



## Divine Intervention

AT AN AMBITIOUS NEW FOOD HALL IN THE BRITISH CAPITAL, DINING IS A NEAR-RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

BY DELLE CHAN

in 1974, has been given a new lease on life as **Mercato Mayfair** ([mercato-metropolitano.com](http://mercato-metropolitano.com)), an offshoot of the hip South London food market Mercato Metropolitano.

Fresh from a two-year, 6.5-million-dollar restoration, the Greek Revival building and its original stained-glass windows and reredos now provide a sublime backdrop to one of the buzziest food halls in town. Diners can order a G&T or craft pale ale at the altar, and margherita pizza or spicy tuna *maki* in the high-vaulted nave. There's also a second-floor gallery with yet more offerings, from seafood platters and Italian grilled meats to the aforementioned Turkish flatbread, freshly baked at Lala—try the Dara pide, which is generously topped with melted cheddar, egg, crushed red chilies, and sesame seeds. Another crowd-pleaser? The pillowy bao buns at Steamy & Co: fillings include soy-braised pulled pork with caramelized peanuts and *shichimi togarashi* (Japanese seven-spice blend), or, for vegetarians, *panko*-crusted mushroom with pickled cabbage, garlic-and-jalapeño aioli, and hoisin sauce. Even the church's crypt has undergone something of a resurrection: the subterranean space now hosts a microbrewery and charcuterie-and-cheese corner alongside an excellently stocked wine cellar. ☉

At a former church in London's Mayfair district, visitors can still partake in bread and wine, though less in the spirit of Holy Communion than in the form of Turkish *pide* and chardonnay. That's because St. Mark's, built by the Church of England in 1822 but deconsecrated due to dwindling congregations



## Also New in London

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### SEVEN DIALS MARKET

With six markets across the city, business incubator Kerb is a stalwart of the London street-food scene. Its latest project, which made its debut last September, is set in a former banana warehouse in buzzing Covent Garden, with 12 independent traders dishing up global flavors ranging from Jewish and Italian to Chinese and Japanese. Headliners include Club Mexicana for its vegan comfort food (think jackfruit burritos and smoked tofu tacos); Claw, which specializes in sustainable seafood rolls; and Pick & Cheese, the world's first cheese conveyor-belt restaurant. For edible souvenirs, stop by Cucumber Alley, where vendors purvey artisanal produce such as Lithuanian rye bread and English jams and preserves ([sevendialsmarket.com](http://sevendialsmarket.com)).

### MARKET HALL WEST END

Opened in November in a former department store just off Oxford Street, this three-story, 3,200-square-meter behemoth is by far the largest food hall in the U.K. It seats over 1,000 hungry diners, who can take their pick from a smorgasbord of dishes such as ruby prawn dumplings from Baozilnn, Pastiao's *cacio e pepe*, and Malaysian *roti canai* with mutton, fish, or chicken curry from Gopal's Corner. There's more than just street food on offer: the venue also houses three event spaces, a rooftop terrace and bar, a cocktail lounge, and even a TV studio that hosts video podcasts and live cooking demos. It all makes for a fun-filled culinary playground ([markethalls.co.uk](http://markethalls.co.uk)). —DC