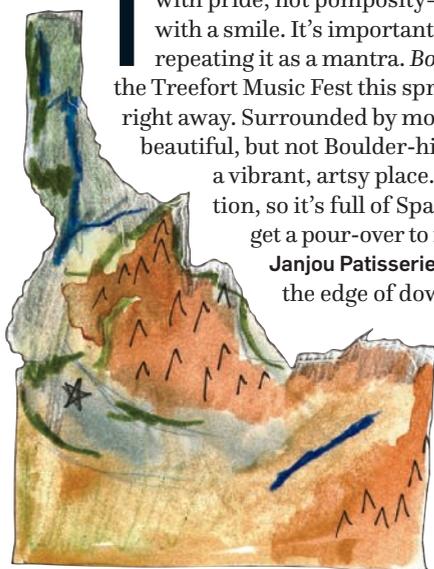




Boy, Oh, Boise!

This spring, the chef, restaurateur, and *Top Chef* judge **Hugh Acheson** explored Idaho's lively capital city. Here's his journal of snapshots and sketches.

The first thing I learned in Boise was that it is pronounced “Boy-see,” not “Boy-zee.” The locals I met explained this with pride, not pomposity—a friendly corrective offered with a smile. It’s important to Boiseans, so I practiced, repeating it as a mantra. *Boy-see. Boy-see.* I landed there for the Treefort Music Fest this spring, and the town grabbed me right away. Surrounded by mountains and rivers, it’s intensely beautiful, but not Boulder-hippie or Aspen-wealthy—just a vibrant, artsy place. There’s a large Basque population, so it’s full of Spanish food and markets. You can get a pour-over to rival any in San Francisco. At **Janjou Patisserie** (janjou.com), in a strip mall at the edge of downtown, I ate the best croissant I’ve had all year. There’s a gripping authenticity to the place, and it feels as if a movement is afoot—like it’s on the cusp of being a nationally beloved destination. I can’t wait to go back.



I caught a trout (Big one) on the Boise River.

1. I took this photo from the historic Owyhee building (theowyhee.com). I liked the mural on the white building. Street art is everywhere—even on the electrical transformers. **2.** The **Modern Hotel & Bar** (themodernhotel.com; entrées \$18–\$25) is an old motel that has been redone in a cool, contemporary style. There’s a great little restaurant with chef-y bistro fare. **3.** I got provisions at the **Boise Co-op** (boise.coop) and went fly-fishing. My guide was amazing, pointing out the best spots to wade. The cold water made my toes tingle, but it was such a beautiful place to get away to. →

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF HUGH ACHESON

