

8 investing mistakes you should avoid this year

Don't wait to find out if you're making costly investment errors. Instead, download the latest report by Forbes columnist Ken Fisher. It's called **"The Eight Biggest Mistakes Investors Make and How to Avoid Them."** Even if you avoid just one of these mistakes, you'll be glad you acted now!

[Click Here to Download Now!](#)



FISHER INVESTMENTS™

BARRON'S

Penta

Insights and advice for families with assets of \$5 million or more.

January 6, 2012, 7:23 P.M. ET

The London-New York Food Axis

New York doesn't take a backseat to any city in the world when it comes to food, but there are two cuisines that are just better in London: Indian and Lebanese. Everyone who has visited or lived in London has their own favorite "local" curry house, but for those who are London bound and want a little Old Raj ambiance with their tandoori, I recommend that reliable standby, [The Bombay Brasserie](#). The [Good Curry Guide](#) calls it the "UK's most acclaimed Indian restaurant – consistently superb."

The restaurant, owned by the Taj Hotels, recently went through a major refurbishment, but is still redolent with special meaning for me. One evening in the 1990s I dined there with my friend, the late film producer, Ismail Merchant, of [Merchant Ivory Productions](#). Ismail made those lovely 1980s and 1990s films like "[Howard's End](#)" and "[Room With A View](#)", and had just privately screened for me the Urdu-language film he had [directed](#) of Anita Desai's [In Custody](#). We were celebrating his artistic success.

Scarfig down the Bombay Brasserie's fabled Goan Fish Stew, my forehead beading up with sweat, I said to Ismail, "You really need to find a literary property that can marry your love of the kitchen with your love of filmmaking." So the Bombay Brasserie has emotional resonance with me, not just because it was one of my old friend's favorite culinary haunts, but because it gave birth to my novel, [The Hundred-Foot Journey](#), a story about an Indian chef who becomes a three star chef in Paris.

But my favorite restaurant in the world, purely for eating, is the Lebanese restaurant, [Al Hamra](#), lurking in the cobblestone lanes of Shepherd's Market, London. The décor is Lebanese-private-bank-circa-1974, with white table cloths and heavy silverware packed in tight around potted plants and ruched curtains.

It's the food you come for. After dining there for 25 years, I still only know half Al Hamra's menu because I can never get past the mezes of hummus dotted with pine nuts and grilled lamb, *fatoush* (a salad of onion, sumac, mint, cucumber, tomato, parsley and crackling bits of toasted pita bread), and the smoky, pureed eggplant called *baba ghanoush*.

In the eve of a breezy London summer night, it's bliss to dine outside on the cobblestones of Mayfair, a glass of chilled [Chateau Musar](#) rosé, a fine Lebanese wine, at your elbow, the table filled with little platters of sautéed leeks and grilled chicken livers. My all-time favorite Al Hamra dish: quail, split and grilled on charcoal with a slather of citrusy garlic paste. Simple and delicious. I cannot tell you the number of guests I have taken to Al Hamra, who, slightly revolted at the idea of eating the dainty game birds, ended up crunching the bird's delicate bones and sucking their fingers.



But the point is, with this London benchmark to measure up to, every time I have eaten Lebanese in New York I have been disappointed. Until last weekend, that is, when I made my way to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, to eat at [Tanoreen](#), a restaurant where Michelin inspectors take their families to eat on their days off. A few blocks from the water and the looming Verrazano Narrows Bridge, Tanoreen is an airy dining hall with long tables and lots of glass. The proprietress must be Lebanese Christian – angels wrapped in red tinsel stood in the windows the day we visited.

Tanoreen is different to Al Hamra, home-style rather than crisply formal, but it sure holds its own in the kitchen: browned cauliflower, dribbled with tahini and pomegranate molasses; crispy Brussel sprouts with a citrus spritz; *tagine*, a grapes, carrots and lemon-chicken stew, where the meat fell off the bone.

I was swooning over the *sujok* – an Armenian lamb sausage that was paprika-red and oozing a slick of artery-clogging fat – when the kohled-eyed chef-owner, Rawia Bishara, came to our table. “It’s not paprika,” she said. “The *sujok* is made with my house-made chili paste.”

I told her this was the best Lebanese I had since London. She pooh-poohed the idea. “I don’t know why,” she said, “but they don’t have good Lebanese in London. Paris, yes. But not London.”

“Well, I love Al Hamra.”

“Aah, Al Hamra. That is another matter entirely.” I went poetic on her about Al Hamra’s quail and how much I missed it. “Next time you come, call me 24 hours ahead. I will make the quail for you,” she said.

So I am heading back to Tanoreen soon. Our gourmet lunch, for four people, cost \$106 including tip, and qualifies as one on my “best-value” restaurants in New York, alongside [Wong](#) and [Do Or Dine](#).



Finally, for those of you who are serious theater-goers and frequently heading to London, it’s always important to have a reliably good pretheater restaurant that serves excellent food and can quickly get you in and out for the curtain call. [Orso](#) and [Joe Allen](#) are known New York theater restaurants on 46th street, but their long-established offshoots in London’s West End far out perform their U.S. parents.

I was recently at Orso in New York, and while it had the same subterranean feel and attractive menu, it lacked the stardust that Orso in London has. My favorite dish in the London restaurant is the roast suckling pig, but they also do an excellent rabbit and their grilled scallops with risotto are also top-rate. (The menu changes throughout the year, but they recycle the favorites.) Always very pleasant to end the evening with *Vin Santo* (an amber-colored Tuscan sweet wine) and the house-made pistachio biscotti, while people watching. One amusing evening at Orso, my wife and I sat next to Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft quaffing drinks and howling with laughter.