

THE FOOD LIFE

✓ fall checklist

'Tis the season for hearty charcuterie, warming spirits and the last of the ripe tomatoes we'll get until next summer. Our must-taste-it list for fall offers distinctly local flavors for health nuts and candy freaks alike to enjoy.

✓ Tomato Burger

Don't let the name of this dish fool you—there's no beef or meat of any kind here. This sandwich stars a thick slab of beefsteak tomato served on an olive oil brioche bun with pickled red onions, sprouts and capers. The tomato burger is a menu standout at Jose Andres's recently opened fast-casual restaurant, **Beefsteak**, in University City. 3417 Spruce St., 215.898.5552, beefsteakveggies.com.



✓ Rice Cakes

Trust us: These are nothing like the flavorless, Styrofoam-like rice cakes you ate in the eighties. Made from organic brown rice grown locally at **Blue Moon Acres farms**, these snacks are fresh, crisp and nutty-tasting. They're the perfect addition to back-to-school (or work) lunchboxes, especially when paired with some soft local cheese. Buy them at the Blue Moon Acres farms in Pennington, NJ, and Buckingham, PA; the Blue Moon Acres stand in the Stockton Market; and online at bluemoonacres.com/shop.



✓ Four Grain Bourbon

Warming brown spirits like bourbon seem just right for autumn sipping. Try this version from **Bluebird Distilling**, made in Phoenixville. This bourbon starts with a blend of corn, rye, wheat and barley and is aged in charred American oak barrels. Its smooth sweetness makes it a good bourbon to drink neat or mix up in your favorite cocktail. Visit the distillery at 100 Bridge St., Phoenixville, 610.933.7827, bluebirddistilling.com.

✓ Salame Felino

Traditionally, this dry-cured pork sausage is made in a small town in Italy, but chef and charcuterie master Joe Cicala, of Le Virtu and Brigantessa restaurants, is making his exceptional version right here in Philly. Along with several other cured-meat products, it's now offered as part of the chef's new charcuterie line, **Salumificio Cicala**. You can find it at Brigantessa, Le Virtu, Taproom on 19th, Martha and Green Aisle Grocery and at salumificio-cicala.com.



✓ Salty Black Licorice

It's not for everybody, but the potent anise flavor of black licorice combined with salt is a candy classic—and those who love it really love it. **Mueller's Chocolate** is a local specialist in this Scandinavian treat. The Reading Terminal Market stand carries five varieties of salty black licorice, ranging in texture from soft to crisp. 51 N. 12th St., 215.922.6164, muellerschocolate.com.



✓ Pink Oyster Mushrooms

The scientific name for this pretty edible fungus is *pleurotus djamor*, and it tastes as good as it looks. The pink variety packs more savory, umami-rich flavor than other oyster mushrooms. The mushroom farm **Philly Grown** cultivates this and many other varieties of exotic mushrooms at its Feltonville growing facility. (The farm is inside one of the old Goldenberg's Peanut Chews factories.) Philly Grown specializes in mushroom CSAs, which offer an assortment of mushrooms, including the Pink Oyster. Buy mushrooms and learn more at phillygrown.farm.