

## How to Strategically Stuff Your Face at Eat Drink SF

A.K. Carroll | Photo: Gamma Nine | August 21, 2015

This weekend's epic food fest is packed with nearly 100 small bites and 70-plus beverage pairings. How are we ever going to eat all the things?



The feasting frenzy that is [Eat Drink SF](#) kicks off at Fort Mason Center with the first of three grand tastings tonight at 7:15 p.m. With two follow-up tastings back to back on Saturday, the fest has issued the ultimate epicurean challenge: to devour dozens of culinary delicacies without reaching for the Pepto-Bismol. Each of the tastings—whose offerings do overlap for the most part—lasts about three hours and features roughly 32 tasters of two to three bites each. For weekend pass holders, that's a grand total of 95 servings, which, when you add in the 70-plus beverage pairings, really starts to put a strain on one's storage capacity (and one's pants). And—as if anyone needed more—VIP ticket holders can treat themselves to bonus sips and snacks that will be exclusive to the VIP lounge. For advice on how to keep pace at this gastrointestinal triathlon, we turned to *Top Chef* finalist Melissa King and *San Francisco's* own Josh Sens, who were more than happy to explain how to go about walking (waddling?) the line between gourmand and glutton.

### **Get the lay of the land before planning your attack.**

VIP ticket holders get a 45-minute head start, so you'll want to be ready for action. "Handle it as you would at a big buffet," suggests Sens. "Make a reconnaissance tour to see what's out there. Then go back for more surgical strikes afterwards."

### **Eyes on the prize: Focus on your favorites.**

"Find restaurants you've always wanted to try but haven't had the chance to," says King. "There will be plenty of options, and you might not make it through all of them, so pick your favorites and go for those first." You can also do [some scouting in advance](#) online.

### **Know your limits and pair with care.**

“Champagne and beer pair well with a variety of offerings,” says King. “Carbonation helps to cut acidity and fattiness, but beer can be filling, so choose wisely.”

Sens suggests that serious eaters will want to “sip slowly” to avoid palate fatigue. And for those who are looking to get tipsy, you probably don't need a food writer to tell you this, but here you go: “Go straight to the hard stuff and make sure you have the Uber app.”

### **Make the most of your time and go slowly.**

“Remember to only take one offering,” King kindly reminds those who fail at portion control. “You’ll want to save room. Try to pace yourself.”

Despite humoring us for a while, Sens seemed to lose patience with this whole premise. “Anyone who needs advice on how to eat an abundance of food probably shouldn’t be allowed access to a food festival,” he says. “But as long as we’re accepting the stupidity of the populace as our starting point, walk around. Take your time. Chew every bite 32 times.”

### **Our experts' picks:**

#### *Friday night*

**Delfina**’s caponata speidino with sour grapes, capers, and basil

**Flour + Water**’s smoked ricotta with tomato, chili, and lime leaf

**Aaxte**’s mussel escabeche

#### *Saturday afternoon*

**ICHI**’s marinated watermelon with avocado puree and chili almond sauce

**Luce**’s tartar of prime beef with black garlic and smoked white cheddar

#### *Saturday evening*

**Hopscotch**’s butterscotch pudding with whiskey whip and senbei rice cracker