



145 East 16th Street New York, NY 10003
Tel (212) 505-7090 Fax (212) 473-5085
www.ckponline.com

Washington DC Guide

For those of you who have never seen our Restaurant Guides before... let me explain. While Chuck Klein Productions provides turnkey promotional solutions for companies launching new products, attending tradeshows, and aggressively building brand awareness; CKP staffers travel constantly and are never too busy to enjoy a fine meal and a great restaurant. And we consider sharing these finds to be our responsibility to fellow food-lovers.

While most of our clients are in the Entertainment and Cable TV industries, we have also worked in Consumer Electronics, High Tech, and Fashion. We can either help you execute your promotional strategies, or work with your staff to develop tactics that will satisfy your marketing objectives. In any case, our proven track record makes me confident that you will be very pleased with the results.

Since it costs no more to start speaking with us earlier vs. later... you should call us as soon as you start thinking about a new exhibit, promotional event (large or small), or some kind

of traffic building tradeshow stunt. We can provide everything from spokespeople and models to imaginative hospitality suites, to the mega parties and special events that have made us famous. The sooner you start to move, the more options you have.

Our nation's capitol offers much excitement, talent and variety when it comes to dining out. A commingling of cultures and nationalities, a sense of history and American political myth, colorful characters galore, plus the flavors and ingredients native to the region come together artfully in the local restaurant scene. From the fanciest, most formal of dining rooms to the humblest of neighborhood diners, DC and vicinity easily provides whatever sort of meal you crave.

As always, our restaurant recommendations are a compilation of personal favorites, top picks of local and national food and wine critics, and input from local friends and associates. While we have tried to make specific comments in the brief reviews, ratings, from ★ to ★★★★★, are overall ratings, most heavily influenced by the food, but also factor in ambiance, décor and service. Our cost estimates are based on dinner compared to other restaurants in the area: \$ inexpensive; \$\$ moderate; \$\$\$ expensive; \$\$\$\$ very expensive, and \$\$\$\$\$ is really expensive, over \$70.

Keep in mind that in Washington DC, as everywhere, restaurants and clubs can open and close, change hours, credit card policies, and even move with very short notice. We recommend calling ahead to address any special needs. Feel free to mention Chuck Klein Productions.

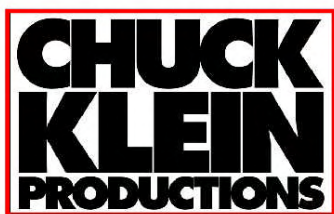
We hope you enjoy our recommendations, and we'd like to hear from you about anything you especially loved or loathed. Also remember, we post past and present guides on our website, www.ckponline.com... plus, it's a good place to learn more about CKP, and what we may be able to do for your company.

We wish you all a hearty appetite, good eating, and a concierge who can arrange those 'difficult to get' reservations.

Acadiana - 901 New York Ave. NW (9th St.) - 202-408-8848 www.acadianarestaurant.com ★★★ \$\$\$: The latest offering from the creators of Ceiba and TenPenh, Acadiana is all things Louisiana...including roux, rémoulade, bisque and étouffée. Design elements like big, old, sparkling crystal chandeliers, elaborately wrought giant urns and alligator sculptures are elegant and whimsical. Turtle soup, gratinée of jumbo lump crab, fried green tomatoes, and grilled gulf redfish are just a few of the mouth-watering treats in store. And for dessert...warm bittersweet chocolate bread pudding sounds just about perfect. So does the location...right across from the Convention Center.

Asia Nora - 2213 M St. NW (bet. 22nd & 23rd Sts.) - 202-797-4860 www.noras.com ★★★ \$\$\$: Thai décor and authentic Asian artifacts are a serene backdrop for the simply sensational flavors created by Chef Nora Pouillon. Created from all organic ingredients, with a flair for natural flavor and bold color, the Pan Asian delicacies are sure to delight you. Especially good: the ginger-touched dumplings, the wonderful tuna tartare, the Thai seafood stew, and the sesame-crust ahi with wasabi potato puree.

Ben's Chili Bowl - 1213 U St. NW (bet. 12th & 13th Sts.) - 202-667-0909 www.benschilibowl.com ★★★ \$: There's a whole lot of history around this legendary U Street tradition. Some call it a landmark, others call it a dive, but since just about forever, Ben's has served their legendary and addictive chili dogs and chili cheese fries to a loyal clientele. Non-meat eaters do just fine here...this great little joint serves veggie dogs and veggie chili, too. The chocolate shakes are stellar. Open till 2 am weeknights, 4 am Fri and Sat., Sun. from 11 am till 8 pm only.



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Butterfield 9 - 600 14th St. NW (bet. F and G Sts.) - 202-289-8810 www.butterfield9.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Our *Cable World* pal, Seth Arenstein, turned us on to this snazzy spot in the heart of DC's theatre district. It looks and feels like that *movie land* supper club from the glam old days. Décor features stylized black & white prints of 40's and 50's vintage fashion, and Butterfield 9 references the phone number of cinema detectives, Nick and Nora Charles, of the classic *Thin Man* films. The lunch entrée of giant shrimp and soft-shell crab in nicoise sauce with arugula and herbs is fantastic. For dinner, try the chipotle-marinated grilled quail appetizer, followed by the porcini-crust black cod with smoked onion gratin. Expensive but the pre and post theater prix fixe menu is a great deal...3 courses for about \$35.00.

Ceiba - 701 14th St. NW (G St.) - 202-393-3983 www.ceibarestaurant.com ★★★ \$\$\$: A sky-blue domed ceiling, walls done in splashes of crimson, cocoa, ice blue and green, primitive murals, textured Mexican limestone accents and curved glass bay windows makes this one of the prettiest dining rooms in town. From the creators of the fabu DC Coast and TenPenh, Ceiba's specialty is South American, Cuban and Mexican cuisine. To start, the ceviche sampler is a must, but make sure someone at your table orders the shredded duck confit empanadas, and gives you a taste. Favorite entrees: The whole, crispy fish is terrific...likewise, the braised pork shank, done feijoada style. All kinds of great rum and tequila cocktails; and another nice touch... complimentary caramel corn is served along with your check.

Citronelle - Latham Hotel 3000 M St. NW (30th St.) - 202-625-2150 www.citronelledc.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$\$: This is the top of the food chain...about as good as it gets here and anywhere. Chef-Owner, Michael Richard, wrapped up the 2007 James Beard Award for Outstanding Chef, along with Sommelier, Mark Slater, for outstanding wine service. Condé Nast Traveler calls Citronelle 'one of the world's most exciting restaurants'. There's a show kitchen, and it's not unusual to spy Chef Richard himself creating some brand new dish...like a tuna napoleon nicoise...just for you. Cuisine, described as New French, is devised from the freshest seasonal ingredients and the most lavish imagination. Try the beluga pasta appetizer, served with chunks of lobster. As you'd expect, the wines are superb and the service is stellar. Expensive, and should be.

City Lights of China -1300 Pennsylvania Ave. (13th St.) - 202-289-1007 www.citylightsofchina.com ★★ \$: White House workaholics are regulars here, and also buy lots of take-out from this long-standing fixture in DC dining. The price is right, the food is good, and the three-tiered dining room with leather booths and banquettes is comfortable and low-key. Best dishes include a crisp-fried Cornish Hen, Chinese Eggplant in Garlic Sauce, and Peking Duck. Full bar, too.

CityZen - Mandarin Oriental 1330 Maryland Ave. SW (bet. 12th & 14th Sts.) - 202-787-6006 www.mandarinoriental.com/hotel/535000039.asp ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$\$: Five Diamond, AAA and Four Stars Mobil plus tons of honors from all the foodie press, including "Hottest Restaurants" *Food & Wine Magazine*, just begins to describe the buzz generated by CityZen. Modern American cuisine created by Chef Eric Ziebold is to die for. Fun options, like a mini 3-course tasting menu served at the bar, underscore the comfortable elegance that regulars love. Other fan faves are the open kitchen, the 'wall of flames' bar, the complex tasting menus, and the cute little mini-parker house rolls. Seriously expensive.

Clyde's - Georgetown Park Mall 3236 M St. NW (bet. Prospect St. & Wisconsin Ave.) - 202-333-9180 www.clydes.com ★★ \$: This mega-popular chain of *food saloons* has it's winning formula honed to a T, with the Georgetown location at it's epicenter. Juicy burgers, a serious bowl of chili, and terrific crab cake sandwiches are the draw, along with a Sunday Brunch so well-attended, they now serve it on Saturday, as well. Also delish: the steak and eggs! Bar note: 10 draft beers on tap and wines are half-priced on Sunday nights.

Cosi Sandwich Bar -1275 K St. NW - 202-408-1119 www.getcosi.com ★★ \$: Part of a nationally-known restaurant chain, Cosi is a good, fast and inexpensive choice for freshly made and tasty sandwiches, melts, soup and salads. The tomato, basil and Mozzarella sandwich on warm flatbread is really good.

DC Coast - Tower Bldg. 1401 K St. NW (14th St.) - 202-216-5988 www.dccoast.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: This beautiful space, designed with classic Beaux Arts panache, features a giant mermaid sculpture at the entryway. Cuisine is mostly seafood, with a Creole accent. Start with the mussels, served in a heavy pot, swimming in sweet broth. The 'tower of crab' is a must...a yummy stack of soft-shell crab, a crab cake, and tangy corn relish. Fried oysters are served like buffalo wings...with a crumbled blue cheese, butter, and hot sauce dip. The whole striped bass, fried to perfection, is extremely good. (Meat Lovers note: There's a sensational Pork Chop with Sweet Potato puree on the menu.) For dessert, either the hot chocolate soufflé or the lemon meringue pie should do the trick nicely.

Eve - (Alexandria) 110 S. Pitt St. (bet. King & Prince Sts.) - 703-706-0450 www.restauranteve.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$\$: This New American in Old Town boasts *Food & Wine* 2006 " Top 10 Best New Chefs" winner, Dublin- born Cathal Armstrong, rocking the kitchen. (He's also nominated for a 2007 James Beard Award!) Local ingredients are key to his fabulous food...with over 150 local farmers and purveyors providing the bounty. Especially good: The house-made charcuterie, the confit of house-cured pork belly, and the Muscovy duck leg with lentils. For a special treat, visit the Tasting Room, and sample Jerusalem-artichoke velouté with black truffles.



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Filomena's - 1063 Wisconsin Ave. (bet K & M St.) - 202-338-8800 www.filomenadc.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Simply wonderful Italian cooking so authentic that real Italian mamas and grandmas can be seen kneading the pasta dough in the store-front window. Décor is a charmingly over the top overload of plants, statues and art...which somehow just works. Portions are huge and very affordable...the \$10 lunch buffet is a steal. Loved by tourists and locals, power players and just plain power eaters, even former presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton were fans of Filomena. Try the Ravioli stuffed with Italian cheeses and spinach, or filled with smoked chicken and cream. They make a spectacular veal dish with a Marsala and mushroom sauce that's to die for. The risotto with seafood...there are no words. Finish with scrumptious cheesecake and tiramisu. A gem!

Galileo (Il Laboratorio Del Galileo) - 1110 21st St., NW - 202-293-7191 www.robertodonna.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Our sister-in-law, Sami, is a big foodie (and a gourmet cook herself,) and she's lived here for ages. She has nothing but raves for the Neapolitan cuisine at Galileo, and especially loved dining at the glass-enclosed (and very hard to reserve) chef's table. Outstanding dishes include the roasted rack of lamb served with porcini mushroom tart in black olive sauce, and the homemade ravioli filled with ham, mozzarella, and buffalo ricotta in a meat ragu. While overall very expensive, some good deals can be found on the lunchtime bar menu which offers pastas, pizzas, and some entrees.

Georgia Brown's - 950 15th St. NW (bet. I & K St.) - 202-393-4499 www.gbrowns.com ★★★ \$\$\$: CKP staffers cannot resist the temptation that is Georgia Brown's. Southern fried everything, smothered in country gravy, with heavenly biscuits and glorious cornbread alongside...slathered with butter, of course. Just listen to these appetite-inducing phrases...fried green tomatoes, crunchy fried chicken and mashed potatoes, crispy catfish fingers, gumbo, crab cakes. Dessert Pick: Bourbon Pecan Pie with a Scoop of Jack Daniels ice cream. Expect to see a few power folk here...especially during lunch.

Gerard's Place - 915 15th St. NW (bet. I & K Sts.) - 202-737-4445 www.gerardsplacedc.net ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Quiet, low-key, elegant, and all about the superb New French cuisine created by chef-owner, Gerard Pangaud. You'll spot a famous face or two, swooning over yummy treats like the poached lobster in ginger-lime sauce, the confit of osso bucco with a gratin of potatoes, and the veal with prosciutto, artichoke and mushrooms. Overall, considered quite pricey. For a good deal, try the 3-course prix-fixe lunch at @\$30.

The Grill - Ritz Carlton, Pentagon City 1250 S. Hayes St. (bet. Army Navy Dr. & 15th St.) - 703-412-2760 www.ritzcarlton.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: The décor of the Grill is typical Ritz Carlton, which, as we all know, is a very good thing. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are all served in this lushly wood-paneled dining room. However, the signature Sunday Champagne Brunch (11am-3pm) is its most celebrated meal and should not be missed. Readers of *Washingtonian* magazine have voted this Sunday tradition "Best Brunch" for the past two years... and, why not, with over 75 specialties served, including numerous omelet and crêpe stations, a raw bar with oysters, shrimp and crab claws, made-to-order sushi, roasts and a full array of sumptuous desserts. If you are going to be in town over the weekend, make reservations for this luxurious dining experience.

The Inn at Little Washington- (Wash, VA) 309 Middle St. (Warren Ave.) - 540-675-3800 www.theinnatlittlewashington.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: For the ultimate in special occasion destinations, this charming country inn, located about an hour's drive from Washington DC, is the last word. The complex 7-course menu is full of spectacular choices in every category...there's even a fully vegetarian option, if that is your wish...and the menu changes daily. You'll feast on lobster, veal, rabbit and beef, done up with divine sauces, and presented with panache. A charming sommelier will guide you through the 40-page wine list, and the wait-staff is expert in pampering of every sort. At meal's end, try the 7 Deadly Sins...a gorgeous sampler of tarts, tortes, and chocolates. Very expensive...the prix fixe meal costs about \$130-\$170 per person, not including wine, tip or tax.

Jaleo - 480 Seventh St. NW (E St.) - 202-628-7949 www.jaleo.com ★★★ \$: The last word in Tapas, DC style. Head chef, Jose Andres, is considered the *head master* when it comes to creating these tasty tidbits. His specialties include a grilled bread layered with fresh tomato puree and anchovy, a warm goat cheese served with crispy toast points, a grilled chorizo sausage, skewered and set atop garlic mashed potatoes, the Manchego cheese and apple salad, and a savory mushroom tart. Spanish wines and Sangrias can be had by the glass. Crowds abound at lunch and dinner. Wednesday nights feature flamenco dancers at 7:45 and 8:45. Way fun.

Kinthead's - 2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (I St.) - 202-296-7700 www.kinthead.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: One of DC's (and our pal, Paul Maxwell's) favorites, Kinthead's is known for super-fresh and mouth-watering seafood and fish served to perfection in a cozy, comfortable brasserie setting. Regulars, including many politicians and visiting celebs, swear by their favorite dishes...especially the fried Ipswich clams, the cod topped with crab imperial (and served with sweet potato puree and spoon bread infused with ham,) and the pepita-crust salmon, done with chillies, shrimp and crab. Late afternoon gets a sizable drop-in clientele here...with options like fish and chips, soups and lobster rolls available for those who wish light fare and a substantial drink. Good jazz piano can be heard nightly in the bar.

L'Auberge Chez Francois - (Great Falls, VA) 332 Springvale Rd. (Beach Mill Rd.) - 703-759-3800 www.laubergechezfrancois.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: About a half hour's drive from DC, this rustic French Inn serves up hearty Alsatian fare to many a Washington heavy-hitter, along with myriad 'regular folks' who just adore great food. Specialties include the fabulous foie gras, the choucroute with sausages, and the veal sweetbreads sautéed with truffle sauce and wild mushrooms, done up in puff pastry. Note: Reservations should be made well in advance...literally, about 4 weeks ahead.



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Le Paradou - 678 Indiana Ave. NW (bet. 6th & 7th Sts.) - 202-347-6780 www.leparadou.net

★★★★★ \$\$\$\$: The dining room is done in soothing and delicious shades of caramel and cream, with accents of lavender and periwinkle blue. A magnificent gold and purple hanging glass sculpture, lit from within, illuminates this elegant space. In the kitchen, French native, Chef Yannick Cam, creates his award worthy New French cuisine...winning Le Paradou the *Wine Spectator's* 'Best of' Award of Excellence. Your meal starts with a duo of amuses bouche...perhaps the tiny tea cupful of English pea soup and the miniature salmon tartare in phyllo dough, drizzled with caviar. Next, try the delicate lobster claw and avocado salad, then follow with the heavenly rack of lamb, accompanied by wild mushrooms, young, peeled asparagus, and a savory, wine-infused au jus. And for dessert...the fresh fig tart, *s'il vous plait!* P.S.: Bring lots of money.

Maestro - Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd. (International Dr.) - 703-821-1515 www.gruppoff.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$:

For some, this elegant Ritz dining room is the last word in DC fine dining...they claim it's half the price of the Inn at Little Washington (about \$150 a head,) and twice as good. You absolutely must ask for a seat with a view of the open kitchen. Apparently the show is not just informative...it's also most entertaining, with much squabbling, kibitzing, and ridiculing taking place amongst the crew. Regulars advise choosing wines by the glass since the choices are so phenomenal, and the sommeliers are so very, very good at what they do. The 7 course meal is flawless. The wait staff is perfection. For dessert, everyone says the cheese cart is the way to go...its why good! Don't worry about missing the sweets...a plate of exquisite chocolates are served with your check.

Makoto - 4822 MacArthur Blvd., NW (U St. NW) - 202-298-6866 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$:

Food so beautiful, you may be tempted to frame it as wall art! This jewel of a Japanese restaurant is adored for its exquisite sushi and sashimi, wonderfully authentic noodle, beef and salmon dishes, and for the overall artistry of service and presentation one finds in every detail. Décor reflects the look of a real Japanese country inn...lots of wood, close seating, and small...it seats just 25. But the food and flavors here are very large, indeed. The chef's choice menu offers 10 delicate, ingenious courses...each a wow. Oh, and wear socks...you'll be asked (most politely) to leave your shoes at the door.

Marcel's - 2401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (24th St.) - 202-296-1166 www.marcelcdc.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$:

Rough-hewn stone panels, rustic shutters, and antique hutches displaying Provencal pottery set a lovely backdrop for the fabulous French/Belgian cuisine at Marcel's. Try the duck breast with baby turnips, rose lentils, and Calvados sauce. The venison with ragout of wild mushrooms and Madeira is wonderful, and regulars just adore Chef Wiedmaier's hearty boudin blanc. There's patio seating...right on Pennsylvania Avenue, and live jazz nightly.

Marrakesh Palace - 2147 P St. NW (Twining Ct.) - 202-775-1882 www.marrakeshpalace.com ★★★ \$\$\$:

Moroccan food, belly dancers, tapestry on the walls, waiters in harem pants...and not a fork in sight. Yes, you eat this feast *with your hands*. (If you beg, they will give you a spoon for the couscous.) Service is somewhat slow and iffy, but if you can get into the swing, and come with a jovial group, you should have a ball. Wine is by the bottle only. Type A personalities should probably avoid this one.

McCormick and Schmick's - 1652 K St. NW (bet. 16th & 17th Sts.) - 202-861-2233 www.mccormickandschmicks.com ★★★ \$\$\$:

Many branches of this upscale seafood chain are scattered around town. Though the chain is not the most exciting place for seafood in DC, the fish couldn't be fresher and the service is consistently excellent. The wood and brass room is comfortable for lunch or dinner, and we love the Dungeness crab cakes, no matter which city we're in.

Morton's - 3251 Prospect St. NW (bet. Potomac St. & Wisconsin Ave.) - 202-342-6258 www.mortons.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$:

Classic, clubby and clearly about the beef, Morton's retains its ranking as the DC big boys' number one destination for rare, aged and marbled meat. Many big deals have been done over the Scotch and Sirloin here...of that you can be sure. Start with the sliced beefsteak tomato served with red onion and blue cheese...it's delicious but more important...you'll still have room for that huge slab of prime rib, snuggled up to the perfect (and mammoth) baked potato served along side.

Obelisk - 2029 P St. NW (bet. 20th & 21st Sts.) - 202-872-1180 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$:

This small, sophisticated gourmet Italian is the brain-child of uber-talented Chef-owner, Peter Pastan. The dual prix fixe menus change daily, and are built from the freshest local ingredients. Especially good...the zucchini fritters, the deep-fried risotto croquettes, and the sweetbread and porcini ravioli with sage butter. For dessert, the pear spice cake is a knock-out. Wonderful Italian and California wines, and all the breads and desserts are baked in-house daily.

Old Ebbitt Grill - 675 15th St. NW (bet. F & G Sts.) - 202-347-4801 www.ebbitt.com ★★★ \$:

With the original actually founded in 1856, this latest incarnation of the Ebbitt is literally a stone's throw from the White House, and is a big time hang-out for staffers, day and night. Tons of bar action...with many bars within to accommodate the crowds, and big, comfortable booths and tables for eating and talking shop. Lots of mahogany, beveled glass, marble and brass... and a charming oyster bar, create this venue's identity. The food is described as 'American Saloon'. Inexpensive, fun, a bit rowdy, and you never know who might drop in.

Polo India Club Restaurant - 1736 Connecticut Ave NW - 202-483-8705 ★★ \$:

If you love to dip puffy, fluffy Indian breads into saffron-scented creamy sauces, and you want variety without *breaking the bank*, try the buffet lunch line at Polo India. Sweet mango lassi, tiki masala, dhal makhani, and most of your favorites are on the menu. Not gourmet but very tasty, easy, casual, and eminently affordable.



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The Prime Rib - 2020 K St. NW (bet. 20th & 21st Sts.) - 202-466-8811 www.theprimerib.com

★★★★ \$\$\$: Still and always the place to go for juicy slabs of aged prime rib, great steaks, and the best cottage fries in town. The waiters wear black tie, the carpet is faux leopard skin, the martinis are hearty, and show tunes are played on the baby grand while you drink and dine. Less clubby than you would expect, and according to *Food and Wine Magazine*, it's one of the five most romantic restaurants in the U.S. Jacket and tie for the gents, if you please. Expensive.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse - 724 Ninth St. NW (H St.) - 202-393-4488 www.ruthschris.com ★★★+

\$\$\$\$: The very first Ruth's Chris opened in New Orleans in 1965. Now, with over one hundred locations, they have it down to a science... and they do it well. Known for fine, aged steaks cooked in custom-made broilers that fire up temperatures exceeding 1700° Fahrenheit, the choice cuts of custom-aged beef then arrive in sizzling butter on 500-degree plates. Also on the menu: fresh lobster, stuffed chicken breast, and a mushroom stuffed with crabmeat. For dessert, the chocolate 'Sin' Cake is everyone's guilty pleasure.

Sushi Taro - 1503 17th St. NW (P. St.) 202-462-8999 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: So, where do the Japanese diplomats go when they crave ultra-fresh, pristine sushi? Sushi Taro, of course. Exquisite preparation and a gracious staff make every delectable bite taste even better. The sushi bar is DC's longest, and loyal fans think the tempura here is the most succulent in town. Fabulous, rich noodle soups make you feel like a kid, and the fried seafood platter is a thing of beauty. Regular table seating is available, of course...but for those who dare, traditional floor seating on Japanese mats adds a bit of exotica. Seriously good food.

TenPenh - 1001 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (10th St.) - 202-393-4500 www.tenpenh.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Fun, exciting and stylish not only describes the restaurant and diners, but we're pleased to say it also defines the imaginative Asian menu at this downtown restaurant. We've only gotten here once, but we will be back to further sample the tasty menu, and experience the warm hospitality. Although reservations are highly recommended for lunch and dinner, there are also some very pleasant first-come, first-served seats at the big marble bar and the outdoor tables on Pennsylvania Ave.

Tony Cheng's Restaurant - 619 H St. NW (bet. 6th & 7th Sts.) - 202-371-8669 ★★ ★ \$: There's not much of a Chinatown in Washington, and it seems that Tony Cheng is responsible for most of it. Upstairs is an enormous seafood restaurant, offering typical Chinese versions of very fresh fish, Dungeness crab, shrimp, etc. As a matter of fact, some were swimming when you arrived. At lunch, dim sum is also served. Downstairs, you'll find the Mongolian Barbeque. If you are not familiar with this, let me describe it as a salad bar gone crazy. Customers circle the buffet, piling bowls with sliced raw meats and vegetables that the chefs season and cook on a big grill. The browned ingredients are flipped into a clean bowl, and that's lunch.

Tosca Ristorante - 1112 F St. NW (bet. 11th & 12th Sts.) - 202-367-1990 www.toscadc.com ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Great ambiance and subdued décor for a power lunch or a romantic dinner. Excellent salmon, steak, and pasta dishes, and if you view ravioli as the soul of Italian, look no further. Silky, paper-thin pasta encloses savory veal and prosciutto, or maybe woodsy wild mushrooms, all in just enough creamy sauce. Their risotto is also amazing. As a matter of fact, you're safe with nearly anything on the menu, and the vast array of dishes presents the best of all of Italy's culinary regions. First timers should consider the 3-course tasting menu...it offers a fine overview of the cuisine, and is a bargain at only \$32. Reservations recommended.

Zaytinya - Pepco Bldg. 701 Ninth St. NW (G St.) - 202-638-0800 www.zaytinya.com ★★ ★ \$\$\$: Not in the mood for a standard *3-courses and dessert* dinner out? Middle Eastern flavors and a ton of culinary imagination are the basis of over 70 varieties of small plates served at Zaytinya. Cool Mediterranean shades of blue and white create a sophisticated backdrop for the throngs of patrons who come to share after-work stories over exotic tidbits and rockin' retsina cocktails. Favorite dishes include: Dabs of skate, fried in beer batter, sauced with pureed potato and garlic...the crusty, petite lamb chops...and lamb-beef sausages in veal stock with pine nuts. About a half-hour wait at the bar is standard...but it's a really, really fun bar. Lots of pretty people, super friendly wait staff, and orange blossom-peach martinis.