

Orlando Restaurant 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.

Now, moving on from the commercial to the major issue at hand... good food, and where to find it Orlando has something for everyone! The big theme parks provide food fantasy galore, family dining of every sort, and big, brand-name Food Stars like Emeril Lagasse opening places here. Plus, the many privately-owned, long-established eateries in town offer unique menus that reflect the best of local ingredients and Florida flavors. American Southern and Caribbean influences, plus access to the freshest of seafood and year-round fresh produce, add extra zest to Orlando dining.

As always, our restaurant recommendations are a compilation of personal favorites, top picks of local and national food and wine critics, and input from Orlando 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.,

Keep in mind that in Orlando, 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.

Have fun, success and some good meals!

Amura - 55 W. Church St. (Betw. S. Garland and Orange Ave.) 407-316-8500 (2nd location at 7786 W. Sand Lake Dr. 407-370-0007) ★★ ★\$: Considered by most the top sushi place in town, so expect to wait a bit for your table. (Management promises to seat you within 30 minutes...and they do.) Prices are reasonable, and there's a great lunch special for about \$8.00 that includes soup and salad. With so much variety in sushi rolls, some folks complain there is actually too much choice. (We also hear that the seating is a bit close and claustrophobic, and the lighting is harsh.) Still, there's never an empty seat in the house so clearly the food keeps 'em coming back for more.

Beaches and Cream Soda Shop - 1800 Epcot Resorts Blvd. (by the pool at Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Resort) 407-WDW-DINE ★ \$: If your inner ice cream lover is yearning for the ultimate chilly treat, stop by with your gang and order the



Kitchen Sink. You get scoops of chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, coffee, and mint chocolate chip, slathered in every topping under the sun, and served family style in....what else?... a mock kitchen sink!

Bistro de Paris - France, Epcot's World Showcase WDW 407-WDW-DINE ★★★
\$\$\$\$: French fare done Disney! Begin with Foie Gras, Escargot, and Tuna Tartare, then follow with an entrée of Roast Duck or Rack of Lamb. For dessert, the Apricot Tart comes highly recommended. The Bistro is considered one of the more sophisticated Park offerings. The Proof: they do not have a children's menu, and the cost of appetizer, entrée, and dessert per person comes to about \$70.00, before tax, tip and wine.

The Boheme – Grand Bohemian Hotel, 325 S. Orange Ave. 407-581-4700 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$: Rated AAA Four Diamond, this luxe hotel dining room is known for the unique framed artwork that covers the walls, and it's very much *the* special occasion destination for local cognoscenti. Lots of business is done over their sumptuous breakfast service, and the power lunch is par for the course here. Cuisine is described as eclectic.... classic with a twist. Try the Fricassee of Escargot and the Skillet Roasted Chilean Sea Bass. (Stop by the lounge and check out the Imperial Grand Bosendorfer Piano....one of only 2 in the world...it's a wow!)

Broadway Pizzeria – 6807 Visitors Circle (International Dr.) 407-351-8989 ★★ \$\$: For those staying in the Universal Orlando area, Broadway will DELIVER their really good NY style pizzas, pastas, and subs to your hotel....up until 4 am on week-ends. So, when the munchies hit, you're totally covered, dude.

Charley's Steak House – 8255 International Dr. 407-363-0228 (Also, second location: 6107 S. Orange Blossom TRL 407-851-7130) ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$: Vies with Morton's for *best steak in town* honors. Beef here is aged 4-6 weeks, and is pit-cooked to heady perfection in a blast of wood-fired flame reaching over 1100° F. (Rumor has it...this method was lifted from the local Seminole Indians.) Excellent Scotches and a fine wine list will smooth out any rough edges.

Chatham's Place – 7575 Dr. Phillips Blvd. 407-345-2992 ★★★ \$\$\$: This pretty restaurant has lots of breathing room, many windows, and some lovely outdoor seating as well. The Rack of Lamb and the Florida Black Grouper with Pecan Butter are fan favorites. Zagat, Mobil, and Fodors have all put Chatham's on their local where-to-eat lists.

Christini's Ristorante Italiano – Bayhill Market Pl., 7600 Dr. Phillips Blvd. 407-345-8770 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$: Multiple award-winning (including AAA Four Diamond, Wine Spectator, and The Ivy,) this veteran Northern Italian is a favorite with local VIP's and visiting politicians, athletes and show biz types, as well. Don't be put off by its modest shopping center location...this place is the real deal. Just check out the waiting limos. Try Bob Hope's favorite dish...Costata Di Vitello. Also super...the Maine Lobster Flambé with Brandy and Vodka.

The Crab House Seafood Restaurant – 8291 International Dr. 407-352-6140 (a 2nd Orlando location: 8496 Palm Parkway 407-239-1888) ★★ \$\$: Offers a reasonably priced seafood (and salad) buffet featuring lots of oysters, crabs, shrimp, and mussels. There's also a baked-stuffed lobster/steamed crab entrée that's tasty and affordable. Kids' menu offers fried shrimp, chicken, spaghetti, and the like for around \$5.00. Outdoor seating is available on both the deck and the patio.

Doc's Restaurant – 1315 S. Orange Ave. 407-839-3627 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Winner of the *Orlando Sentinel's* Foodie Award, and Critic's Choice for *Best Power Lunch* - Doc's is the brainchild of a local surgeon and a world-class chef ...a perfect Florida collaboration. Neil Connolly, former Kennedy family chef, and author of "*In the Kennedy Kitchen*," does a bang-up eclectic menu. Sushi is one of the house specialties...and the lobster stew is not to be missed. Lots of dark wood, a great looking bar, and well-designed lighting set the mood for a most enjoyable dining experience.

Dux – Peabody Orlando, 9801 International Dr. 407-345-4540 ★★★ \$\$\$: This elegant dining room at the Peabody is named for the live ducks that parade through the hotel's lobby each morning to the strains of a Sousa march. Décor features bamboo chairs, candle light, mirrors, flowers, and lovely framed watercolors of (what else?) DUCKS! The New American menu is creative, the wine cellar is grand, the service is delightful, and it's considered the most romantic spot in town. Very well behaved kids are cordially invited...and, word to the tender-hearted, *duck will never be found* on the menu here.

Emeril's Restaurant – 6000 Universal Blvd. 407-224-2424 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$: Always fun, always fabulous...the great Emeril Lagasse brings his New Orleans magic to Orlando. Check out the divine Oyster Stew (made extra-special with Andouille mashed potatoes, garlic aioli, and black pepper croutons.) The pecan-coated Texas redfish is another winner. Stellar gourmet pizzas are perfect for lunch. Watch the action in the snazzy 'show kitchen'...it's all kinds of 'bam!', all night long!



Emeril's Tchoup Chop - 6300 Hollywood Way, Universal Orlando Royal Pacific Resort 407-5032467 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Tchoup Chop (pronounce it chop-chop) offers Asian/Polynesian cuisine that's *kickin' it* Emeril-style. Campy cool features like a tiki bar, bamboo detail, waterfalls, sculpted gardens, and giant woks provide a fun setting for the fabulous food. The Kona coffee-glazed duck breast with duck and vegetable chow mein is grand...likewise, the Kahlua slow-roasted pork and noodle sauté. More good times come from the bar, where elaborate tropical mixed drinks rule...try the Pago Pago (minted rum with a squeeze of lime and crushed fresh mint). Open for lunch and dinner.

50's Prime Time Café – WDW Disney MGM Studios 407-WDW-DINE ★★ \$: If Pot Roast, Meatloaf with Gravy, and Chicken Pot Pie make you go "ahhhh!"...this is your place. Formica, Philco, and fifties all over...it's comforting and cozy and cute as heck. Food is not quite up to Mom's, but it satisfies nicely.

Fish Bones – 6707 Sand Lake Rd. 407-352-0135 ★★★★★ \$: Freshly caught seafood grilled to perfection over an open pit, along with some excellent lamb and beef dishes, make Fish Bones a favorite with locals and tourists alike. A bit of Cajun sass flavors the food and the mood...Zydeco music wafts out of the bar...and you can bet their famous "hurricane" cocktail will blow you away. Especially good: the grilled tuna and the filet mignon stuffed with blue cheese. Dinner only....opens at 4 PM daily.

Hollywood Brown Derby – WDW Disney MGM Studios 407-WDW-DINE ★★ \$: Doing the *Hollywood Power Lunch* Florida-style, this recreation of the original 1937 LA hotspot is spot-on! The chandeliers, the brass 'derby' hat lamps, the teak accents, and marvelous celebrity caricatures are all there. Try their original creation, the now world-famous Cobb Salad... a combo of chopped lettuce, avocado, watercress, tomatoes, chicken, hard-boiled eggs, chives, blue cheese, and bacon, topped with French dressing. Simply scrumptious!

House of Blues – WDW Downtown Disney Westside 407-934-2583 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: CKP staffers really enjoyed the lavish New Orleans spread put on at this in-park favorite. Feast on tender baby back ribs, Louisiana crawfish, jambalaya, Cajun shrimp and all the trimmings. A truly fun place....good food and a really good time. The Sunday Gospel Brunch is always a winner.

Hue – 629 E. Central Blvd., Downtown Orlando 407-849-1800 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Progressive American cuisine served in stylish, sophisticated surroundings...earning lots of press attention and local foodie recognition since opening in 2002. Awards include Best Power Lunch (*Orlando Sentinel*) and Best Restaurant (*Orlando Magazine*). Fan favorites: the Tamari Roasted Duck Breast and the Wood-Grilled Mahi Mahi. Also known for an active bar scene, with a very well-attended happy hour.

Kres Chophouse - 17 W. Church St., The Kress Bldg., Downtown Orlando 407-447-7950 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Another success story from the creators of Hue, the Kres Chophouse is home to local movers and shakers, offering sizzle, steak, and a good stiff drink to loyal devotees. Great for those seeking upscale late-nite dining....and a favorite spot for closing the deal over martinis and meat. The steak tartare appetizer is yum, as are the tenderloin thumbits. And, if you're a fan of Beef Wellington, they've got it. The 12 Oz. Veal Chop is quite impressive. DJs spin on Thurs. and Fri. nites.

Le Coq Au Vin – 4800 S. Orange Ave. 407-851-6980 ★★★★★ \$: When local chefs go out to eat after work, this is where they go. For cozy surroundings, and hearty country French cuisine served with a spiffy Pinot Noir, Le Coq Au Vin is surely the place. Try the Eggplant, Crabmeat and Shrimp topped with Cajun Hollandaise, the Duck a L'Orange, and, but of course, the Chicken with Wine Sauce.

Maison and Jardin - 430 S. Wymore Rd. (AS) 407-862-4410 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: This classic Continental is a recipient of the Di-RoNa Award, *Wine Spectator's* Grand Continental Award, and owns a AAA Four Diamond rating. Chef Hans Spirig is famous for his wonderful preparation of game and Florida seafood. Start with the Blinis a la Russe (you can choose between Icelandic, Spanish, and Beluga Caviar), next...the flaming Spinach Salad, then the Snapper and Crabmeat in Pastry, and finish with the Crêpes Suzette. Wonderful wines, of course.

Manuel's on the 28th - Barnett Bank Bldg., 390 N. Orange Ave. 407-246-6580 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: This glass-walled restaurant at the top of downtown Orlando's DuPont Centre is one of the city's finest with great views, great service, great food. Cuisine is New American, and the bill of fare changes with the seasons. Especially good...the Abalone and Shrimp in Roasted Garlic Sauce appetizer, and the entrée of Lobster and Wood-Roasted Chicken with Coconut Lime Sauce and Fried Curry Noodles.

Moonfish Restaurant - 7525 W. Sand Lake Rd. 407-363-7262 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Seafood is the specialty of the house and the menu offers impressive varieties of local catch, flown-in specials, and all kinds of fresh shellfish, sashimi and sushi. A raw bar



serves every kind of oyster imaginable. Also notable (and non-fishy): the duck carpaccio. Plasma TVs play loops of aquarium scenes shot thru veils of running water...and pretty pieces of multi-hued art glass lend a magical touch to the room.

Morton's, The Steakhouse – 7600 Dr. Phillips Blvd. 407-248-3485 ★★★ \$\$\$: Member of the venerable steakhouse chain, Orlando's Morton's serves all the standard house favorites. Beautiful steaks, prime rib, and whole Maine lobsters, plus signature sides like creamed spinach and jumbo asparagus with Hollandaise are great, as per usual. Prepare for brimming man-size drinks from the bar, and all the usual comfy, clubby ambience you expect from Morton's. Desserts are rich and satisfying...especially the legendary hot

chocolate cake.

Norman's – 4012 Central Florida Pkwy, Ritz Carlton Grande Lakes 407-393-4333 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Chef Norman Van Aken is quite the culinary star in the Florida firmament, and he brings his unique style...dubbed *Floribbean* (fusing Key West, Havana and Kingston cuisines) to this elegant room at the Ritz. Try the mango glazed barbecue duck wrapped in a green chili pancake, the beef ribs with creamed corn, grilled chayote, and fried onion rings. ...and do not miss the toasted brioche with cinnamon scented foie gras. For dessert, consider the New World Banana Split... featuring macadamia nut-brittle ice cream and rum flam-béed banana. Best buy on the menu: A 3-course, prix- fixe dinner can be had for \$55.00. Open for dinner only.

Palm – 5800 Universal Blvd., Hard Rock Hotel 407-503-7256 ★★★ \$\$\$: As always, steak and lobster rule at the world famous Palm. Hearty slabs of juicy prime rib and some noteworthy specialty salads (like the Gigi: tomatoes, bacon, onions, chopped shrimp and green beans in a light vinaigrette), plus sides like the yummy creamed spinach are also fan favorites. The atmosphere here is a bit energetic, a touch raucous, and perfect for a boisterous good time. Big drinks, big hunks of NY cheese-cake, and a big appetite just add to the fun.

Primo – 4040 Central Florida Pkwy., JW Marriot Orlando Grande Lakes 407-393-4444 ★★★ \$\$\$: Home grown organic produce was the trademark of Melissa Kelly's first restaurant in Rockland, Maine. Her Orlando location still boasts its own organic garden where fresh ingredients provide the basis of her terrific menu. Begin with tuna tartare, garnished with Meyer lemon and a sunnyside-up quail egg. The pan-roasted grouper entrée with sweet shrimp risotto is divine. And for dessert, the full-bodied espresso float hits just the right note. Dinner only.

Roy's Orlando – 7760 W. Sand Lake Rd. 407-352-4844 ★★★★★ \$\$\$: Hawaii's famous Chef Roy Yamaguchi brings his trademark Island Asian cuisine to Orlando. (TV cooking show fans know him from *Iron Chef* and *Top Chef* appearances. He is a totally charming and charismatic guy.) Try the wood-roasted lemongrass shrimp with black rice risotto, or the perfectly seared mahi mahi with macadamia lobster sauce. Notable wines and an intimate ambience make the great food at Roy's taste even better.

Ruth's Chris Steak House – 7501 W. Sand Lake Rd. 407-226-3900 ★★★ \$\$\$: The very first Ruth's Chris opened in New Orleans in '65. Now this popular chain has outposts everywhere. Known for fine, aged steaks cooked in custom-made broilers that fire up temperatures exceeding 1700° Fahrenheit. 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.

Seasons 52 – 7700 W. Sand Lake Rd. 407-354-5212 ★★★ \$\$\$: This award-winning spot prides itself on a lighter menu featuring super-fresh ingredients. The bill of fare changes with the seasons, and whatever is freshest...all 52 weeks of the year...is the basis of your meal. Also unique...a huge variety of wines (at least 70) are available *by the glass*, with another 70 varieties available by the bottle only. Another fine touch, live entertainment happens nightly at the kitschy piano bar.

Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater Restaurant - Disney-MGM Studios 407-WDW-DINE ★★ \$: This place is all about those 'fabulous fifties' drive-in movies. Seating is in faux-fifties convertibles, where your 'carhop' provides the popcorn, and 'B' sci-fi movie trailers and old-tyme-y commercials play on giant screens under a twinkling fiber-optic starry night. Big burgers and shakes are the lunchtime favorite, with more sophisticated and more expensive entrées featured on the dinner menu.

Taquitos Jalisco – 1041 S Dillard St. Winter Garden, FL. 407-654-0363 ★★★ \$: When the craving for real-deal Mexican food hits, head here immediately. Enchiladas, burro loco, savory tacos, spicy camarones...fabulous rice and beans, and a special home-made salsa are *lick the plate clean* good! Real chocolate in the Mole Sauce, strolling Mariachis on the weekend, and prices that are easy on the wallet are additional perks.



Thai House – 2117 E. Colonial Dr. 407-898-0820 ★★★ \$\$: This small, friendly, family-owned dining room is full of Siamese paintings and statues, and the aromas of tangy Thai spices will spark both your appetite and your imagination. Begin with the tom yum gai, a lemon-lime chili broth heaped with chicken chunks and vegetables. The savory red curry stew with meat, pineapple and bamboo makes a hearty entrée, and the whole fish selections...like the deep-fried snapper topped with pork, ginger and mushrooms...are guaranteed to satisfy. Devotees swear by the Pad Thai here...can't rave enough...and the Thai iced tea is another favorite touch. Dinner only

Victoria and Albert's - Disney Grand Floridian, Grand Floridian Way (LBV) 407-939-3463 ★★★★★ \$\$\$\$\$ (@ \$95.00 pre fixe, plus wines and tips, expect nearly \$200.00 per diner): The poshest spot in Disney World...a personal maid and butler magnificently attend each table. The china is Wedgwood, the flatware is Sambonet, and the crystal is by Riedel (the wine snob's favorite!). Dinner is a 6 course personalized menu, with options in each category. The international menu is always mutating....under the creative direction of the brilliant Scott Hunnel. Must experience to believe. Do dress up for this one.

Vito's Chop House - 8633 International Dr. 407-354-2467 ★★★ \$\$\$: Kind of that *Rat Pack-ish* vintage steak house with lots of Italian *flava*, Vito's has your martini and cigar waiting. With over 1000 wines on hand, and over 50 varieties of cigar for your pleasure, Vito's wants you to be really, really happy. Aged steaks, market fresh fish, Italian specialties, and all kinds of fancy martinis, served with style and old-world panache, guarantee that you'll leave pampered and satisfied. Conveniently located near the Convention Center.