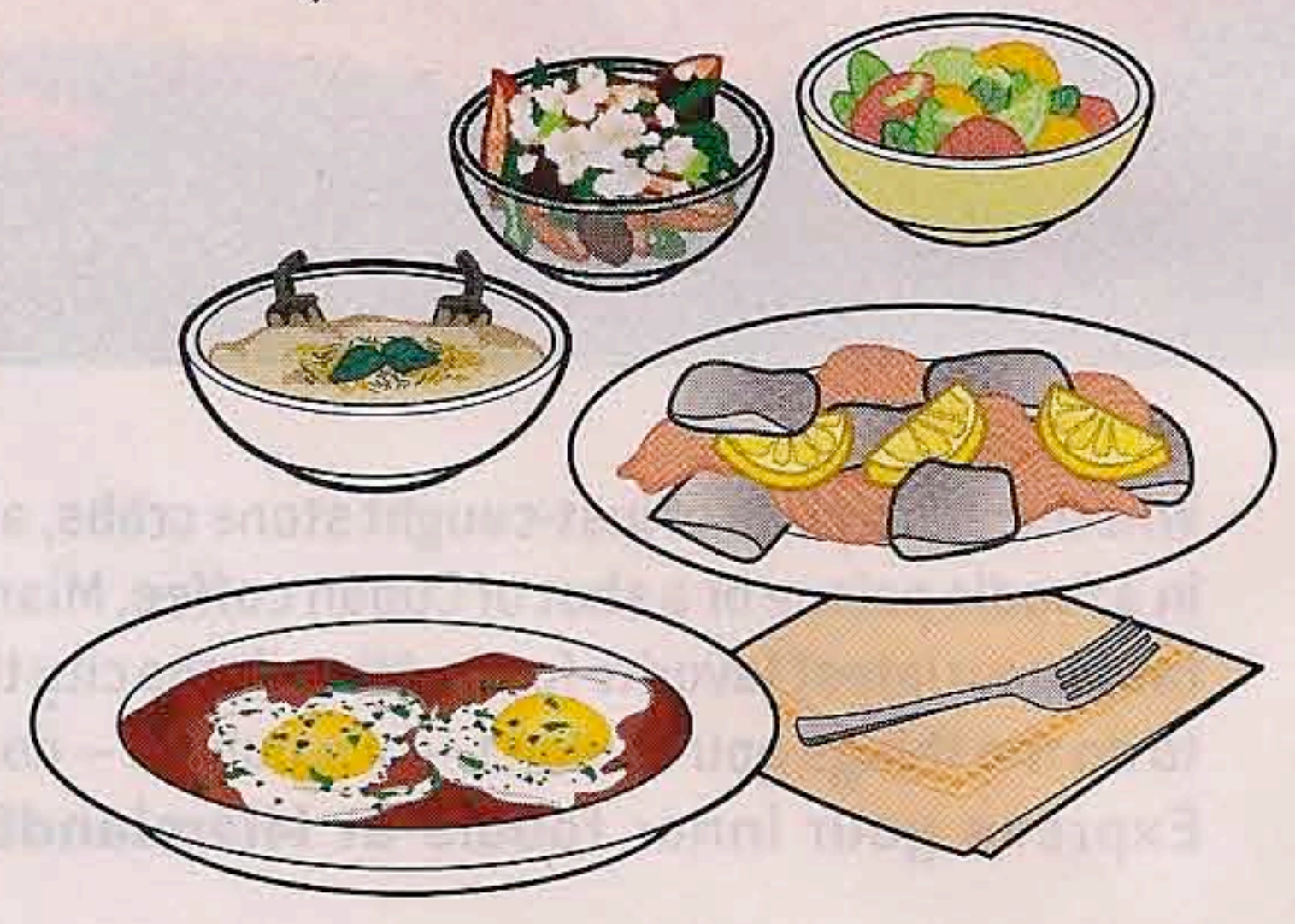
MOROCCO

You may eat *laasida*, a thick porridge made with barley meal and served with butter and honey, or a square layered bread called *msemmen* with *amlou*, a dip of toasted almonds, argan oil, and honey.

21 Number of locally managed beehives that supply Tanzania's Sanctuary Swala Camp with its vanilla-scented acacia honey.

**KING DAVID HOTEL
JERUSALEM**

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST
Shakshuka, or spicy poached eggs, with baba ghanoush, Israeli and citrus salads, and a platter of smoked fish. 800/223-7773; danhotels.com.



7 Number of hours it takes to make *ful medames* (fava-bean stew) at the Fairmont Nile City Cairo.

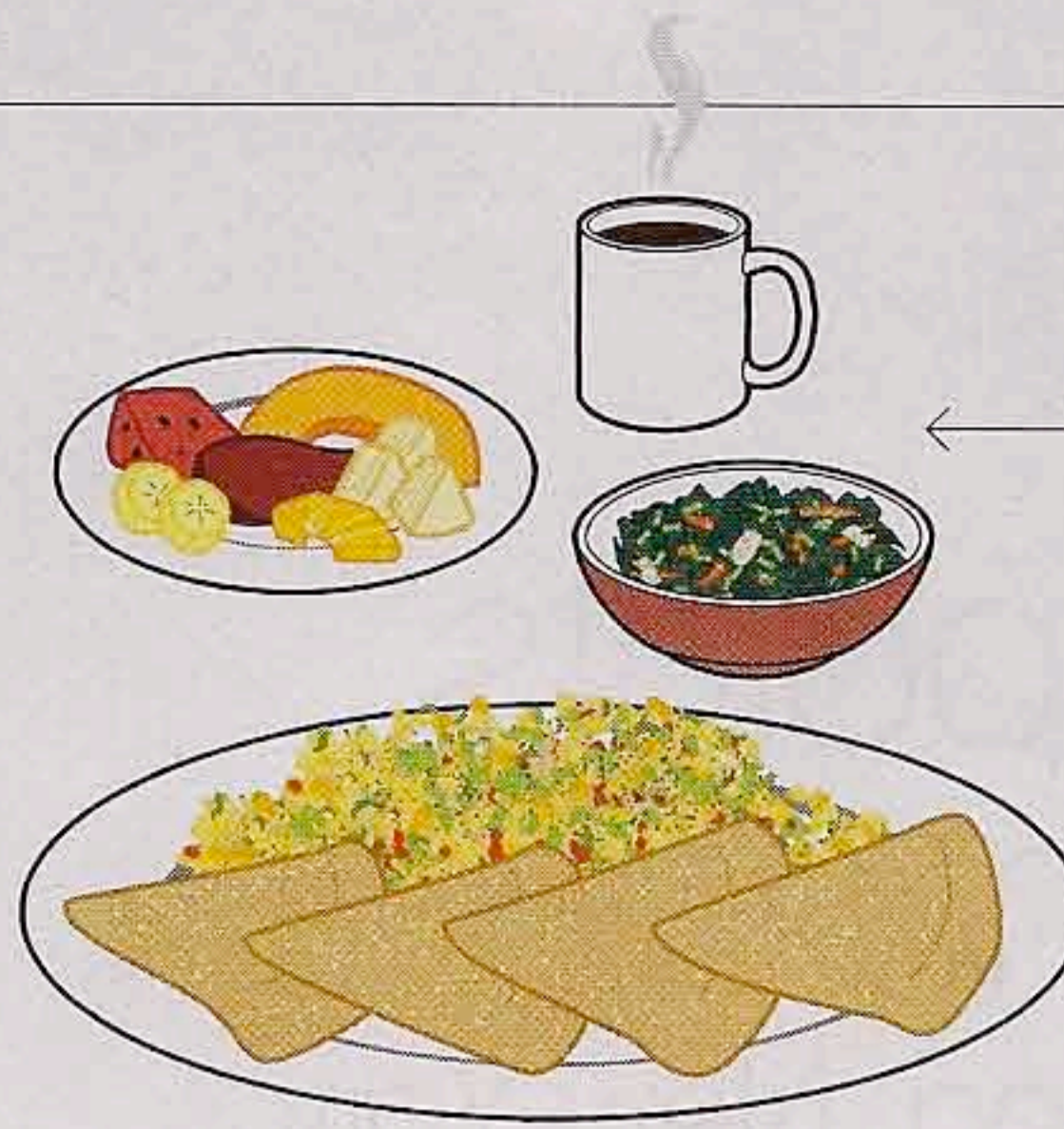
UNITED STATES

Grits! Biscuits! Redeye gravy! These, of course, are the staples of a Southern breakfast. Plus, andouille sausage, *pain perdu* (French toast to you), and beignets (gilded, if you wish, with praline dipping sauce) in New Orleans. Peppers are in everything in the Southwest, while the region's pancakes are made with blue-corn flour and sweetened with agave syrup. New England is all about maple syrup, perhaps

871

Estimated calorie count of the loco moco breakfast at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, in Hawaii.

poured over hotcakes made with Maine's wild blueberries. And in the Pacific Northwest there's salmon, smoked and made into hash. Loco moco is Hawaii's decadent fast-food answer to the Egg McMuffin: white rice with a hamburger patty, a fried egg, and gravy.



ROCKHOUSE HOTEL NEGRIL, JAMAICA

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Ackee and saltfish with bami, served with callaloo, fruit, and Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee. 876/957-4373; rockhousehotel.com.

CARIBBEAN

Puerto Rico's yeasty egg bread, *pan de mallorca* (from the Spanish island of the same name), accompanies *café con leche*. In Jamaica, ackee with saltfish looks like scrambled eggs, but ackee is a fruit; callaloo, served on the side, is a leafy green. The dish often comes with *bami* (cassava flatbread), johnnycakes (fried dumplings), breadfruit, and Jamaica's famous Blue Mountain coffee.

that are surprisingly addictive despite having the consistency of chewing gum.

COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA

The national breakfast dish of these two nations is *gallo pinto* (painted rooster), a reference to the speckled appearance of the mixed beans and rice, but also an attempt to conceal the fact that it's frugally meatless. A more luxurious version would be served with stewed meat and *chorreadas*, Costa Rican corn pancakes.

PERU

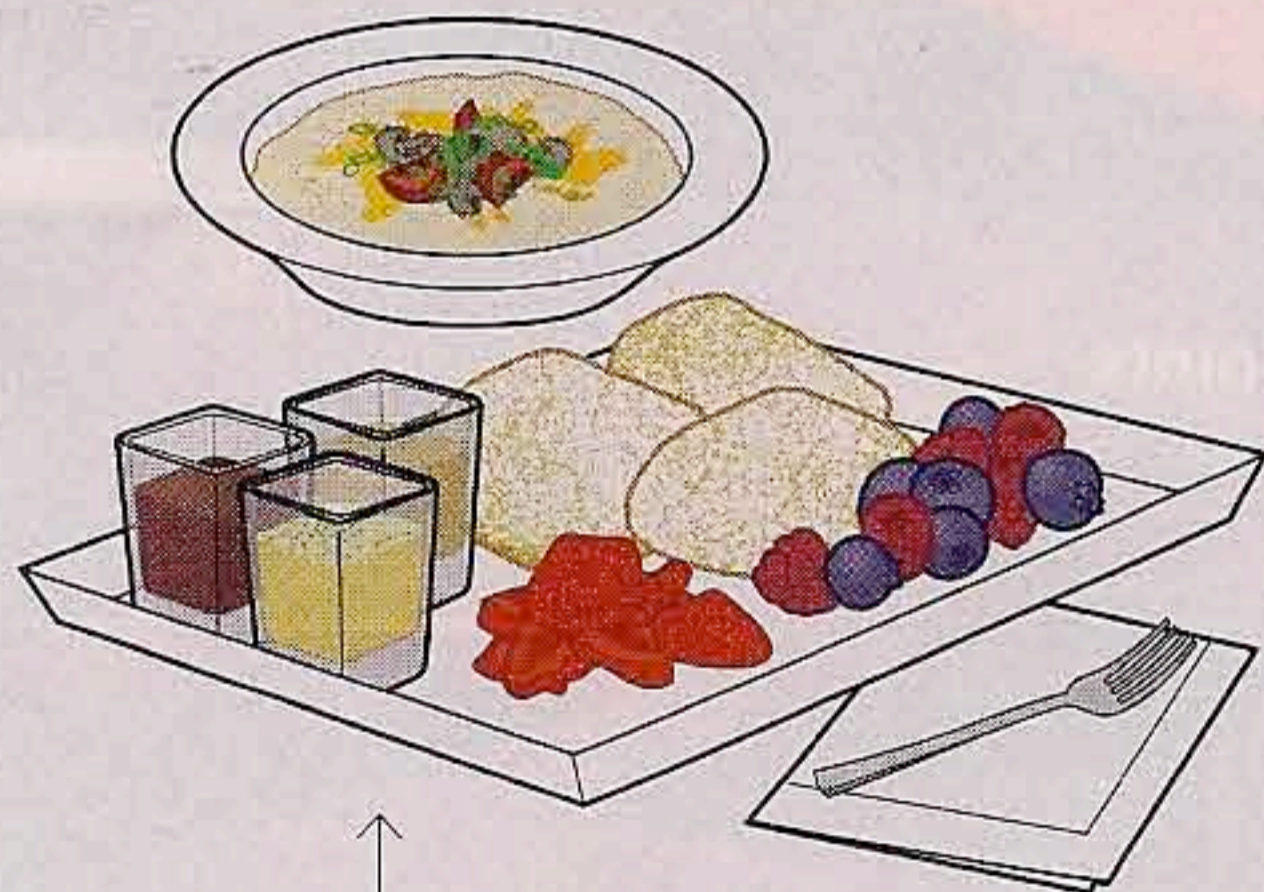
Sweet rolls called *chancays* (named for a small port town) are anise-flavored and often served with Paria cheese from the Andes. Jams are made with elderberries or gooseberries, and pancakes are quinoa-based, with a hint of *oportó* (port wine).

ARGENTINA

Don't expect eggs; they're not served before lunch. Instead, order *colaciones* pastries filled with *dulce de leche* or fruit, and yerba maté, an herbal beverage with antioxidant properties that's made by steeping the leaves of a South American tree. Hotels, however, may not serve it in the traditional way: from a shared hollow gourd with a metal straw. +

Aimee Lee Ball is the co-author of four books and writes frequently for the New York Times.

THE Americas



RITZ-CARLTON, NEW ORLEANS

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Powdered-sugar-dusted beignets with vanilla, chocolate, and caramel dipping sauces, and grits with tasso ham, aged cheddar, and stewed tomatoes. 800/241-3333; ritzcarlton.com.

MEXICO

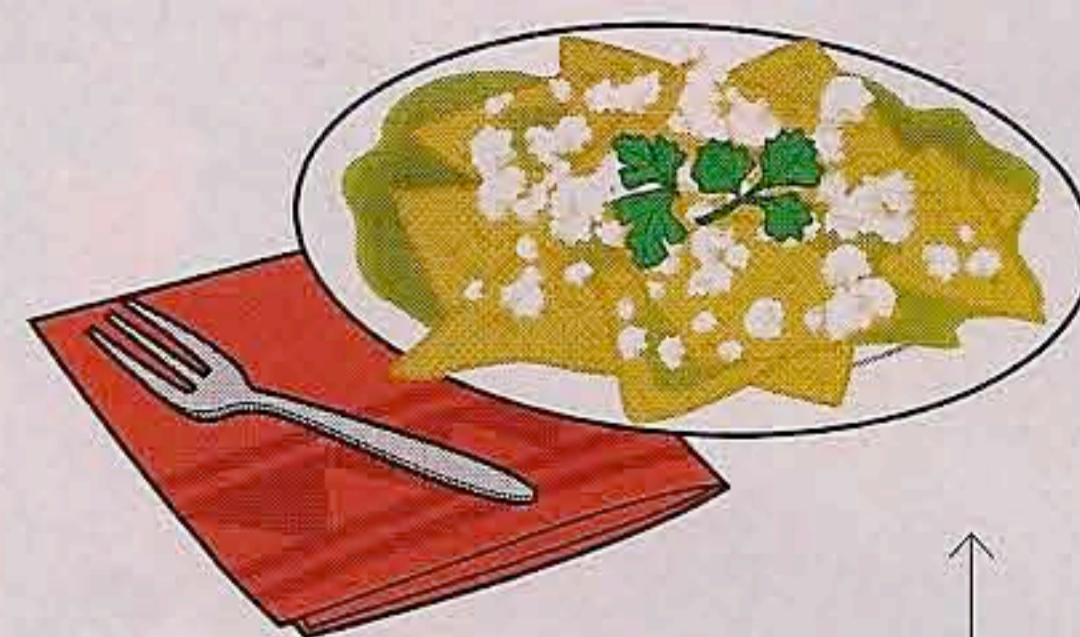
Huitlacoche, a fungus considered a delicacy, is stirred into omelettes. But the breakfast Mexican mothers make to use up day-old corn tortillas is *chilaquiles*: the stale bits are fried in oil, then mixed with salsa, eggs, and a side of beans or nopalitos (the paddles of the prickly pear cactus).

BRAZIL

Along with the country's famous coffee, most hotels offer a basket of small round *pão de queijo* (cheese breads made with tapioca flour)

18

Number of different fruits and berries served by the JW Marriott Guanacaste, in Costa Rica.



PRESIDENTE INTERCONTINENTAL MEXICO CITY D.F.

SIGNATURE BREAKFAST

Chilaquiles, or corn tortillas with salsa, eggs, and panela cheese. 800/344-0548; ichotelsgroup.com.

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