

[drink&dine]

Side Show

San Francisco Side Dishes with a Little Something Special

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Do you dip your french fries in mayo or ketchup? Top a taco with cheese, guac or the true aficionado's scatter of pickled jalapeños? Our condiment choices say a lot about us; mayo is undeniably the European choice and thrill seekers tend toward a hit of hot sauce with taqueria fare. We relish (pun intended) condiment decisions in lowbrow, fun-filled situations like a backyard barbecue or a weekend road stop at In-N-Out. It's a way to take ownership of an ordinary burger as we mark it indelibly with our own tried and approved condiment ratio.

Psycho mumbo-jumbo aside, it seems highbrow chefs are beginning to realize the joy diners derive from do-it-yourself enhancements. Here's a summary of dishes that let you drizzle, slather and sprinkle as much, or as little, as you desire — all in the confines of one of those new hotspots your crew has been buzzing about.

What's the main dish without a lil' somethin' on the side? At these SF eateries, condiments make entrees shine.



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SPOTLIGHT Ultimate half-pound Roasthouse burger

SUPPORTING ROLE A gathering of burger's best friends includes house-made bacon bits, garlic aioli, whole grain mustard and sautéed mushrooms.

THE STAGE Each condiment comes in its own ramekin. A slim rectangular dish holds them all in one place.

RESTRICTED AUDIENCE During lunch, Chef Jan Birnbaum's latticed potato chips, made in-house daily, make an appearance beside the burger.