

WHERE TO EAT IN



DO YOU CRAVE CLOUDLIKE RISOTTO? SHANGHAISE DUMPLINGS?

Los Angeles, visitors often assume, is a universe captured wholly within the whirring, oversize Rolodexes maintained by Jeffrey Katzenberg. But in fact, it's an overwhelming place, endless and illogical, stretching for 100 miles on some axes until the city grid melts into desert, high mountains, or the sea. A hundred

different languages are spoken in the hallways of the city's high schools; far more Mexicans live here than in Guadalajara, more Asians than in Kyoto, more Samoans than in American Samoa.

Are you fond of Chinese food? The 1998 edition of the local *Chinese Yellow Pages* weighs in at close to

N los angeles

by jonathan gold photographed by anders overgaard



Holy mole: Guelaguetza lends a dash of Zapotec flavor to Koreatown.

EVERY MOLE KNOWN TO MAN? HAVE WE GOT A CITY FOR YOU!

2,500 pages. Central American cooking? There may be as many as 300 Salvadoran restaurants in central Los Angeles, and at least half of them are identically good.

In my dozen years as a restaurant critic here, I have had a chance to taste it all. And I've found that the most authentic Los Angeles experiences tend to involve

a mild sense of dislocation, of tripping into a rabbit hole and popping up halfway around the world. The greatest Los Angeles cooking, the real local cooking, has first a sense of wonder about it, and only secondarily a sense of place. Experience a few of the following restaurants, and you'll begin to know Los Angeles itself.