

What's cooking in Supper Clubs & Underground Restaurants?

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Posted [Jun 13 2013](#) by [Miss Funtasty](#) in [Secret Tables](#) with [0 Comments](#)

Berlin has by now a decent and steadily growing number of supper clubs that cover various kinds of tastes. But what if you are after the sweet side of life? *Sophiencafé* is the name to keep in mind, for cakes and cookies and any such sugary pleasures loaded with chocolate, fruit, nuts, heavy cream, eggs and butter. *Sophiencafé* is Berlins – if not Germany's – first and only secret tea club. Yet a top secret tea club if you want, because it's brand-new, and reading this you are amongst the very first ones to know.



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The sweetheart behind *Sophiencafé* is Astrid Sophie, a graduated pastry chef with a diploma from one of the world's most famous culinary arts schools, Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. For pâtisserie, Paris is pretty much what it is for fashion: The place to be! A melting pot where several hundred years of tradition and classic craftsmanship merge with influences from all over the World to produce trendsetting innovations. A sugar-coated catwalk for pastry chefs launching their new collections, what the top guys seriously do. The latest hype is by the way Wasabi, even for chocolate and pastries, no kidding! Astrid Sophie's approach is experimental, yet classic, with her main ingredients being: Honesty and love. Above anything else, she believes in fresh, high quality produce with no artificial flavours. Her focus is on the natural taste and beauty of the product to make it talk for itself. A cake overloaded with playful decoration and tons of sugar icing is usually a disappointing taste experience, she finds, pimped-up Barbie style. And not surprisingly, she has never felt tempted to follow the cupcake mania.

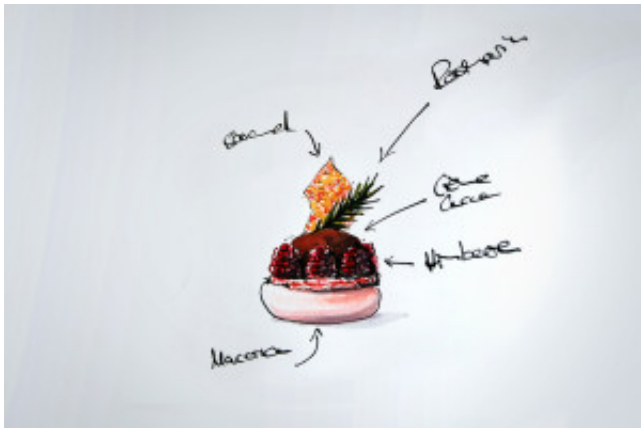


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So imagine the very first, very classy *Sophiencafé* tea time event that took place at Astrid Sophie's place end of March: 3 damask covered tables, white porcelain, her flea market silver cutlery, folded napkins and fresh flowers. A classic French apple tarte, millefeuilles with prunes, orange and vanilla, poppy-seed brioche, furthermore a selection of cookies and petit fours, and on the savoury side cucumber sandwiches with Danish cheese, sandwiches with mushrooms in lime and dill cream and pumpnickel with quail egg on parsley and capers butter – because a traditional tea time does never go without sandwiches! And not to forget the tea of course: 4 different types, ranging from Earl Grey, fresh mint tea and Chinese green tea to Assam, the latter personally collected by Astrid Sophie's own hands during a two weeks stay at a tea plantation in India.

It's not only for the tea that the story of *Sophiencafé* is strongly connected to India. In fact, it all goes back to a boarding school in South India where 2 teenage girls meet and become close friends: Astrid Sophie, the German exchange student who wants to spice up her high school years with some adventure abroad, and Meghna from a family from Calcutta. Already at that time Astrid trains herself in the delicate art of making traditional Bengali sweets. *Sophiencafé* is her childhood dream that years later comes to life through Meghna: Born with a hospitality gene and a passion for food, she pushes her friend to start a supper club together: The *Sophiencafé* supper club, supposed to bring the flavours of an authentic Indian meal to Berlin. But the two underestimate the organizational challenge that arises from Meghna living in London. The plan gets put on hold for several months until Astrid Sophie finally decides to launch *Sophiencafé* "reloaded" on her own, as a tea club this time. The initial tea party at her apartment – rightfully called a party because the last guests left around midnight – was followed by a picnic in early May. It was the type of event that lifestyle magazines would orchestrate as the perfect escape from the city: Amazing cakes, cookies and sandwiches served in an amazing piece of nature, yet widely

undiscovered by Berlin’s hipsters. The setup was very stylish again, no paper cups and plastic forks but porcelain and silver cutlery. And whilst it had been pouring with rain all morning, the sun came out just one hour before the event, and finally even the freshly prepared ice tea was highly welcome.



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Quite obviously, *Sophiencafé* is closing a gap. Really good cafés, pastry shops and bakeries are even harder to find than good restaurants if you ask me. A tea time treat at the Adlon hotel for 29€ may not meet everybody’s taste and budget. At *Sophiencafé*, you are in for a suggested donation of €15 (depending on the event) to enjoy Astrid Sophie’s creative, non-standardized delicacies – always seasoned with a good dose of love!

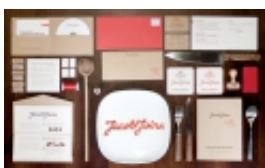
If you want to give yourself a yummy time at *Sophiencafé*, your next chance will be ”La Vie en Vert” on 28th June: A dinner this time, five vegetarian courses inspired by classic French cuisine and Astrid Sophie’s work experience from several Michelin-starred restaurants in France. The suggested donation for this special event is €35 including aperitif, coffee and petit fours, plus €10 for the wine arrangement. Check out the [Facebook fanpage](#) or find contact details on the [Sophiencafé website](#) - and don’t wait too long, places are very limited!

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