

# Los Angeles Times

# FOOD

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## Wow, what a deal!

**We hit the streets to find the most delicious bargains around.**

by Betty Hallock, Times Staff Writer

**W**HETHER it's saving \$200 on the price of an airline ticket to the Mayan Riviera or snagging a pair of Christian Louboutin sandals priced to move on the last day of the Barneys Warehouse sale, there's something about finding a great deal that's supremely gratifying. And if it's three-star dim sum for the price of a paperback or a cold, frothy chocolate egg cream that's just 50 cents (in Beverly Hills, no less)—it's just that much more delicious.

So what tasty bargains await hungry Angelenos? The best fish taco in town, filled with crisply fried halibut, crunchy cabbage, salsa and crema for 99 cents. Two cocktails for the price of one in a swanky setting from a top mixologist. A steak dinner at the beach for less than \$20. A three-course chef's tasting menu that might include impeccable yellowtail sashimi with bacon and preserved lemon, suckling pig confit with fresh garbanzo beans and blackberry gastrique, and coconut panna cotta with pistachio-cumin brittle—for only 30 bucks.

These are just a few of the 25 tasty bargains that Food section writers discovered after pounding the pavement, from Santa Monica to the Sunset Strip, from North Hollywood to Westminster, from Koreatown to Little Tokyo. Sometimes the delicious deal depends on knowing when to get what where—so step lively if you want that free bottle of wine or a blow-your-mind-but-not-bust-your-budget bento box lunch. Others, like a superior Vietnamese sandwich for \$1.75 or a perfectly spiced samosa for 59 cents, are perennial steals. Here are our favorites.

**10. Butter steak aux fines herbes at Chez Jay, \$19.** This Santa Monica steakhouse hangout just a stone's throw from the beach attracts local twentysomethings, families, couples on dates, bar regulars and an occasional pack of Australian lifeguards or Japanese tourists. You'll also find an excellent steak dinner for less than \$20: 10 ounces of New York steak, a baked potato, sautéed vegetables and garlic bread. Tuck into a booth and enjoy the friendly, dark, boozy scene, with a jukebox that plays what would make a great CD compilation called "Just Good Rock." Chez Jay, 1657 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 395-1741, [www.chezjays.com](http://www.chezjays.com).