

France's top chef Alain Ducasse reduces amount of meat on the menu

Michelin-starred cook Alain Ducasse reopens Parisian restaurant by ditching¹ duck, veal and steak for largely vegetarian dishes



Alain Ducasse's luxury Plaza Athénée restaurant will reopen with a meat-free and largely organic menu. Photograph: Fred Dufour/AFP/Getty Images

As any vegetarian visiting Paris will know, the French do like their meat. Steak frites, côtes or rotis de boeuf (ribs or roast beef), foie de veau (veal liver) and canard (duck) in various forms are the staples² of the country's cuisine. Now, however, one of the giants of gastronomy, the internationally celebrated French-born chef Alain Ducasse – the most Michelin-starred cook on the planet – is going against the culinary grain³.

His three-star restaurant at the luxury Plaza Athénée hotel will reopen after refurbishment⁴ on Monday with a largely organic produce menu.

The chef has not gone as far as to declare his restaurant vegetarian – fish, seafood and some meat will still be served – but Ducasse has got what he calls "naturalité" (naturalness). "The planet has increasingly rare resources so we have to consume more ethically, more fairly," he told AFP. New dishes include black rice cooked in the oven with shellfish, squid and octopus, Mediterranean fish with bulgur wheat in a tagine, and Anjou grown quinoa and seafood.

Ducasse, who has restaurants around the world including Tokyo, New York and London (at the Dorchester hotel), and several in Paris including the Jules Verne in the Eiffel Tower, said the basic dishes would focus on "fish, cereal and vegetables ... presented in an exceptional way".

"It's a new expression of contemporary French haute cuisine," the company's said. As French newspapers pointed out, however, eating naturally does not mean eating more frugally. The new menu will still set diners back €380, not including drinks.

By Kim Willsher in Paris, theguardian.com, Friday 5 September 2014

¹ To ditch : abandonner

² Staples : les incontournables (produits-phares)

³ Culinary grain : l'identité culinaire

⁴ Refurbishment : rénovation

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