

New York City Guide



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Over the years, we've sent you dining guides for New Orleans, Boston, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Anaheim. Now here's an updated guide for our hometown, NYC. While this list is not a comprehensive guide to NYC dining (what is??), it includes something for everyone, whether you're on expense account or paying your own way. In addition, we've indicated our very favorite restaurants with an asterisk.

We look forward to seeing you in The Big Apple. If you have any questions about the city, or if there is anything that we can do for you while you're in town, please don't hesitate to call.

Cost estimates are based on one dinner with cocktail... \$ inexpensive (under \$20); \$\$ moderate (\$21 to \$40); \$\$\$ expensive (\$41 to \$60); \$\$\$\$ very expensive (\$61-\$80); \$\$\$\$\$ the big bucks (\$81+).

★ Our very favorite restaurants are marked with a star.

Keep in mind that in NYC, as everywhere, restaurants can open and close, change hours, and even move with very short notice. Many restaurants are closed Sundays and/or Mondays, or even Tuesday, so we recommend calling ahead.

Aquavit – Midtown, 13 West 54th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-307-7311 www.aquavit.org \$\$\$\$ – We like the downstairs café for lunch, where we can nibble on superbly-prepared Swedish treats like a gravlax club, Swedish meatballs and herring four ways. The more formal dining room offers more sophisticated preparations as well as an impressive 18-foot waterfall (and higher prices). Reservations recommended. Café: Dinner and lunch, Monday-Saturday; dining room: dinner, 7 days; lunch, Monday-Friday; Sunday brunch.

A Salt & Battery – West Village, 112 Greenwich Ave. (betw. 12th & 13th Sts.) 212-691-2713 www.asaltandbattery.com \$ – This fish n' chips counter doesn't even have tables... you eat your crisp fried haddock or chip butty (french fry sandwich!) at the bars along the perimeter. Don't skimp on the salt or vinegar and you may as well have the fried Mars Bar, too. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. (East Village location with seating: 80 Second Ave., 212-254-6610)

Asia de Cuba – Midtown, 237 Madison Ave. (Morgans Hotel) 212-726-7755 www.morganshotel.com \$\$\$ – The seductive Starck-styled space complements the surprisingly good Asian-Latin cuisine. We love the house version of a chopped salad that includes lightly-fried calamari, hearts of palm, bananas, radicchio and a sesame-orange dressing. Other favorites include the ostrich steak, lobster potstickers, and pan-seared tuna entrée. All dishes are served family-style, so go with a group that really enjoys a variety of tastes. There's a communal table for solo diners, too. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Friday.

★ **Babbo – Greenwich Village, 110 Waverly Pl. (betw. MacDougal St. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-777-0303 www.babbonyc.com \$\$\$\$** – It's not just us... other chefs positively gush about chef/partner Mario Batali's innovative Babbo. Batali uses Hudson Valley ingredients and his overflowing creative energy to take Italian cooking to a whole new level. Just thinking about the beef cheek ravioli, served with crushed squash livers and black truffles, makes our mouth water. We also love the Deconstructed Ossobuco (for two) and homemade ice creams. The sommeliers are brilliant resources for oenophiles and newbies alike. It's a beautiful setting too, but no one ever remembers the flowers after they've eaten a Babbo meal. Reservations required... and tough to get. Dinner, 7 days.

Balthazar – Soho, 80 Spring St. (betw. Broadway & Lafayette) 212-965-1785 www.balthazarnyc.com \$\$\$ – Now that the wave of glitterati has moved on, we can all enjoy Balthazar a bit more. They have a well-prepared menu of French bistro standards, with carbs-be-damned bread and even better french fries. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days.

Barbès – Murray Hill, 21 E. 36th St. (betw. Fifth & Madison Aves.) 212-684-0215 \$\$\$\$ – It seems like Moroccan is always on the verge of being "the next Thai", and if anyone can make that happen, ultra-charming (and handsome!) Omar Baloumar is the man to do it. The menu includes a number of French standards like mussels and Steak au Poivre, but we like the exotic twists like Chicken Payard with Zaalouk (roasted eggplant), spiced crab cakes, and the traditional couscous dishes. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Barbuto – West Village, 775 Washington St. (betw. Jane & W. 12th Sts.) 212-924-9700 www.barbutonyc.com \$\$\$ – Great food, a sexy crowd, and you can eat al fresco without the congestion of a big avenue. Credit the A-list rustic Italian celebrated Chef Jonathan Waxman, the Vogue-ready crowd to nearby Industria Superstudios, and the fresh air to a couple of jumbo garage doors. The menu changes almost daily, but we've never gone wrong with roasted dishes from the wood-burning brick oven and wine recommendations from the staff. We like the not-so-fancy feel of the place, especially at the chef's kitchen table. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

BLT Fish – Flatiron, 21 W. 17th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-691-8888 www.bltfish.com \$\$\$\$ – You never thought you'd hear this from us, but skip the casual "fish shack" downstairs and head straight for the BLT (Bistro Laurent Tourondel) main event. This man knows fish (we like this one better than BLT Prime & BLT Steak) and he serves it in an easy, elegant room. Everyone loves the house specialty, Crispy Red Snapper "Cantonese Style", and we suggest the Rock Shrimp with White Asparagus starter, Salt Crusted Sunchoke and melt-in-your-mouth Silver Dollar potatoes. Wallet warning: the whole fish dishes are priced by the pound and can get expensive fast. Dinner Monday-Saturday.

Blue Hill – Greenwich Village, 75 Washington Pl. (at Washington Sq. West) 212-539-1776 www.bluehillnyc.com \$\$\$\$ – The landmark Village townhouse offers a perfect, cozy backdrop for Co-chef and Owner Dan Barber's Hudson Valley fine dining. Barber named the place for his family farm in the Berkshires, and he hasn't lost his taste for just-picked, field-to-table produce. Summer menus featured tomatoes galore, summer squashes, and sweet-as-can-be corn. Dinner 7 days.



★**Blue Ribbon – Soho, 97 Sullivan St. (betw. Prince & Spring Sts.), 212-274-0404**
www.blueribbonrestaurants.com \$\$\$ – If CKP was in the restaurant business, this is the place we'd open. The food is always terrific, reasonably priced, and there's something about the room that just doesn't let you talk business. Our favorites from the eclectic menu include skate with potatoes and bacon, rack of lamb, anything from the raw bar, beef marrow with oxtail marmalade, sautéed calamari, fried chicken with mashed potatoes and greens, and a stunningly delicious duck club. The service is friendly and attentive, whether you go in for a three-course meal or stop by for a quick turkey burger at 3am. They don't take reservations for parties fewer than five, so expect to wait at the crowded but convivial bar. Dinner Tuesday-Sunday until 4am.

Blue Ribbon Bakery – West Village, 33 Downing St. (at Bedford St.) 212-337-0404
www.blueribbonrestaurants.com \$\$\$ – They have smaller tasting plates and sandwiches as well as entrees, so you can design a meal around your appetite. Winners: iceberg lettuce salad, chicken salad sandwich, steak tartare, and the outrageous bread puddings. They have a good selection of wines by the glass and service is always great. No reservations for parties of 5 or fewer. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Blue Smoke – Flatiron, 116 East 27th St. (betw. Park & Lexington Aves.) 212-447-7733 www.bluesmoke.com \$\$ – From the man behind Union Square Café and Gramercy Tavern, Blue Smoke takes the finger-lickin' good prize for the empire. While rib aficionados question Blue Smoke's authenticity (Is there authentic BBQ in NYC??), the St. Louis, Texas, and babyback ribs are tasty and we love the fry-bread, deviled eggs, and pulled pork sandwich. You can order from a limited Blue Smoke menu at the Jazz Standard downstairs, too. Dinner, 7 days.

BondSt – Noho, 6 Bond St. (betw. Broadway & Lafayette) 212-777-2500 \$\$\$ – A sexy, upscale Japanese spot serving sublime sushi (the chefs hail from Nobu) and other Japanese treats until 2am. In addition to the usual and unusual sushi menu, we love the grilled eggplant and short rib appetizers. Don't poo-poo the tempura; it's delish. Portions are small, but the sake menu is long... Dinner 7 days.

Bouchon Bakery – Time Warner Center, 10 Columbus Circle (betw. 58th and 60th St.s) 212-823-9366 \$\$ -- Thomas Keller's soup, sandwich and salad boutique is most humbly situated in an open mall corridor on the 3rd floor of the Time Warner Center. (His upscale smash, Per Se, is located one floor up!) We assure you this is the best mall food you will ever have. Especially good: the beet and mache salad with goat cheese and toasted hazelnuts, the tuna nicoise tartine, and, of course, the quiche du jour ... (the leek and Roquefort is our favorite.)

Bouley – Tribeca, 120 West Broadway (at Duane St.) 212-964-2525 www.bouley.net \$\$\$\$\$ – If you love NYC like we love NYC, you owe it to David Bouley to try his reopened (Feb. 2002) Bouley. After the 9/11 tragedy, Bouley closed his restaurants and served over 1 million meals to Red Cross relief workers... and they probably never ate better. On top of his generosity, the man's got talent. The original Bouley held *Zagat's* #1 spot for 5 years running, and this Bouley reflects that same dedication to brilliant flavors and fine dining. Reservations required. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Brasserie – Midtown, 100 East 53rd St. (betw. Lexington & Park Aves.) 212-751-4850 www.thebrasserienny.com \$\$\$ – Super-sleek Brasserie's Chef Luc Dimnet trained in 3-star Michelin restaurants in Strasbourg, France, but there's nothing stuffy about the place or his modern seasonal menus. Start with the Perfect 10 cocktail of gin, Campari, Citronge, and lemon, and then try the Chicken Paillard, Crab Cakes, or the Bouillabaisse Royale. Delish. Breakfast/brunch, lunch, and dinner, 7 days.

Bubby's – Tribeca, 120 Hudson St. (at N. Moore) 212-219-0666 www.bubbys.com \$\$ – The cozy, nostalgic, Americana décor is just right for all kinds of good Southern breakfast foods like sour cream pancakes, grits, and homemade pies. There's a long line for weekend brunch, but early birds beat the lines. Lunch & dinner are about plain ol' foods like macaroni and cheese, garlicky hamburgers (with Bubby's homemade spicy ketchup), and roasted chicken. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days.

Buddakan – Meatpacking District, 75 Ninth Ave. (at 16th St.) 212-989-6699 \$\$\$\$ -- Another Steven Starr extravaganza (a la his Morimoto,) housed in a former Nabisco Cookie factory. This place is stunning for its gargantuan size alone. Picture ceilings two stories high, a reception area bigger than most neighborhood restaurants, chandeliers the size of economy cars, and dining rooms so vast you need a guide to find your table. The food is pretty spectacular as well. Described loosely as modern Asian, the menu offers such delights as the deboned frog legs appetizer, tossed with chives, the 'lollypops' of minced chestnuts and sweet pork tucked inside fried taro balls, and a chili flavored tuna tartare. And that's just for starters. Great dim sum...the King Crab and Shanghai Chicken dumplings are not to be missed. Fav entrees include the glazed black cod, the Mongolian lamb chops, and the marinated short ribs served over chow fun noodles and mushrooms.

Café Habana – Nolita, 17 Prince St. (at Elizabeth St.) 212-625-2001 \$ – Their amazing \$3.50 Mexican grilled corn is the starter that we crave... they roast two ears of sweet corn, then slather them with mayonnaise, sprinkle on salty cotija cheese and red chili powder, and serve it with lime. Sooo good. Luckily, the rest of the menu in this little dive is great, too, especially the steak and fish tacos. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Café Spice – Greenwich Village, 72 University Pl. (at 11th St.) 212-253-6999 www.cafespice.com \$\$ – Indian friends turned us on to this winner. The fresh food and flavors soar over Little India (6th Street) standards, even at these reasonable prices. Masalas, tikkas, curries, and a variety of light, Indian breads satisfy us like nothing else and there are plenty of vegetarian options. Dinner and lunch 7 days. (Midtown outpost: 54 West 55th St., 212-489-7444 and they have a take out stand in Grand Central Station's food concourse, too.)

Cafeteria – Chelsea, 119 Seventh Ave. (at 17th St.) 212-414-1717 \$\$ – It looks expensive, but it's the best deal in Chelsea; they're open 24hours and they serve high-quality breakfast staples like waffles, omelets and pancakes at corner diner prices. Their comfort-menu lunch and dinner are also good. Open 24hours/7days.

Carnegie Deli – Midtown, 854 Seventh Ave. (betw. 54th & 55th Sts.) 212-757-2245 www.carnegiedeli.com \$\$ – The most famous deli in the world, Carnegie serves up the quintessential NY deli experience. The corned beef sandwiches are thicker than the phone book and the cheesecake melts in your mouth. NOTE: at Carnegie, "Kosher style" accommodates a Reuben... and ham and cheese. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days.



Casa Mono – Union Square, 52 Irving Place (at 17th St.) 212-253-2773 \$\$\$ – We swear, we’re not on Mario Batali’s payroll... the man just can’t go wrong... especially by opening a block from the CKP HQ. This Spanish tapas spot opened in early 2004 and it’s been mobbed ever since. The house-cured meats, luscious seafood, and hearty veggies are always an adventure. Our favorites so far: Razor Clams a la Plancha (grilled on a wooden plank), Terrina de Lengua (yep, tongue), and Cock’s Combs with Favas. P.s. timid eaters beware: there ain’t no chicken on this menu. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Chanterelle – Tribeca, 2 Harrison St. (at Hudson St.) 212-966-6960 www.chanterellnyc.com \$\$\$\$ – We like to be treated to Chanterelle. And we like the way we’re treated at Chanterelle. Everyone rates the service as impeccable, the setting as magnificent, and the food as wonderful at David and Karen Waltuck’s fancy place (Le Zinc is their less fancy place). Splurge on the seasonal tasting menu and let them choose the wines. A recent menu: lobster salad with bouillabaisse, potato ravioli with truffle sauce, grilled turbot

with sauerkraut and caviar butter, lamb with rosemary and polenta, a cheese course and yummy desserts. It’s really expensive, but this is certainly a place where you get what you pay for. Dinner Monday-Saturday, Lunch Tuesday-Saturday.

Churrascaria Plataforma – Midtown, 316 West 49th St. (betw. Eighth and Ninth Aves.) 212-245-0505 www.churrascariaplataforma.com \$\$\$ – Bring a big appetite for this traditional Brazilian steakhouse. And bring your vegetarian friends, too. First, eat your fill from a “salad” bar stocked with sushi, marinated vegetables, cheeses, salads, and shrimp. Then, turn over your red/green disc and signal the parade of meats to begin. When your chip is green-side-up, a slew of waiters will offer you the likes of beef tenderloin, pork ribs, sausage, chicken legs, brisket and daily fish sliced from the skewer onto your plate. Flip the disc back to red and they’ll leave you to enjoy the feast without interruption. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. (and now there’s a downtown outpost: 221 W. Broadway, 212-925-6969.)

City Bakery – Flatiron, 3 West 18th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-366-1414 www.thecitybakery.com \$ – Better known for their decadent sweets, City Bakery has a terrific lunch buffet that’s popular with neighborhood media types and accommodates even the most stringent of diets (other habitués include models and yoga teachers.) Best of the buffet: cornmeal crusted catfish, Old Bay chicken wings, stir-fried tempeh, roasted yellow peppers, baked salmon, and mushrooms baked with herbs. AND, there are those amazing cookies, brownies, homemade marshmallows, etc. when you’re done. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks until 7 on weekdays. Until 6:30 on Saturday and 5:30 on Sunday.

City Hall – Tribeca, 131 Duane St. (betw. Church & West Broadway) 212-227-7777 www.cityhallnyc.com \$\$\$ – Must be the proximity to water, because seafood steals the show at this steakhouse. While the steaks are great (when they say “rare”, they do mean rare), our favorites here are the “Chrysler” shellfish tower and the tuna steak. Dinner Monday-Saturday; Lunch Monday-Friday.

Compass – Upper West Side, 208 West 70th St. (at Amsterdam Ave.) 212-875-8600 www.compassrestaurant.com \$\$\$ – Finally, there’s fine dining on the Upper West Side. Chef Neil Annis’ stellar New American menu balances his training from Lespinasse with the neighborhood’s low-key feel for creative and hearty results. We love the sweet Nantucket Bay Scallops in curry sauce and the mushroom, fennel and parmigiano reggiano starters. The satisfying roasted hen stuffed with bacon and chanterelles and veal chop dishes are nothing to sneeze at, either. Desserts are really special, so save room. If you don’t have a reservation, the bar menu offers a number of tasty options. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days, Sunday brunch.

Corner Bistro – West Village, 331 West 4th St. (at Jane St.) 212-242-9502 \$ – On every “Best Burger” list, Corner Bistro is more bar than restaurant, and packed at dinnertime (they serve until 3am). Go for lunch and enjoy the juiciest no-frills burger around. p.s. if you don’t want a burger, your only other choices are grilled chicken, grilled cheese, or BLT. Have the burger. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Daniel – Upper East Side, 60 East 65th St. (betw. Madison & Park Aves.) 212-288-0033 www.danielnyc.com \$\$\$\$ – Swanky! Nothing says high-class better than a reservation at Daniel, the most formal of Daniel Boulud’s three restaurants. Hands down, the best French in a city of wonderful food. If you’re in from out of town, go for the tasting menu to sample as many amazing flavors as possible... we bet you’ll come back for more. Reservations required. Dinner, Monday-Saturday; lunch Tuesday-Saturday.

davidburke & donatella – Upper East Side, 133 East 61st St. (betw. Park & Lexington Aves.) 212-813-2121 www.dbdrestaurant.com \$\$\$\$ – What do you expect from the guy who invented both the “Angry Lobster” and the Cheesecake Pops you see at the grocery store (www.gourmetpops.com)? Supremely talented chef David Burke’s Modern American menu is full of dramatic winners like Asian Spiced Black Sea Bass with Lobster Dumplings, and Handmade Cavatelli and Braised Short Rib. Don’t skimp on sides. Dinner 7 days; lunch Monday-Friday; Sunday Brunch.

DB Bistro Moderne – Midtown, 55 West 44th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-391-2400 www.danielnyc.com \$\$\$\$ – Daniel Boulud’s \$59 and \$99 DB Burgers get a lot of press... and a lot of orders. They’re filled with braised short ribs, foie gras, and black truffles and come with a silver cup of the Frenchest of fries (\$99 gets you double truffles). The rest of the menu is a bit less overblown, but every bit as good. It’s organized by food, rather than course, and you can have frogs’ legs as either an app or main course. Reservations required. Dinner, 7 days; lunch Monday-Saturday.

Dylan Prime – Tribeca, 62 Laight St. (at Greenwich St.) 212-334-4783 www.dylanprime.com \$\$\$ – Fitting for the neighborhood, Dylan Prime offers a slightly yuppie take on the traditional steak house. The perfect martinis arrive with house-cured olives stuffed with blue cheese, anchovies or pickled quail egg and you can start with a gruyere fondue. They’ve got some of the best lamb chops we’ve ever tasted and the Argentine filet mignon isn’t too shabby either. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Friday.

★Eleven Madison Park – Flatiron, 11 Madison Ave. (at 24th St.) 212-889-0905 www.elevenmadisonpark.com \$\$\$\$ – Another classy move from Danny Meyer, Eleven Madison Park is just lovely. The landmark deco building’s 35 foot ceilings are an impressive backdrop for impeccable American/French fare like the Morel Crusted Monkfish and Fennel and Coriander Muscovy Duck Breast from a recent menu. When Carrie (*Sex in the City*) met Big for a “let’s be friends” lunch, she met him here... we wonder if they ordered the \$25 prix fixe deal??) Reservations recommended. Dinner and lunch/brunch, 7 days.



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Estiatorio Milos – Midtown, 125 West 55th St. (betw. Ave. of the Americas & Seventh Ave.) 212-254-7400 www.milos.ca \$\$\$\$ – Big, fat Greek seafood. First, choose your entrée from the vast array of super-fresh iced fish. While they bring your pick back to the kitchen for light grilling, start your meal with charcoal broiled jumbo shrimp, tender grilled octopus, or a meaty crab cake. If you're bored with Chilean Sea Bass and tuna, try a new fish like Mediterranean Loup de Mer or Royal Dorado. Wallet warning: menu prices are by the pound, and most of the catch is at least 2lbs. Reservations recommended. Dinner, Monday-Saturday.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven – Midtown, 57 East 57th St. (Four Seasons Hotel) 212-758-5757 www.fourseasons.com \$\$\$\$ – The classiest power breakfast in town, Fifty Seven Fifty Seven is where to "get the deal done." The beautiful I.M. Pei-designed space is a backdrop to an elegant Continental breakfast and is also a great place for cocktails. Breakfast (starting at 7am), lunch and dinner, 7 days.

★Five Points – Noho, 31 Great Jones St. (betw. Lafayette & the Bowery) 212-253-5700 www.fivepointsrestaurant.com \$\$\$ – Ever since that "Gangs of New York" movie, the place got a lot more crowded. But we can't begrudge anyone a meal at Five Points. It's comfortable, low-key (ok, low-key for NYC), and the New American food is exactly what you want. Try one of their seasonal salads and the house-cured double pork chop. Sunday brunch is a stand-out – great baked goods, eggs, Mexican hot chocolate, and Bloody Marys by the pitcher. Dinner 7 days, Sunday brunch.

Florent – Meatpacking, 69 Gansevoort St. (betw. Greenwich & Washington Sts.) 212-989-5779 www.restaurantflorent.com \$\$ – Part diner/part bistro and all scene. You can go classy with a goat cheese salad and pate or take it down a notch with boudin noir (a Creole treat) or a cheeseburger. Breakfast all day. 24 hours on weekends; breakfast, lunch and dinner until 5am weekdays.

The Four Seasons – Midtown, 99 East 52nd St. (betw. Park & Lexington Aves) 212-754-9494 www.fourseasonsrestaurant.com \$\$\$\$ – The Four Seasons defined power lunch. The Grill Room has more clout (and bigger moguls), and the Pool Room has a more romantic feel. As you would expect, the Continental fare is perfect and the service is polished. p.s. this is NOT the restaurant at the hotel (that's Fifty Seven Fifty Seven.) Reservations required. Dinner Monday-Saturday, Lunch Monday-Friday.

Fred's at Barneys New York – Upper East Side, 660 Madison Ave. (9th floor of Barneys, at 60th St.) 212-833-2200 \$\$\$ – You *deserve* a nice lunch after all that hard shopping you've been doing. Fred's moved on up from Barney's basement floor (now a beauty emporium) to the penthouse and everything's gotten better and brighter. Sit at the bar for the best angles in celeb-spotting. Open 11:30-9, Monday-Saturday; 11:30-6 Sunday.

Gobo – Greenwich Village, 401 Ave. of the Americas (betw. Waverly Pl. & 8th St.) 212-255-3242 www.goborestaurant.com \$\$ – Our vote for NYC's best vegetarian. The Wu brothers, Zen Palate scions, deliver veggie nirvana. Billed as "food for the five senses", Gobo's Asian menu takes tofu and seitan to a whole new level AND includes organic wines (Zen Palate is BYOB.). We love the King Oyster Mushrooms in Sizzling Basil Black Bean, New England Rolls, and Butternut Squash Risotto with Toasted Almonds. Dinner and lunch 7 days. (Upper East Side: 1426 Third Ave. 212-280-5099.)

Gonzo – Greenwich Village, 140 West 13th St. (betw. Ave. of the Americas & Seventh Ave.) 212-645-4606 \$\$\$ – The latest entry from the Scotto restaurant family. The grilled thin-crust pizzas are sooo good. And the entrees are great, too (especially the Venetian calf's liver). But we really love the sides: roast beets, sweet & sour brussel sprouts, potato croquettes, and sautéed wild mushrooms. Prepare to eat big; you won't be able to resist a single course. Dinner Tuesday-Sunday, brunch Saturday & Sunday.

Gotham Bar and Grill – Greenwich Village, 12 East 12th St. (East of 5th Ave.) 212-620-4020 www.gothambarandgrill.com \$\$\$\$ – Gotham took up permanent residence at the top of NY restaurant lists in the 80s and they've never looked back. They're known for wonderful food, an extensive wine list and stunning, gravity-defying presentations. We think the game dishes (pheasant, rabbit, venison) best showcase Chef Portale's award-winning talent. Do not, DO NOT skip dessert. Reservations required. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Monday-Friday.

★Gramercy Tavern – Flatiron, 42 East 20th St. (betw. Broadway & Park Ave. South) 212-477-0777 www.gramercytavern.com \$\$\$\$ – a.k.a. Chuck's second office. This may be the least pretentious fine dining in the entire city. They're always glad to see you and will accommodate you in the boisterous and less expensive front bar room if you don't have a reservation for the more formal prix fixe dining room. The New American food and extensive wine list are excellent and the service is stellar. This is Danny Meyer's second NYC eatery and many now agree it's his best. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Saturday.

Hangawi – Murray Hill, 12 East 32nd St. (betw. Madison & Fifth Aves.) 212-213-0077 www.hangawirestaurant.com \$\$+ – Be prepared to take off your shoes, step into a different world and get a little closer to serenity. An oasis in midtown, Hangawi offers amazing tasting menus for lunch and dinner. You'll enjoy dish after dish of Korean vegetarian delights like rich pumpkin soup and amazingly flavored tofu (really!) Each course is small, but you'll be tranquilly full by the end of your meal. Dinner & lunch, 7 days.

Hearth – East Village, 403 East 12th St. (at First Ave.) 646-602-1300 www.restauranthearth.com \$\$\$ – The latest addition to East Village foodie black books, Hearth is as warm and inviting as you'd expect, with fancy Tuscan food like Roasted and Braised Lamb with Lamb Sausage, Rabbit Ballotine, Monkfish Osso Buco (really!), and Zucchini Ravioli. The Goat Milk Panna Cotta with Strawberries and Thai Basil Sauce is divine. Dinner 7 days.

Jack's Luxury Oyster Bar – East Village, 101 2nd Ave. (at 6th St.) 212-253-7848 \$\$\$ – Another gem from Jewel Bako's proprietors, Jack's is a tiny duplex of a restaurant with a short, ever-changing menu of the freshest oysters and seafood available on a given day. Part of the fun here is watching husband and wife Chefs Allison Vines-Rushing and Slade Rushing maneuver in an open kitchen that's smaller than yours. Reservations are a must. Dinner Monday-Saturday.



Jean Georges – Midtown, 1 Central Park West (Trump International Hotel) 212-299-3900 www.jean-georges.com \$\$\$\$ – Breakfast in the Nougatine Room with its open kitchen and views of Central Park is the draw here. If it's warm enough, ask for a table on the Mistral Terrace. The casual elegance, quality service and renowned cuisine make for one heckuva high-end breakfast. Breakfast (starting at 7am), lunch, and dinner, 7 days.

Jerry's – Soho, 101 Prince St. (betw. Greene & Mercer Sts.) 212-966-9464 www.jerrysnyc.com \$\$ – One of the best values in Soho, Jerry's is practically an institution. The fancy diner/bistro menu can rejuvenate even the most tired of shoppers. Lunch specials run the gamut from a chopped salad of shrimp, avocado, grapefruit, and veggies to a BBQ chicken, bacon, cheddar melt on ciabatta. Late afternoon is prime celeb-spotting time. Breakfast and lunch, Monday-Friday; dinner Monday-Saturday; weekend brunch.

Jewel Bako – East Village, 239 East 5th St. (betw. Second & Third Aves.) 212-979-1012 \$\$\$\$ – Divine sushi in an intimate, exotic room. We like their unusual sushi almost as much as Nobu's, and the East Village address takes the scene down a level. The owners, Jack and Grace Lamb, monitor the tables vigilantly and could write a book on hospitality. The room is very small and reservations are highly recommended. Dinner Monday-Saturday.

Katz's Delicatessen – Lower East Side, 205 East Houston (at Ludlow St.) 212-254-2256 www.katzdeli.com \$\$ – Now that the Second Avenue Deli is gone, Katz's is the last of the old-school delis down on the Lower East Side. Their sandwiches aren't as good as The Carnegie is or Second Avenue was, but, thanks to the neighborhood's bar explosion, they've got the best late-night people watching around. NOTE: tipping the counter guys will get you leaner pastrami. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days. Open on weekends until 3am.

Keen's Steakhouse – Garment District, 72 West 36th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Ave. of the Americas) 212-947-3636 www.keens.com \$\$\$ – This is Old New York ambiance. Since 1895, they've offered up hard-boiled eggs at the bar and well-aged porterhouse and mutton chops in the clubby, white-tableclothed dining room. Great for power lunches or mellower dinners. Dinner Monday-Saturday, lunch Monday-Friday.

Kitchen Club – Nolita, 30 Prince St. (at Mott St.) 212-274-0025 www.thekitchenclub.com \$\$\$+ – Chef/owner Marja Samson tweaks typical Japanese fare with influences from far and wide, including her Dutch heritage. You can start with a chunky shiso-flavored crabmeat salad, grilled shrimp salad, or pickled herring (there's that Dutch influence). Hearty entrées include the miso-marinated steak (our favorite), free-range chicken with wasabi, and a really good yellowfin tuna. Dinner, Tuesday-Sunday; lunch, Tuesday-Friday; Sunday brunch.

Koi – 40 W. 40th St. (in the Bryant Park Hotel) near 5th Ave., 212-921-3330 www.koirestaurant.com \$\$\$\$- We know people who are still waiting for a reservation at the Los Angeles original...one of the hardest to get tables ever. Now New York is home to its own outpost...and at last there's some real competition in town for Nobu and Honmura An. The sushi here is euphoria-inducing...and the tempuras are equally divine. Especially delectable...the hanger steak prepared with pureed Aji Amarillo peppers, fromage blanc, cracker crumbs, and grapeseed oil. Tiger prawns glazed in pureed kumquat and veal stock are stunningly good...and the Chilean sea bass done with ginger and roasted peppers is not to be missed. Clientele here is somewhere between hip and hyper, and there's a bit of a noise problem, especially near the very active bar. If you're looking for a low-key, relaxed vibe, this is not your best bet. To savor the flavor without the din, go for lunch.

La Bonne Soupe – Midtown, 48 West 55th St. (betw. Fifth & Sixth Aves.) 212-586-7650 www.labonnesoupe.com \$\$ – A handy one in midtown. Good bistro basics like soup (duh!), salad, crêpes, quiche, omelets, fondue, and burgers for less than \$20 a person at lunch, and not a whole lot more for at dinner. This one's practically next door to the Peninsula Hotel and is close enough to the theater district to make it to the show on time. Lunch and dinner, 7 days (until midnight most nights.)

L'Annan – Gramercy, 393 Third Ave. (at 28th St.) 212-686-5168 \$ – It doesn't look like much from the outside, but the light, spicy Vietnamese food is addictive. Portions are large, so plan to share. We like scallion pancakes, basil chicken, sugarcane shrimp, and the design-a-dish noodle options. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. (another location at 121 University Place, 212-420-1414)

Le Bernardin – Midtown, 155 West 51st St. (betw. Ave. of the Americas & Seventh Ave.) 212-489-1515 www.le-bernardin.com \$\$\$\$ – One of the most lauded restaurants in NYC (and one of the most expensive... before the TW Center opened), Le Bernardin consistently wows diners with stellar seafood creations. It's a classy place, but we want to lick the plate after a baked potato filled with smoked salmon, sour cream and Osetra caviar and served with two toasted lady fingers filled with more smoked salmon and caviar. Reservations required. Dinner Monday-Saturday, Lunch Monday-Friday.

Les Halles – Gramercy, 411 Park Ave. South (betw. 28th & 29th Sts.) 212-679-4111 www.leshalles.net \$\$ – This is where Anthony Bourdain of *Kitchen Confidential* and the Food Network's "A Cook's Tour" hangs his hat in NYC. Forget all of that fuss and go in for the really, really good hangar steak and superstar pommes frites in a relaxed, friendly setting. While they've got a full brasserie menu, this place is all about the beef. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. Also try Les Halles Downtown at 15 John St. – 212-285-8585.

L'Express – Flatiron, 249 Park Ave. South (at 20th St.) 212- 254-5858 www.lexpressnyc.com \$\$ – Easy, easy, easy. The best place for a late-night snack of Caesar salad, steak frites, garlicky escargot or a bleu cheese- burger. Once in a while we roll the dice and go with the sausage du jour, just because you have to like a place that has sausage du jour. You'll feel comfortable in a suit or in jeans and you can hog the table for as long as you like. Also good for breakfast and lunch. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Lever House Restaurant – Midtown, 390 Park Ave. (enter on East 53rd St., betw. Madison & Park Aves.) 212-888-2700 www.leverhouse.com \$\$\$\$ – Lever House hosts a more relaxed and more stylish power lunch than you'll find at the Four Seasons, but the deals are still getting done. Hexagonal patterns throughout evoke a honeycomb feel, and the place positively buzzes. Exceptional New American food, and the scene, keep media regulars coming back. It's très chic, so dress accordingly.



★Lupa – West Village, 170 Thompson St. (betw. Houston & Bleecker Sts.) 212-982-5089

www.luparestaurant.com \$\$\$ – It's more casual and much easier to get in to than Babbo, but Mario Batali's brilliant cooking doesn't suffer a bit at Lupa. Start with wonderful antipasti and salumi and then choose from an array of amazing pasta and heartier entrées: saltimbocca, striped bass, salmon, or lamb. Daily specials include lamb sausage (Monday), Lupa baccala (Tuesday), roasted pork (Wednesday), and whole grilled sardines (Friday). We've never been able to save room for dessert, but we hear Batali's cheese plates will astound your tastebuds. Reservations recommended, but you can squeeze in at the bar on weeknights. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Lure Fishbar – Soho, 142 Mercer St. (at Prince St.) 212-431-7676 www.lurefishbar.com \$\$\$\$ – When you head downstairs, you'll feel like you're below deck on the fanciest, glossiest yacht ever... try to get a white leather banquette and be careful with high heels. Love the shellfish bar (great oysters), pristine raw

fish bar (Arctic Char with trout roe and creamy horseradish, Nantucket Bay Scallops with scallion and radishes in a ginger marinade) and sashimi (New Zealand Red Snapper). Cooked entrée preparations are simple and well-executed. Dinner and lunch/brunch 7 days.

Mangia – Midtown, 50 West 57th St. (betw. Fifth & Sixth Aves.) 212-582-5554 www.mangiatogo.com \$ – Just what you'd expect from a "deli" across the street from Chanel. You'll find cooked-to-order pastas, a high quality salad bar, designer sandwiches, meal-sized salads, and just about anything else you could want for lunch. There's table service upstairs, if you're feeling a little fancier. Breakfast, lunch & snacks, Monday-Saturday (until 8pm weekdays and 6pm on Sat.) **More Mangias:** East Side at 16 East 48th St., 212-754-0637; Downtown at 40 Wall St., 212-425-4040, Flatiron at 22 West 23rd St., 212-647-0200.

MarkJoseph Steakhouse – Financial, 261 Water St. (near Peck Slip) 212-277-0020 www.markjosephsteakhouse.com \$\$\$ – This one's stealing the stockbrokers from Peter Luger. The same grade A, dry-aged, juicy porterhouse steaks, gorgeous sides and you don't have to haul your cookies to Brooklyn. Dinner Monday-Saturday; Lunch Monday-Friday.

Mary's Fish Camp – West Village, 64 Charles St. (at West 4th St.) 646-486-2185 www.marysfishcamp.com \$\$ – Known for a lobster roll that's as close to Maine as you can get in these parts, Mary's serves super-fresh seafood in a dive-y (but clean!) casual setting. Oysters are a great value here (\$10 for 6 Malpaques), and the salt-crusting shrimp, crab cakes, and French fries dusted with Old Bay are also great. The lines can be a little nuts here, but you can usually get in for a late (2pm) lunch. Lunch and dinner, Monday-Saturday.

Mayrose – Flatiron, 920 Broadway (at 21st St.) 212-533-3663 www.mayrose-nyc.com \$ – Eat your corner diner breakfast at this corner diner. A little brighter than your average coffee shop, Mayrose is perfect for everyday breakfasts, business or personal. Choose from staples like pancakes, made-to-order omelets, and oatmeal. We don't know how many dotcom startups got their start over Mayrose's matzoh brei. We like their salads and chili later in the day. Breakfast (starting at 7am), lunch, and dinner, 7 days.

Megu – Tribeca, 62 Thomas St. (betw. Church St. & W. Broadway) 212-964-7777 www.megunyc.com \$\$\$\$\$ – As much as we appreciate really expensive sushi, we also appreciate really expensive *cooked* Japanese food—thanks to fantastic Megu. Megu is the first U.S. entry from a bigtime Japanese restaurant group, and we hope they keep 'em coming. The extensive menu is a little much for us, so we got passive and let our server guide us through a magnificent tasting menu that was much, much more fabulous than what we would have put together. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Friday.

(Mercer)Kitchen – Soho, 99 Prince St. (Mercer Hotel) 212-966-5454 www.jean-georges.com \$\$\$ – Not many NYC hotel restaurants maintain their hip factor this long, and we credit Jean-Georges Vongerichten's strong French/New American/Asian menu for Mercer's staying power. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner, 7 days.

The Modern – Museum of Modern Art, 9 W. 53rd St. (betw. 5th & 6th Ave.) 212-333-1220 www.themodernnyc.com \$\$\$\$ -- Designed by architects Bentel & Bentel, a wall of glass offers diners a clear view of the magnificent 31 piece sculpture gardens. Or, dine at the bar...equally stunning, and offering less expensive *a la carte* menu options. As expected, all the design elements here... from the cutlery and dishes, to the furniture and lighting... are cutting edge and beautiful. Some of the prettiest food you'll ever see is created by exec chef, Gabriel Kreuther.

Montrachet – Tribeca, 239 West Broadway (betw. Walker & White Sts.) 212-219-2777 www.montrachet.net \$\$\$\$ – The beginning of Drew Nieparent's restaurant empire, Montrachet is almost humble by comparison to other fine dining establishments in Tribeca. They've won all the awards (Wine Spectator, James Beard, etc.), but the vibe remains laid back. The modern French cuisine is wonderful and the service is polished and friendly. Reservations required. Dinner Monday-Saturday, lunch Friday only.

New Green Bo – Chinatown, 66 Bayard St. (betw. Mott & Elizabeth Sts.) 212-625-2359 \$ – We discovered this one on a break from jury duty. Typical of the neighborhood, the Shanghai soup dumplings are terrific, the food is unbelievably cheap, and the place is a total hole. Lunch and dinner, 7 days.

Nobu Fifty Seven – Midtown, 40 West 57th St. (at .), 212-757-3000 \$\$\$\$\$ – We're fully confident that Matsuhia's latest is as terrific as the original Nobu, but given the choice between Midtown and Downtown, we're always going to head south.

★Nobu New York – Tribeca, 105 Hudson St. (at Franklin St.), 212-219-0500 \$\$\$\$\$ – This is the high temple of Japanese, so forget about spicy tuna rolls and get ready to spend big. Chef/owner Nobu Matsuhisa draws upon years spent in Peru to create innovative dishes that exceed expectations. Choose the \$80, \$100 or \$120/per person Omakase (chef's choice) menu and you'll be dazzled by dishes like rock shrimp tempura, kumamoto oysters, sweet black cod marinated in miso, and world-class sushi. The space is beautiful and the whole experience is truly divine. Reservations recommended, and they're a lot easier to get since Nobu Fifty Seven opened. You can also try Nobu Next Door (literally), which doesn't take reservations but you're practically guaranteed to see a celebrity or two. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Friday.



Norma's – Midtown, 118 W. 57th St. (Le Parker Meridian Hotel) 212-708-7460

www.parkermeridien.com \$\$ – Talk about focus: Norma's only serves breakfast. They spend 100% of their time and energy making the best french toast in the world. Their version starts with brioche and only gets better with foie gras and wild mushrooms. They also get creative with pancakes, crêpes, and frittatas and the juice is always fresh-squeezed. Breakfast until 3pm, 7 days.

Odeon – Tribeca/Soho, 145 West Broadway (at Thomas) 212-233-0507 www.theodeonrestaurant.com

\$\$\$+ – The first of Tribeca's hot spots, Odeon has over 20 years of experience and they know what they're doing. The American Bistro menu is made up of yummy standbys like a beet and camembert salad, steak au poivre, and roast chicken and the food and service are consistently excellent. It's good for groups and they're kid-friendly, too. Dinner and lunch, 7 days.

Olives NY – Union Square, 201 Park Ave. (at the W Union Square) 212-353-8345 www.olivesnyc.com \$\$\$ – The W chose Todd English to run this prime hotspot after observing his raging, repeated successes in Boston. English uses his repertoire of rich Mediterranean recipes and his proximity to Union Square's green market to create nightly tasting menus. We love pastas like tortellini with butternut squash, brown butter, sage, and parmesan. Dinner Tuesday-Saturday.

Otto Enoteca and Pizzeria – Greenwich Village, One Fifth Ave. (at 8th St.) 212-995-9559 www.ottopizzeria.com \$\$ – The pizzas are closer to Middle Eastern flatbreads than NYC slices, and not everyone is ready for that. We like it, but then, we're notoriously easy on pizza, and they've got outrageous topping combos like potato, anchovy and ricotta or tiny, briny clams with chili peppers and garlic. No reservations for parties less than 12, so they've set up a mock Italian train station where you register with reception, get a ticket and then watch the departure board. That wait can be long, but painless thanks to an extensive Italian wine list. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner 7 days.

Paladar – Lower East Side, 161 Ludlow St. (betw. Houston & Stanton Sts.) 212-473-3535 www.paladar.ws \$\$ – It's all in the family... chef-owner Aaron Sanchez (you might recognize him from the Food Network's "Melting Pot"), is the son of Zarela Martinez of Zarela fame. Well-priced Pan-Latin cuisine and zingy margaritas draw crowds to funky Paladar. Dinner 7 days, until 2am Thursday-Saturday.

Pastis – Meatpacking, 9 Ninth Ave. (at Little West 12th St.) 212-929-4844 www.pastisny.com \$\$\$+ – Pastis is just right whenever you want to feel a little Parisian energy (unless it's Thursday or Saturday night, when this part of town is a madhouse.) It's boisterous, the food is terrific, and your fries arrive with mayonnaise. You'll feel like you really "got away" for lunch. The Croque Monsieur, Tuna Nicoise, and cheesy onion soup are big winners. Breakfast (starting at 8am), lunch, and dinner 7 days.

Per Se – Columbus Circle, 10 Columbus Circle, 4th Fl. (Time Warner Center) 212-823-9335 \$\$\$\$\$ – If there's any meal worth spending this much, this is it. Thomas Keller (of French Laundry fame) brings us this New American wonder with daily tasting menus that will blow your mind with their creativity, complexity, and flat-out deliciousness. The lobster and foie gras courses were the very best things we've ever tasted. It's outrageously expensive, but think of it as dinner and a show all wrapped into one. Reservations required. Lunch, Friday-Sunday; dinner, 7 days.

Peter Luger Steak House – Brooklyn, 178 Broadway (at Driggs Ave.) 718-387-7400 www.peterluger.com \$\$\$+ – Another old New York institution, Peter Luger is worth the taxi ride over the bridge (about \$18 from midtown). The only decision you'll make is whether you want your dry-aged porterhouse black n' blue, rare, or medium rare. Your waiter will tell you how many orders of tomato and onion salad, hashbrowns, bacon, and creamed spinach you'll be having. It's crowded, noisy, and full of rowdy finance types (still!), but the food is delicious. We really like their lunchtime burger, too. They don't take credit cards, but do accept personal checks. Go figure. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. (If you don't have a reservation, the Great Neck Peter Luger is a better bet 516-487-8800.)

Petrossian – Midtown, 182 West 58th St. (at Seventh Ave.) 212-245-2214 www.petrossian.com \$\$\$\$ – We do love our caviar. While Petrossian can be a bit stuffy, there's nowhere better to indulge yourself (and that big client.) Don't even think of eating here without ordering the legendary Petrossian Sampler —when else will you get a chance muse on the subtle differences between sevruga, osetra, and beluga?? Jacket, tie, & reservation required. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

Pie – Union Square, 124 4th Ave. (betw. 12th & 13th Sts.) 212-475-4977 www.piebythepound.com \$ – No, it's not *that* kind of pie. In NYC, pie=pizza. And this place sells a glorious thin crust version by the pound, instead of the slice. Our favorites are the Potato Pie with ricotta, mozzarella, walnuts, and rosemary and the Fresh Cubed Pie with cubes of tomatoes and fresh mozzarella. The Nutella and Mascarpone dessert pies are even better than we imagined.

Pink Teacup – West Village, 42 Grove St. (betw. Bedford & Bleeker Sts.) 212-807-6755 www.thepinkteacup.com \$ – Where else in NYC can you get fried chicken, pork chops, and corn fritters for breakfast? We promised our doctors that we'd only eat here once a year, but that one time sure is good. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days.

★Prune – East Village, 54 East 1st St. (betw. First & Second Aves.) 212-677-6221 \$\$\$ – A foodie haven in the East Village. There's no pretension here, just creative, exciting takes on American fare, like creamed corn succotash, chestnuts with ricotta and sea salt, roast capon on a garlic crouton, and sweetbreads with bacon and capers. The friendly waitstaff really knows their stuff, and that counts at a place this ambitious. The place is very small and reservations are a must. Dinner 7 days, terrific weekend brunches. x

Quality Meats – 57 W. 58th St. 212-371-7777 \$\$\$ – Enjoy yummy classics like traditional steak tartare, Caesar salad and creamed spinach soufflé. The roasted bone marrow is m-m-good...as is the corn crème brûlée. In case you didn't know...New York has its share of celebrity butchers, and Milton Abeles and Strassburger Meats (suppliers for Quality) can claim that distinction.



Rao's – East Harlem, 455 E. 144th St. (at Pleasant Ave.) 212-722-6709 www.raos.com \$\$\$ – Just getting a table here will impress anyone in the know. All ten tables have standing reservations so the only way to get in is when one of those regulars cancels. It's a no-menu, eat-what-they're-making, only-in-NYC kind of neighborhood place. Obviously, reservations required. (Just for fun: Owner Frank Pellegrino played Agent Cubitosi on "The Sopranos") Dinner, Monday-Friday at 7pm.

The Red Cat – Chelsea, 227 Tenth Ave. (betw. 23rd & 24th Sts.) 212-242-1122 www.theredcat.com \$\$\$ – It's casual, but don't let that fool you. The creative American bistro menu is first-class and offers dishes to meet most cravings. The menu changes often, but starters could include rock shrimp fritters in lime-coriander aioli or grilled endive with Maytag blue cheese gratinée. Our favorite entrée here is a tasty pork chop loaded with olive tapenade. Yum. Service is warm and inviting and you feel like you could stay all night. Dinner, 7 days.

Ruby Foo's – Times Square, 1626 Broadway (at 49th St.) 212-489-5600 \$\$ – We snickered the first time we were invited to Ruby Foo's. Foodies like us enjoy a meal at a gimmicky place like this?? You bet. The Pan-Asian food is great for sharing and there's something for all tastes. The décor is a bit kitschy, but we love the drama queen staircase. We also love the Bento Box dessert sampler. Dinner and lunch, 7 days. (another location at 2182 Broadway 212-724-6700)

Salon Mexico – Gramercy, 134-136 East 26th St. (betw. Lexington & Third Aves.) 212-685-9400 www.salonmexiconyc.com \$\$\$ – If you don't over-indulge on the high-end tequilas, you'll find fine Mexican dining in the La Cava dining room and hot jazz in the Agave piano bar. We like the mole specials and anything they do with shrimp. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Friday.

Sarabeth's at the Whitney – Upper East Side, 945 Madison Ave. (Whitney Museum, at 75th St.) 212-570-3670 www.sarabeth.com \$\$ – Perfect for a break from the Hoppers, O'Keefes, and deKoonings. They have the best cream of tomato soup and the soup is a cozy companion to their salads and sandwiches. They serve breakfast all day, too. Lunch/Brunch served Tuesday-Sunday. (3 other locations: Upper East Side 212-410-7335, Upper West Side 212-496-6280, and Chelsea 212-989-2424.)

Schiller's Liquor Bar – Lower East Side, 131 Rivington St. (at Norfolk St.) 212-260-4555 www.schillersny.com \$\$ – By virtue of location alone, Schiller's had to be hip. Add in the Keith McNally magic touch (Balthazar, Pastis, Odeon, Lucky Strike, etc.) and a few famous faces (from Nicole Kidman to Martha Stewart to the Bush twins), and the place was an instant winner. Luckily, the eclectic bistro menu wins raves, too, and includes McNally's killer fries. The house wines are remarkably reasonable, and unless you're a serious wine snob, you'll be perfectly happy with the \$5/glass choices. The only thing we don't like here is the communal sink outside the restrooms – we hate washing our hands in mixed company. Lunch/brunch, dinner, & late-night dining, 7 days.

★Shake Shack – Flatiron, Madison Square Park (corner of 23rd St. & Madison Ave.) 212-889-6600 www.shakeshacknyc.com \$ – A no-frills, take-a-number outdoor "shack" sounds a little small town, but Danny Meyers adapted the concept to the big city with fabulous deco décor, primo frozen custard, and damn good burgers. They also serve loaded hot dogs, cheese fries, beer and wine, and a couple of vegetarian options. And as if we didn't love the place enough, they take care of our dogs, too: a Pooch-ini is frozen custard with peanut butter and a dog biscuit served in a mini dog dish... adorable. The line may look intimidating, but it moves fast and it's worth the wait. 11am-11pm 7 days, from April-November.

Shun Lee Palace – Midtown, 155 East 55th St. (betw. Third & Lexington Aves.) 212-371-8844 www.shunleepalace.com \$\$\$ – This one proves the adage "you get what you pay for." Shun Lee's Chinese is heads and shoulders above our Sunday night Chinese delivery. The haute Chinese is fresh and elegant, no grease in sight. Try whole sea bass braised in spicy bean sauce... yum. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

66 – Tribeca, 241 Church St. (at Leonard St.) 212-925-0202 www.jean-georges.com \$\$\$\$ – It's a little bit of a scene, particularly for Chinese food, but it's completely delish and the minimalist décor is beautiful (courtesy of Richard Meier). While some complain that Frenchman Jean-Georges Vongerichten couldn't possibly do the cuisine justice, we really like his twists like the Shrimp and Foie Gras Dumplings with Grapefruit dipping sauce, Lobster E-Fu Noodles, and the Niman Ranch Pork Chop. Perfect for a group that likes to share. Dinner and lunch 7 days, Sunday dim sum brunch.

Snack – West Village, 105 Thompson St. (betw. Prince & Spring Sts.) 212-925-1040 \$ – Snack's fresh and delish salads, sandwiches, and dips are a welcome change from the tired Greek fare offered at the city's ubiquitous coffee shops. You can't go wrong at this tiny spot. Start with refreshing Tzatziki (cucumber yogurt dip) and try a Chicken 1.7 sandwich (we don't know why it's 1.7, but it's roasted chicken, tomatoes, and red onions with arugula, mint and a lemony mayo on fresh Stirato bread). This place spawned the equally delicious Snack Taverna.

Snack Taverna – West Village, 63 Bedford St. (off of Seventh Ave. South) 212-929-3499 \$\$\$ – Wonderful, refined Greek fare draws fans from all over town to this upscale offshoot of casual Snack. We won't even try to tell you the Greek names for what we like, but we recommend the cured beef with squash and figs appetizer and the rich (but not too rich) scallop entrée. The staff can help you navigate the all-Greek wine list. No reservations. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

Spice Market – Meatpacking, 403 West 13th St. (at Ninth Ave.) 212-675-2322 www.jean-georges.com \$\$\$ – Despite a small food critic scandal (or maybe because of it?), Jean-Georges Vongerichten has another winner on his hands with a menu inspired by Southeast Asian street vendors. The space is a little bigger than we'd like, but the food is really, really good. Winners: pork vindaloo, shrimp in pepper sauce, curried duck, and steamed mussels. Reservations recommended. Lunch and dinner, 7 days.

The Spotted Pig – West Village, 314 West 11th St. (at Greenwich St.) 212-620-0393 www.thespottedpig.com \$\$ – The UK's gastro-pub movement arrives in NYC with spectacular results. Really. Chef April Bloomfield tweaks English pub classics with a bit of Italian-style flavor for terrific results, like Rabbit Rillette with Cornichons and Grain Mustard. She invented the "gnudi" appetizer of ricotta fried in sage and brown butter and if she patents it, she could make a mint. It's a major step up from bangers and mashed. Which brings us back to the pub: 6 microbrews on tap, including Brooklyn Brewery's custom Spotted Pig Bitter. (disclosure: yes, Mario Batali is an investor, but then, so is Jay-Z.)



Steakhouse at Monkey Bar – Midtown, 60 East 54th St. (betw. Madison & Park Aves.) 212-838-2600 www.theglaziergroup.com \$\$\$ – Co-owners Pam and Peter Glazier are Atkins loyalists, and their menu reflects it (they own Michael Jordan’s Steak House N.Y.C. and the Strip House, too). In addition to the steaks, choose from peppery yellow fin tuna, lobster, lightly crisp Dover sole, or a nice half chicken. If you want a good deal on beef, they do a different cut every night for just \$20... we’ve like ours with the rich Stilton sauce. And where else can you get a guilt-free no-carb dessert?? Sinless Citrus Delight is Monkey Bar’s fancier version of sugar-free Jell-O and Redi Whip. Dinner, 7 days; lunch, Monday-Friday.

Strip House – Greenwich Village, 13 East 12th St. (betw. University Pl. & Fifth Ave.) 212-328-0000 www.theglaziergroup.com \$\$\$\$ – Designed by David Rockwell, Strip House has more of a sexy bordello feel than the Glazier’s other meat shrines, and we like it. But it’s the signature double-cut NY Strip and artery-clogging goose-fat-fried potatoes that make this a favorite. Holy yum. Dinner 7 days.

Suba – Lower East Side, 109 Ludlow St. (at Delancey St.) 212-982-5714 www.subanyc.com \$\$\$ – It’s hip, it’s entertaining, and it’s casual. The Spanish tapas menu includes all kinds of adventures. Try cockles and caramelized onion layered between black pepper tile or bacalao infused mousse with cranberries and oranges. We really like the brick-lined grotto downstairs. A pool of water and light rings the tables, giving it a romantic and intimate feel with a minimum of fuss. To keep things lively, a dj spins on weekend nights and an amazing flamenco dancer performs on Sundays. Dinner, 7 days.

Tabla – Flatiron, 11 Madison Ave. (at 25th St.) 212-889-0667 www.tablany.com \$\$\$\$ – More, more, more from Danny Meyers & co! Chef Floyd Cardoz’s adventurous menu combines local ingredients with Indian spices and techniques for a delicious turn. The ever-changing menu might include samosas stuffed with greenmarket corn, Nova Scotia lobster, lamb with a chickpea-yogurt jus, or roasted veal with spicy chiles. Note that there’s no a la carte dining at Tabla; choose from the \$57 prix fixe or an even pricier tasting menu. If you’ve got a bit less appetite, or moolah, try the excellent Bread Bar at Tabla, downstairs. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Saturday.

Tamarind – Flatiron, 41-43 East 22nd St. (betw. Broadway & Park Ave. South) 212-674-7400 www.tamarindnyc.com \$\$\$ – Shades of orange and gold combine for a surprisingly elegant and serene backdrop for high-end Northern Indian delicacies like, prawns roasted marinated in yogurt and chiles, roast chicken in saffron cashew sauce, and lamb with ginger and spinach. The waiter may stop at your table a few too many times, but we like to know they care. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

Teany – Lower East Side, 90 Rivington St. (betw. Orchard & Ludlow Sts.) 212-475-9190 www.teany.com \$ – Of course, Moby’s veggie tea and snack shop is cooler than cool... Gwyneth P. celebrated baby Apple’s first birthday here (but that was before the Summer '05 fatal stabbing out front.) The menu includes nibbles like crostini with a variety of vegan spreads, a cheddar melt with faux bacon, and yummy soups. They have over 90 kinds of teas, a menu of potent sake cocktails, and a good selection of beers and champagnes. Rock on. 9am-1am, 7 days.

Telepan—Upper West Side, 72 W. 69th St. 212-580-4300 \$\$\$-- Trendy, seasonal and stylish cooking that brings downtown style to the upper West Side. Bill Telepan (who you may know from his JUdson Grill days,) creates some razzle-dazzle with dishes like yellowtail sushi over farro tabbouleh tossed with mint and olive oil, a bay scallop casserole with butter cream sauce, roasted garlic and spinach, and a smoked trout, olive oil and chive creation served over buckwheat blini.

Town – Midtown, 15 West 56th St. (Chambers Hotel) 212-582-4445 www.chambershotel.com \$\$\$\$ – Chef Geoffrey Zakarian has one of the coolest resumes around (Le Cirque, ‘21’ Club, 44 at the Royalton, and Patroon), so we weren’t surprised when Town’s cool quotient flew through the stratosphere. We were surprised, however, to taste how seriously Town takes the nouvelle cuisine. Make no mistake, this is a foodie destination. Dinner 7 days, breakfast and lunch Monday-Friday.

★Union Square Café – Union Square, 21 East 16th St. (betw. Fifth Ave. & Union Square West) 212-243-4020 www.unionsquarecafe.com \$\$\$\$ – Danny Meyer’s and award-winning Chef Michael Romano’s first entry in the neighborhood still delivers the casual elegance, genuine hospitality, and outstanding American fare that’s won national recognition. They’re famed for the impeccable filet mignon of tuna entree, but our favorite meal here is a tuna burger at the bar. Note: Meyer banned the use of cell phones in all of his establishments– Bravo! Reservations required. Dinner 7 days, lunch Monday-Saturday.

Zen Palate – Union Square, 34 Union Square East (at 16th St.) 212-614-9345 www.zenpalate.com \$\$ – Delicious vegan Asian that satisfies carnivores, too. In the upstairs dining room, you’ll be dazzled by the presentation of dishes like Dreamland, which is rooted in caramelized, meaty mushrooms. There’s a more casual menu downstairs that’s great for a quick bite (spinach noodles with sesame dressing, light basil moo shu rolls, shredded cabbage.) BYOB for maximum zen. Upstairs is open for dinner 7 days and lunch Monday-Saturday; downstairs open for lunch and dinner, 7 days. (You can also try their two other locations: 2170 Broadway 212-501-7768 and 663 Ninth Ave. 212-614-9345)

★ Our very favorite restaurants are marked with a star.

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