

Chicon 2000 Dining Guide



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by Leah A. Zeldes



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*A guide to eating in Chicago
for the members of the
58th World Science Fiction Convention*

By **Leah A. Zeldes**

Art by Brad W. Foster

A Taste of Food to Come

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Food for fandom

Welcome to Chicago, one of the world's greatest restaurant cities. While its stockyards history long ago gave it a reputation as a top meat-and-potatoes destination, in the past several decades Chicago has grown immensely in the style, depth, breadth and richness of its varied cuisine.

From the rarified, New American style of Charlie Trotter to the earthy, finger-licking flavor of Al's No. 1 Italian Beef, Chicago offers something good for nearly every taste and pocketbook.

Chicon attendees are lucky enough to be right in the midst of the greatest concentration of the best of Chicago's restaurants. Indulge and enjoy!

Chicago, Chicago, I'll show you around

Your guide through the galaxy of Chicago dining is a very minor neopro, a longtime Midwestern fan and fanzine editor (better known as Leah Zeldes Smith), a 15-year resident of Chicagoland and a professional foodie. For the past decade, I have been writing about the food and restaurants of Chicago for the Lerner Newspapers, a chain of 14 editions.

I volunteered to produce this busman's holiday because it struck me as a way to introduce my favorite people — fans — to my favorite restaurants.

As a food writer and critic, however, my knowledge of Chicago restaurants is broad but not deep. There aren't any places whose entire menus I know by heart. You don't get to be a regular anywhere in my business. Except for the late-night diner down the street from my office, there are few eateries I get to more than two or three times a year.

And there are many I never get to. Chicago has some 19,000 restaurants. Even as dedicated a foodie as I am — and I eat out four or five nights a week — can't get to them all. There are well over 500 restaurants within a mile of the Hyatt, the area on which this guidebook concentrates. I have been to perhaps a third of them, many not very recently.

This guide, therefore, comprises some of my own knowledge and personal recommendations, some gathered from fellow food writers and other foodies, and some information garnered from the restaurants themselves. We sent questionnaires to several hundred restaurants within roughly a mile of the hotels. In some cases, that's all the information we have about a restaurant. I've left out places I know to be real losers — but I can't claim that every eatery listed here is a winner, either.

This is by no means a comprehensive guide. I've tried to include the nearby restaurants I know and like best — you'll find those highlighted with ♥♥♥ — and others I felt

worth your attention, as well as restaurants of types I felt fans would be looking for. I know not everyone is interested in haute cuisine.

However, I confess that this guide is probably slanted more toward finer dining than not. The con is in a high-rent district, and that's the type of place I get to most often in this neighborhood. Unfortunately, most of the cheap eats downtown cater to the business crowd, which means they are open for lunch on weekdays, and not very useful on a holiday weekend. I have not troubled to list all the fast food in Illinois Center, for example, since much of it will close for the duration by 3 p.m. Friday.

But there are plenty of cheaper places listed here, as well as a few groceries where you can stock up on peanut butter if the budget is really tight.

This guide does not include every type of cuisine available in Chicago, either. Restaurants reflecting some ethnicities are to be found only in their respective ethnic neighborhoods. But if you really want to go on an expedition to eat Lithuanian, Guatemalan, Tibetan or some other fare I haven't listed, catch me in person (the Fan Lounge is a likely spot) and I'll try to make suggestions.

RTFM

How to use this guide

This guide is organized in sections that group similar restaurants, sometimes by neighborhood and sometimes by type of cuisine. (Hey, it seemed logical to me.) A place can fit more than one category, though, so check the index, which is your best means of finding restaurants by type.

A typical entry lists some of the following information:

- The restaurant's name, phone number, fax number, URL and e-mail address, if they have them.
- Particular information of use to Chicon members, such as discounts offered if you show your badge.
- The kitchen hours and meals served. Theoretically, the end time listed is supposed to be the last seating, rather than the time they lock the doors, but do call first if you're going to be cutting it close. Or even if you're not — restaurants are notorious for changing their hours or saying one time and closing at another. "*Late*" means they're open till at least midnight.
- The reservations policy. *The information about reservations applies to prime dinner hours on weekend evenings.* Other times are probably looser.

"*Limited res.*," a peculiar policy of some Lettuce Entertain You restaurants, means that they only offer reservations for a fraction of the dining room and the bulk of the seating is first-come, first-served.

“*Res. 6+ only*” means the restaurant will take reservations only for groups of six or more. “*Res. req.*” means you won’t get in without a reservation, and “*Res. recommended 3-4 weeks ahead*” means you should have made reservations before you got here. (But it’s worth a call anyway; there may be a cancellation, or you may be able to get in by being flexible about timing or at lunch.)

- Payment information. “*No cc*” means they don’t take credit cards. Otherwise, they probably do. Call first if the type of card accepted matters to you.

- Parking info. “*No parking*” means that the restaurant has none of its own parking; if you’re driving, you’ll have to allow extra time to find street parking or a space in a commercial lot or garage. If there’s no notation about parking, the restaurant probably has something, typically a valet or a discount arrangement with a nearby lot. It’ll probably be obvious when you get there, but if time is tight, call to find out about exact arrangements.

- Dress code, should there be one.

- Large group info. Chicago fandom being what it is, we aren’t in the habit of dining out en masse. I haven’t got a good take on which restaurants handle large parties best, but here are some hints:

“*Largest table*” is the number of people the restaurant said could be seated at one table. If your group has agglutinated beyond that, you’ll have to split up. We weren’t able to get this information for a lot of places — call if you need to know definitely.

“*Private room*” means the restaurant has one. If your group has agglutinated that much, you might want to see if you can book it. Probably more places than we know about have such rooms, so call and ask. “*Limited seating*” means there are only a few tables or a counter.

- Other amenities. “*Live music*” may be in the bar, or it may interfere with conversation in the dining room. Call for details. “*Outdoor seating*” means that you can sit in a sidewalk café or other outdoor dining area if the weather’s nice. “*View*” means there’s something nice to look at while you dine, at least if you snag a good table near a window.

- “*No smoking*” means there’s no smoking in the dining room, and maybe not on the premises at all.

- Pricing. Between the brackets is a rough guide to the price of a typical dinner for one; each \$ equals about \$10. These are rounded up. You can usually eat there for less than that amount if you order carefully.

- Description. Opinions expressed are mostly mine.

♥♥♥ marks my favorites. The menu items listed are intended to give you an idea of the type of food served, but menus change frequently, so you can’t necessarily count on these specific dishes being available when you get there.

“*Vegetarian dishes available*” means they say they have some. That may mean a salad. Call for details.

*Since Eve ate the apple,
much depends on dinner.*

— *Lord Byron*

Call first

I did my best to insure that the information in this guide is accurate, but the one thing I have learned in my years of covering the dining scene is that restaurants lie.

They say the last seating is at 10, but on a slow night they'll lock up at 9:30. They say they have vegetarian fare, but that turns out to mean coleslaw. They say you don't need a reservation, but don't mention that means an hour's wait. They say they have "The World's Greatest" food, and serve dreck.

Much of the information gathered here was compiled several months ago. Since then, undoubtedly, hours have changed, policies have altered, chefs have left, menus have been revised, and some restaurants have gone out of business. Besides that, a number of places that said they'd be open on Labor Day have no doubt changed their minds.

If you want to be sure something I've written here is still true, call first.

Yes, you need reservations

Restaurateurs tell me that this is a very busy weekend. There are lots of tourists in town for the Jazz Festival, and because of the holiday on Monday, Sunday night is likely to be just as busy as Friday and Saturday.

You should call for dinner reservations at any place that takes them as soon as you know your dinner plans. Sooner, perhaps. Don't wait till dinnertime, and if you possibly can, call a couple of days ahead for prime times on Friday through Sunday nights.

Rather than the usual fannish milling about in the lobby while everyone decides where they want to go, and the group swells from eight to 27, I recommend this plan: First decide where *you* want to eat and how many people you want to eat with, make reservations, and then collect dining companions.

If your group's already assembling in the lobby, it's still worth calling ahead, especially if your party is large. A place that's full up can warn you off, and a less-busy place will have time to get your table ready.

Can't make reservations? Your best bets then are to eat early — before 6 p.m. — or late — after 9:30, or head for the chain restaurants and fast food.

Trying for an early or late seating may also get you a table at some hot spot that's otherwise booked up. I've

listed restaurants' general reservation policies, but it's always worth calling to see if there's been a cancellation.

And if you try and fail to book a table on your own, ask your hotel's concierge to give it a try. A concierge has more clout than you do. (Don't forget to tip the concierge \$5 or \$10 for this service, depending on how much effort it was and how costly the restaurant.) The concierges will also have copies of restaurant menus and advice about nearby restaurants.

And if you change your mind, please call to cancel your reservations. At the moment, only a handful of Chicago restaurants require that you confirm your reservation with a credit card. I'd like to keep it that way.

I can get it for you wholesale

Check the index under "Discounts" for a list of restaurants that have agreed to give Chicon members a discount. Tell 'em I sent you. (And show your badge.)

Tipping is not optional

If you don't want to tip, or can't afford to, don't go to restaurants that offer table service. Period. (And don't order food delivered, either, because the delivery driver deserves a tip, too — 10 percent, more in bad weather.)

Under the current income-tax law, restaurant servers are required to pay taxes on tips whether they receive any or not. So only really, really dreadful service — which you can trace to the waiter, not the kitchen — justifies leaving no tip.

If you feel that strongly about a problem, don't be a coward about it. Make it a point to speak to the restaurant manager and tell him why you aren't leaving a tip.

Be sure you don't inadvertently tip twice, however. Because of the universal tendency of large groups to undertip, most restaurants will automatically add a gratuity onto a big table's check. Watch for that.

A fair tip is 15 percent on the total of your meal and drinks before taxes. If you want to be a sport, you'll tip on the check total — an easy way is just to double the amount of the tax. Tip more if the service is exceptional, of course.

If the meal is a buffet, and the server just takes your order and brings you a drink, you can get away with 10 percent. High-end restaurants generally call for a 20-percent tip, mainly because the money is going to be divided among more than one server.

You need not offer separate tips to all the various personnel for routine service in ritzy restaurants — they'll divvy it up. Indeed, many restaurants pool tips.

Tip the sommelier a few dollars if he was exceptionally helpful, and the captain or maître d' if he performs some

special service, such as getting you a great window table on request, or bringing in that diamond ring on command — \$5 to \$10 is enough, depending on the service performed and the quality of the restaurant. Pass this money surreptitiously in a farewell handshake as you leave. (It's rude to offer the maître d' money verbally. Don't try to bribe your way to a better table or higher place in line — it won't work here, and if it did, it would likely cause a riot.)

You're unlikely to need a coat in this weather, but if you check one, the coat-checker gets \$1 per one or two coats, when you get your coat back.

Only a few restaurants here still have restroom attendants (they're more common in nightclubs). If you encounter one, you should tip a dollar or two if you use the attendants' proffered toiletries, more if he or she does you a special service, such as sewing up torn clothing.

In theory, you need not tip if all the attendant does is hand you a towel, but if you feel awkward — and hey, who'd take a job like that if he didn't really need the money? — hand over 50 cents.

Remove propeller beanies before dining

Chicago is a medium dressy town. Only a few places actually require a coat and still fewer a tie, but people generally dress nicely to go to nice restaurants in the city. The town's hot spots are places to see and be seen, and diners dress accordingly.

This does not, however, mean you should wear your hall costume out to dinner.

A lot of places have what they call a "business casual" policy, which tends not to be formally stated but means they'd prefer you to be wearing regular shoes instead of sneakers or flip-flops, a shirt with a collar instead of a T-shirt, and something other than jeans. They may let you in anyway, but they'll stick you in an out-of-the-way spot and forget you.

Ladies have the most leeway, of course. You can rarely go wrong in something black, even at the fanciest establishments. Chinos and a sport shirt will probably do for men at all but the ritziest places; a sport coat and a tie will work everywhere.

Shorts are out, except maybe at places where you order at the counter. Nobody wants to look at your hairy legs while he eats.

*One cannot think well,
love well, sleep well,
if one has not dined well.*

— *Virginia Woolf*

Chicagraphy

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods, and locals refer to them by name. Although I've also included some information on a few important restaurant rows farther afield, most of this guide concerns itself with the four neighborhoods nearest the Chicon site.

The Loop: The Hyatt Regency stands at the north edge of the Loop.

Technically, "the Loop" means the area bounded by a rectangle of L-train tracks over Lake Street, Wabash Avenue, Van Buren Street and Wells Street, but the name has grown to mean downtown Chicago generally, and most use it to mean roughly the area south of the Chicago River to Congress Parkway, and west from the Lake to the Kennedy Expressway.

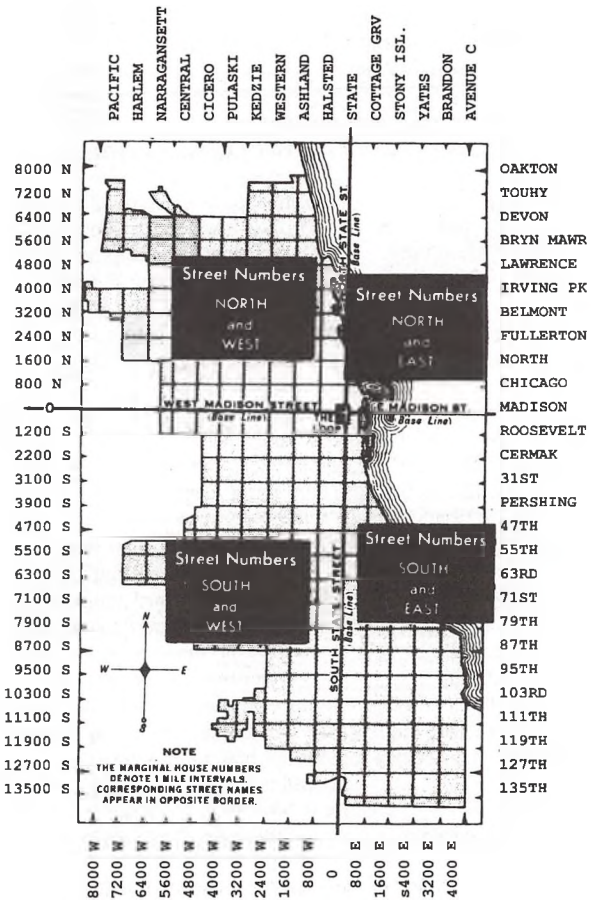
Streeterville: Just north of the Chicago River, from Michigan Avenue east, is Streeterville, named for Capt. George Wellington Streeter.

Streeter, a Civil War gun runner and carnival showman, turned to lake excursions but wrecked his boat on the lakeshore, near what's now the John Hancock building, in 1886. Sand piled up around the wreck and, during the post-Fire building boom, Streeter encouraged contractors to dump their construction debris around it. He then sold lots on the new causeway, which became an anything-goes sort of shantytown.

Streeter dubbed the new land "The District of Lake Michigan," and claimed it as his own province, not part of Chicago or Illinois. After a long holdout, he was finally evicted by police in 1918, and now the area is the city's ritziest real estate, bordered by the Magnificent Mile shopping district along the Boul Mich.

River North: North and east of the Chicago River, south of Chicago Avenue and west of Michigan, lies River North, a Disneyesque district full of art galleries, restaurants and nightlife. It is home to the largest concentration of theme restaurants — Rainforest Café, Hard Rock Café, Eerie World Café, etc. — and extravagantly silly architecture.

Printers Row: Just south of the Loop, from Congress Parkway south to Roosevelt Road and west from Grant Park to Canal Street, is Printers Row, once the center of Midwestern publishing. The beautifully restored Dearborn Street Station train depot, historic point of arrival for thousands of immigrants, provides the southern anchor for a neighborhood full of loft housing, which began the ongoing renaissance of the South Loop.



From here to there

Chicago is easy to navigate. After the Great Fire in 1871, the rebuilt city was laid out on a grid system with a "major" street every half mile, or four blocks. In 1908, all the streets were renumbered to start from a zero point at the intersection of State and Madison streets in the heart of the Loop. Everything north of that point has North numbers, everything west has West numbers, and so on.

House numbers increase outward by 100 each average city block; 800 equal a mile. (Downtown blocks tend to be smaller than average, maybe half a hundred to a block — but eight hundreds still equal about a mile.)

Using this system, you can always figure out how far and in what direction any building is from where you start. For example, the address of the Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Wacker Drive, tells us it's 1½ blocks east of State Street. Wacker Drive follows the river, so it meanders a bit, but at this point it's roughly 300 North.

Eerie World Café, at 51 E. Ohio St., is ½ block east of State Street and, since Ohio is 600 North, six blocks north of Madison. Doing a little math will tell you, then, that it's about 1 block west and three blocks north of the Hyatt, a reasonable walk.

But Thyme restaurant, at 464 N. Halsted St., is further away. It's 1½ blocks north of the Hyatt, but since Halsted is 800 West, more than a mile west — walking distance only for the stalwart. (It's worth the cab fare.)

Good maps and street signs for most major streets list the grid numbers as well as the street names. (Ignore brown “honorary” street signs.) And many Chicagoans will be able to tell you what “hundred” a major street is if you ask.

Even numbers are on the north and west sides of the street; east and south are odd.

If you have a good sense of direction, it may also help to know that the Lake is always east. Some Chicagoans apparently have a “Lake sense” that orients them that way. (If you're from the West Coast and have an ocean sense, remember that the water here is on the other side.)

One complication is that the streets in the hotel area have as many as three levels. This was part of architect Daniel Burnham's plan to keep delivery traffic off the riverfront.

Parts of Wacker Drive (Aufzoo to Pinkwater fans), for example, will be referred to as Upper (street level), Lower (one level down) and Subterranean (two levels down). However, Billy Goat Tavern on Lower North Michigan is the only restaurant on a lower street, so this shouldn't cause you too much trouble.

The non-gourmand is afraid of eating this and that as he will not be able to digest them. When he has finished eating he will be out of sorts. He is out of step with the world and, in fact, abnormal. That is why he is unhappy, embittered, pessimistic, disagreeable, and even dangerous for those around him.

— Edouard de Pomaine

I had one once, but the wheels fell off.

Sorry, no air cars

Even if you've brought your a car, you probably want to avoid getting it out except for expeditions to very distant places. While most downtown restaurants offer some kind of parking — usually valet at \$7 to \$8 plus a \$1 tip — hassling with traffic will not be fun.

The Jazz Festival at Grant Park will be bringing a lot of traffic downtown this weekend, and streets will be closed and bus routes changed to accommodate the crowds, who will also be filling up the roads to and around downtown.

So take a taxi or use public transit if you're going somewhere too far to walk.

Taxis

Taxis are cheap, plentiful and easy, and I recommend them as the simplest way to get around the nearby neighborhoods.

Taxi fare starts at \$1.60, increasing \$1.40 for every mile and 20 cents for every 45 seconds of waiting time, with a surcharge of 50¢ for each additional passenger. The meter should run between \$4 and \$8 for most of the places covered by this guide. You should tip the driver 10 to 15 percent of the fare (a higher percentage for shorter trips, and never less than \$1).

There's a cab rank in front of the hotel. Just get in the first car in line and tell the driver where you want to go. (If the hotel doorman merely motions the next cab in line over, you need not tip him, but if he goes to any effort to flag one down, give him \$1 — more in bad weather.)

It's a good idea to have some idea of where you're going before you get in the cab; Chicago taxi drivers aren't given any kind of geography test before licensing, nor are they required to speak good English.

On the return trip, just stand on a busy corner and flag a passing cab down. Any cab with its light on may be hailed, and the driver must take you anywhere you want to go.

Public transit

Chicago is served by CTA buses and rapid transit (the "L") and Metra commuter trains. The system is complex and not particularly tourist friendly. For detailed help with transit, call 836-7000 or see www.transitchicago.com.

CTA fare for buses and the L is \$1.50. A transfer (between bus routes or between the bus and the L), which allows two additional rides within two hours of issue, costs 30¢, and can only be purchased when you pay the original fare. Connections between L routes are free.

For buses, you'll need exact fare; you buy L passes from machines in the stations; and you can get a Transit Card good for multiple rides. In addition, the CTA offers Visitor Passes, good for unlimited bus and L rides over one to five days, for \$5 to \$18.

Buses: Most CTA buses operate every 15 minutes from early morning to at least 10 p.m. Buses stop about every two blocks at signs that list the route number and name. Popular downtown bus routes include:

#3 *King Drive* on North and South Michigan Avenue to McCormick Place to 95th Street;

#20 *Madison* on Madison Avenue from State Street to the Northwestern Train Station and the West Loop;

#22 *Clark* on Clark Street (or Snark Street to Pinkwater fans) between the Howard L Station on the Far North Side and Dearborn and Polk streets;

#29 *State* on Grand Avenue from Navy Pier and down State Street to 95th Street;

#56 *Milwaukee* on Washington Avenue from the Northwestern Train Station and on Madison Street from Michigan Avenue;

#146 *Marine-Michigan* on North Michigan Avenue down State Street to the Museum Campus; and

#151 *Sheridan* on Michigan Avenue to the Art Institute and Sears Tower.

The L: Chicago's elevated train system is more than 100 years old. Everyone calls it the "L," even when it runs underground. Each L train line has a different color name (a change since Chicon V, when they had street names):

Blue Line: Runs from O'Hare Airport to downtown, then west to suburban Oak Park and Forest Park (Congress Branch), with a second branch west to 54th Street and Cermak Road (Douglas Branch).

Red Line: Runs from the Far North Side through Uptown, Wrigleyville, Lincoln Park, the Loop, and Chinatown to the South Side on the Dan Ryan Expressway.

Orange Line: Runs around the Loop and southwest to Midway Airport.

Green Line: Runs from Harlem Avenue on the West Side around the Loop to the South Side.

Brown Line: Runs around the Loop, then northwest to Kimball and Lawrence avenues.

Purple Line: Runs from north suburban Evanston and Northwestern University to the Far North Side with rush-hour express service to the Loop.

Yellow Line (Skokie Swift): Runs from the Far North Side to Dempster Street in north suburban Skokie.

Blue and Red Line L trains run 24 hours, every five to 15 minutes at rush hours, and then stretching out to about every half hour in the least busy times. Other trains stop in the evening and some don't run on Sundays or holidays.

The nearest L station to Chicon is at State and Lake streets, one and a half blocks west and two south. There you can catch the Orange, Brown, Green or Purple Line L or walk through to connect to the Red Line subway. Take the Red Line one stop south to connect to the Blue Line.

If you take the L, try to look as if you know what you're about. During busy times of day on well-populated routes, the L is reasonably safe, but this is a big city. There are always those prepared to prey on the unwary. Stay alert.

And some parts of the city are not safe. If you are on the L and find yourself in the numbered streets, ***DON'T GET OFF, OR YOU WILL DIE!*** Just stay on the train until it reaches the end of the line and comes back north. Try to sit near the conductor, if you can find one. (It isn't really as bad as that, but South Side safety can be highly variable depending on your complexion, your gender and whether or not you look like you know what you're doing.) Special care is also needed at the northernmost end of the Red Line.

The main exceptions to the numbered-street rule are just south of the Loop: It's safe to take the Red Line to Cermak (22nd Street) and get off for Chinatown, or go one stop further to the 35th Street stop for Comiskey Park (if there's a ballgame on and you're in a group).

The L trains themselves are fairly safe, but do stay alert. More care is needed in the stations.

Women riding the L alone should be especially cautious — there have been rapes even in broad daylight. (Thousands of women ride the L every working day without incident, but....) Riding the L alone late at night is not a great idea for anyone who doesn't know what he's doing.

Trolleys

In addition to regular transit, there are free tourist-oriented "trolley" buses. Look for marked trolley stops.

The Michigan Avenue Trolley runs every 20 minutes 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, and till 8 p.m. Thursday along Michigan Avenue between the Water Tower at Chicago Avenue and the Museum Campus at the south end of Grant Park. This trolley also stops at the Roosevelt Road L station (Red, Orange and Green lines); Congress Drive; Randolph Street, near the Metra Electric/South Shore train station; Illinois Street; Erie Street and Chicago Avenue.

The nearest stop is at Michigan and Randolph Street, about 2½ blocks southeast of the Hyatt. This trolley is probably the best daytime way to get up to the Magnificent Mile shopping area or down to the museums from the Chicon hotels. Transportation buffs may be interested to know that the Michigan Avenue trolleys run on compressed natural gas.

Trolleys also run 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily between the attractions on the Museum Campus, stopping also at parking lots; the bus stops for the #146 Marine-Michigan, #12 Roosevelt, #127 NW/Madison (weekday rush hours only), and #130 Grant Park Treasures (weekends through Labor Day) routes; the Roosevelt Road L Station; and the Roosevelt Road Metra Train Station.

A trolley runs from State Street to Navy Pier along Illinois Street and Grand Avenue every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, till midnight Friday and till 11 p.m. Saturday.

At Illinois Street and Michigan Avenue, you can shift from the Navy Pier Trolley to the Michigan Avenue Trolley by climbing the stairs to Upper Michigan Avenue.

On Thursday, late shopping night in the Loop, the DTN Trolley runs around downtown every 30 minutes from 5 to 8 p.m. with stops at the Chicago Cultural Center at Washington and Garland; Dearborn Station at Dearborn and Polk streets, the Sears Tower and the Shedd Aquarium.

Another trolley runs around Lincoln Park every 10 minutes from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Labor Day, with stops at Piper's Alley, 1600 N. Wells St.; Grant Hospital, at Webster and Lincoln Avenue, Children's Memorial Hospital, 2300 N. Lincoln Ave.; the Chicago Historical Society, 1601 N. Clark St.; the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Stockton Drive and Fullerton Avenue; the Lincoln Park Zoo; and the Sedgwick (Brown Line) and Fullerton (Brown and Red Line) L stations.

Trolley maps are available at Chicago Visitors Centers and online at <http://w4.ci.chi.il.us/transportation/Trolley2000/TrolleyMain.html>.

Boats

Shoreline Sightseeing water taxis run from Navy Pier to the Museum Campus (near Shedd Aquarium) and from the Pier to the Sears Tower (at Adams Street). They operate from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The fare is \$6 one way or \$12 for an all-day pass. For details, call 312/222-9328.

Wendella Riverbuses offer river transportation between the Wrigley Building, 400 N. Michigan Avenue, at the northwest corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge; 2 N. Riverside Plaza, at the northwest corner of the Madison Street Bridge (near the Metra and Union train stations); and River East Plaza, 455 E. Illinois St., a short walk from Navy Pier and accessible from the Navy Pier Trolley. They operate from 7:30 a.m. to 7:10 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:45 a.m. to 6:10 p.m. Saturday, and 10:35 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday and Labor Day. The fare is \$2. For more information, call 312/337-1446.

Who sawed Courtney's boat?

How to eat like a Chicagoan

The big triumvirate of Chicago native fare is pizza, hot dogs and Italian beef sandwiches. These are not street food, per se, because you can't buy them on street corners, but they are the earthy fare of the people, the real thing.

Besides these, there are a few other specialties born and raised in Chicago — some of which have spread to other locales, and some of which are still unique to this city. I hope you'll have a chance to try them all.

Pizza

Brad Foster took considerable artistic license when he designed the cover of this guide, because the pizza depicted there is not a Chicago-style pie.

Chicago pizza is deep-dish pizza.

You can get plenty of thin-crust, flat pizza here, but Chicagoans treat that as a type of canapé — in fact, it will come cut up into small squares.

Some misguided old South Siders may try to kid you that the “real” pizza of Chicago is greasy flat stuff with a cardboardlike crust, but the true Chicago-style pizza began when Ike Sewell and Ric Riccardo opened Pizzeria Uno in 1943.

An authentic Chicago pizza starts with a thin layer of dough, laid in a deep, well-seasoned pizza pan and pulled up its sides. It's then topped with an inch or two of mozzarella cheese slices, your choice of meat and vegetables, and a layer of seasoned crushed tomatoes. Italian sausage — rather than pepperoni — is the meat of choice here.

In 1974, Rocco Palese of Nancy's in suburban Lincolnwood refined the deep-dish style farther by introducing the “stuffed pizza,” which he based on his mother's recipe for *scarciiedda*, an Italian Easter pie from his hometown of Potenza. This adds a thin layer of dough above the cheese and below the tomatoes, creating a somewhat firmer pie, capable of holding even more cheese.

Pizzerias like Edwardo's and Giordano's took the concept even farther with stuffed spinach and pesto pizzas.

Be prepared: Chicago pizza is not fast food. It takes at least a half hour to 45 minutes for the pizza to bake, so call and order ahead or plan to while away the time with drinks and appetizers.

But don't fill up too much — Chicago pizza is rib-sticking stuff. Two pieces are plenty for all but the hungriest of trenchermen.

This is not pizza you can roll up and eat with your hands, but hearty knife-and-fork food. So if you're ordering for delivery, be sure to ask for utensils. Also, request that the pie be cut. Deep-dish pizza for delivery is typically left

uncut, because it keeps hotter and travels better that way, but it takes a sharp cutter to apportion cleanly, and trying to slice one up with a plastic knife in your hotel room is sure to be an exercise in frustration.

Pizza is a kind of religion in Chicago, and Chicagoans will argue heatedly about who makes the best. Don't let anyone kid you — it's Edwardo's.

??Edwardo's Natural Pizza, 312/939-3366;

521 S. Dearborn St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa.

No res. Delivery. [\$\$] (Don't let the "natural" fool you — this is great stuffed pizza. Look for a two-inch-thick, dense cheese filling packed with your favorite extras and stuffed between two thin crisp crusts with a topping of tangy tomato sauce. We like ours with pesto, sausage, mushrooms and garlic, but the famous spinach pizza is nothing to sneeze at either.)

Bacino's Pizzeria, 312/263-0070; 75 E. Wacker Drive

Chicon discount: 10 percent off (dine-in only).

11 a.m.-9 p.m. Su-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa

Delivery. Live music — jazz, 6-9 p.m. M [\$\$]

(Decent stuffed pizza, especially spinach. They also offer Italian beef and meatball sandwiches. Vegetarian pizzas available.)

Pizzeria Uno, 312/321-1000; 29 E. Ohio St.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-1 a.m. M-F;

-2 a.m. Sa; -11:30 p.m. Su. No res. [\$\$]

Pizzeria Due, 312/943-2400; 619 N. Wabash Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Su-Th;

-2:30 a.m. F-Sa. No res. [\$\$]

(Chicago's original deep-dish pizza, invented in 1943, and still one of the best, with a slightly granular crust filled with generous quantities of meats, cheeses and tomatoes. The same pizza is served at Due, opened in 1955, which is larger and tends to be somewhat less crowded with tourists. Of late, Uno has franchised — beware, however, because outside Chicagoland, they tailor the recipe to local tastes.)

Giordano's, 312/616-1200; www.giordanos.com;

Prudential Plaza, 135 E. Lake St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Res. dinner only. Largest table: 30. Private room (100).

Delivery. [\$\$] (Specializing in stuffed and spinach pizza. Features a golden brown crust, slightly tangy tomato sauce and tons of gooey cheese. Vegetarian pizzas available.)

I had one grunch but the eggplant over there.

Suparossa Restaurant and Pizzeria, 312/587-9096;

Fax: 312/587-3011; 210 E. Ohio St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th;

-12:30 a.m. F-Sa [\$\$] (This four-story eatery is one of downtown Chicago's core pizza palaces. Specialties: Stuffed pizza; Bulls pizza, pan pizza shaped like the logo of Chicago's hoopsters; pasta; sandwiches; stuffed hamburger, a half-pound of beef wrapped around cheese, vegetables and bacon.)

Lou Malnati's, 312/828-9800; Fax: 312/828-0746;

www.loutogo.com/pizzeria.html; 439 N. Wells St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;

-midnight F-Sa; noon-10 p.m. Su

Delivery. [\$\$] (The pizza has a good, buttery crust but the sausage — usually laid on so thickly it's like a giant hamburger patty — is bland.)

Gino's East of Chicago, 312/943-1124;

www.ginoseast.com; 633 N. Wells St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;

-midnight F-Sa; noon-10 p.m. Su

Beer and wine only. Largest table: 20.

Private room (80). Delivery. [\$\$] (One of Chicago's most popular pizzerias, newly rehoused in a former Planet Hollywood — they moved the graffiti-covered walls from the original location. It's a deep-dish pizza with a golden crust and chunky tomato sauce.

Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

Hot dogs and Italian beef

On every second or third corner in Chicagoland, you'll likely find a hot dog stand, an Italian beef stand, or a gyros stand. You can tell the difference by looking at the sign outside — many of them offer the same menu, including all three sandwiches, and probably burgers, too.

The hot dog stands have the best names, however: Mustard's Last Stand, Irving's for Red Hot Lovers, U Dawg U, Wiener's Circle, to name a few.

There are some 1,800 hot-dog stands in Chicagoland, according to Bob Schwartz, vice-president of Vienna Beef, the company that supplies about 80 percent of them — more than all the McDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King outlets put together. Most are run by independent entrepreneurs who own one or perhaps two stores.

The Chicago-style hot dog is unique. It's an all-beef, natural-casing frankfurter, steam cooked — never grilled — stuffed into a steam-warmed, high-gluten, poppyseed bun, and piled with the following toppings in this order:

1. Yellow mustard.
2. Fluorescent green sweet-pickle relish.

3. Chopped onions.
4. Tomato wedges (or sometimes slices).
5. One or two kosher-style dill-pickle spears.
6. Two or three hot, green sport peppers.
7. A dash of celery salt.
8. Absolutely *NO* ketchup.

The complete assembly is sometimes called “dragging it through the garden,” but more usually, “the works.”

Some stands also offer sauerkraut, but purists consider that “giving in to the whims of New Yorkers,” as Schwartz says. And don’t you dare order ketchup! At some places, they’ll throw things at you or throw you out. At the very least, people will sneer.

The “banquet on a bun” had its origins in the Great Depression, when greengrocer Abe Drexler decided his 18-year-old son, local sports hero Jake “Fluky” Drexler, needed an occupation. That was in 1929, when jobs were hard to find, so Drexler converted the family’s Maxwell Street vegetable cart into a hot-dog stand, and began offering the “Depression Sandwich,” which sold for a nickel.

“He built it like a vegetable cart would do it,” says Fluky’s son, Jack. (Also called Fluky, he likes to say he was “born in a bun” and is today proprietor of three North Side and suburban stands.) “It was an instant success.”

The only change since 1929 has been the relish, which turned its distinctive “nuclear green” color in the 1970s. Fluky says they developed it, but he’s not too clear about why. To fit the hot dog into the psychedelic era perhaps? Still, today it’s as critical a part of the sandwich as the celery salt.

Most of the places that serve Chicago hot dogs also serve the Maxwell Street Polish. That’s a kielbasa that’s been scored and grilled — or sometimes, deep-fried — till browned, placed on a steamed poppyseed bun and topped with yellow or Düsseldorf mustard; sliced onions sautéed in butter with a little sugar; and a couple of sport peppers. It originated at Jim’s Hot Dog Stand at the corner of Halsted and Maxwell streets, an institution that’s currently endangered by University of Illinois expansion plans.

The history of the Italian beef sandwich, often called just “a beef” (“some beefs” in plural), is somewhat less well-established, however. The *Chicago Sun-Times*’ Pat Bruno posits that, in 1948 or 1949, “An Italian cook working in a Greek coffee shop near the corner of Harlem and Irving thought the French dip sandwich was too bland, so he zipped it up with garlic and herbs. Everybody liked it except the owner, who fired the cook. The cook (his first name is Tony, and that’s as much as we know) then opened an Italian beef stand down the street, which was an instant success.” It’s a good story.

The only trouble with this scenario is that Al's No. 1 Italian Beef opened its first stand in 1938. Chris Pacelli, owner of the current pair of stands with his brothers Terry and Charly, says that the beef was first developed by his grandfather, Anthony Ferrari. "He was like a peddler. He used to deliver lunches by hand. He got the idea to make roast beef with Italian seasonings.

"Then my father (Chris Sr.) was working for a street-car company and my uncle was driving a truck and they decided to open a business. And my uncle (Al Ferrari) said, 'I want to do something from my father.'"

Italian sausage was actually a bigger business at first, cooked outdoors over charcoal, so the stand, then at Harrison and Laflin streets, was originally called Al's BBQ. But, barring modern improvements in slicing, says Pacelli, the beef sandwich was essentially the same as it is today.

However, Pat Scala, owner of Scala Packing Co., disputes Pacelli's story. He says that Italian beef can't be traced to any one individual and that the present-day sandwich has evolved over the years. His company, which supplies Italian beef to the vast majority of the stands serving it (but not Al's, which still roasts its own), dates to 1925, so he may be right.

Anyway, an Italian beef sandwich is, essentially, a French dip sandwich whose thinly sliced, oven-roasted beef has been impregnated with garlic, oregano and other Italian seasonings, served *pre-dipped* in flavorful natural juices and topped with either sautéed sweet peppers or a spicy pickled-pepper mixture called *giardiniera* (though the counter clerk will just ask, "Sweet or hot?"). It's soggy, drippy and delicious. Italian beef is especially good in a combo with grilled Italian sausage.

Says Schwartz of Vienna Beef, "I think part of being a Chicagoan is learning how to eat these overstuffed stuffed sandwiches without using 18 napkins ... or dropping them in your lap." A tip: Lean forward

See also: Faycurr's (page 40), Carm's Beef (page 84) and Mangino's (page 83).

Jim's Hot Dog Stand, 312/666-0533; 1320 S. Halsted St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late, 24 hours 7 days

No seating. [\$] (A real institution, opened in 1930 and home of the original Maxwell Street Polish. Also known for its pork chop sandwich. The neighborhood's a little rough — go in a group.)

Hank's Franks, 312/782-4010; 332 N. Michigan Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 7 days

No cc. No res. No parking. Limited outdoor seating. [\$] (A relatively new doggery that also offers cheese fries, burgers, Italian beef, Italian sausage, barbecued beef and pork sandwiches, Italian ice and ice cream.)

Gold Coast Dogs, 312/527-5230, 418 N. State St.,
*Lunch, Dinner, 10:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F; -10 p.m. Sa;
-9 p.m. Su. No res. No cc. Outdoor seating. No parking.*
[\$] (A bit more upscale than the usual doggery, they
offer fresh roasted turkey and char-broiled swordfish
sandwiches instead of gyros and Italian beef. Good
fries. Hot dog toppings are put on with a light hand,
compared to other places, though.)

Portillo's Hot Dogs/Barnelli's Pasta Bowl, 312/587-8930;
Fax: 312/587-8829; 100 W. Ontario St.
*Lunch, Dinner, late, 10:30 a.m.-midnight M-Th;
-1 a.m. F-Sa; 11 a.m.-midnight Su*
*Res. large groups only. Outdoor seating. Valet parking
after 5 p.m. Delivery. [\$\$]* (Flashy flagship of a large
chain of Chicago-style hot-dog stands. The sprawling,
two-story building houses a collection of 1930s and
'40s Chicago memorabilia — featuring items such as
the clock off the Stuart-Warner Building, razed in
1993, the 1938 Blackhawks' Stanley Cup banner, a
1928 Thompson submachine gun, and a 1930 Chevrolet
— displayed in a representation of a Chicago
neighborhood. Specialties: Hot dogs, Italian beef,
Polish sausage, salads, pastas, pizzas and ribs.)

☛☛☛ **Al's No. 1 Italian Beef**, 312/943-3222;
169 W. Ontario St.
*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late,
9 a.m.-1 a.m. M-Sa; 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Su*
312/226-4017; 1079 W. Taylor St.
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late, 9 a.m.-1 a.m. M-Sa
*No alcohol. No parking. No res. No cc. Delivery over
\$100. No seating. [\$]* (The first and best Italian-beef
stand, with house-made beef, charcoal-grilled Italian
sausage and their own *giardiniera*. Also, Chicago-style
hot dogs, Polish sausage and freshly cut french fries.)

Mr. Beef on Orleans, 312/337-8500; Fax: 312/337-1718;
666 N. Orleans St. *Closed Labor Day.*
*Breakfast, Lunch, 7 a.m.-4:45 p.m. M-F;
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa. No alcohol. No parking. No res.*
[\$] (This Italian beef stand is across the street from
Scala Packing Co. When my husband worked nearby,
he reports, old Mr. Scala would go there every day for
lunch, order a beef, and tell them they'd made it
wrong.)

J & C's Bombacigno Inn, 312/663-4114;
558 W. Van Buren St.
Lunch, dinner, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days
No cc. No parking. [\$] (Pasta and house-made Italian
beef.)

Enjoy yourself. It's later than you think.

Gyros and saganaki

Say “yēēr-ōs.” Another messy sandwich, gyros Chicago-style is a kind of meatloaf made from beef and lamb, cooked on a turning vertical spit, then thinly sliced and served in pita bread with onions and lots of a cucumber-yogurt sauce called *tzatziki*.

It’s not, strictly speaking, unique to Chicago, though the nation’s two biggest manufacturers of gyros loaves, Kronos and Grecian Delight, are both based here. But the proprietors of Greektown’s Parthenon restaurant say they introduced this Greek sandwich meat to America when the eatery opened in 1968, along with another now-ubiquitous Greek-American dish, flaming *saganaki*.

Saganaki is a perfectly authentic Greek melted-cheese dish — but they don’t set it afire in Greece. “Flaming *saganaki* was invented at the Parthenon by the founders, the Liakouras brothers, Chris and Bill,” asserts the restaurant’s promotional material, placing this seminal event in 1968. “Before *saganaki* was flambéed here, it was merely fried cheese.”

I haven’t delved any further into the question than this, but it makes sense to me. The Pump Room, opened in 1938 by flamboyant restaurateur Ernie Byfield, was until the 1960s *the* Chicago see-and-be-seen restaurant. Its Booth One was the coveted seat and the food was brought to the tables on long skewers, dramatically aflame.

I can see that a pair of immigrants trying to make a go of a new restaurant might want to borrow some of that theatrical Chicago style.

The Parthenon, 312/726-2407; www.theparthenon.com;
314 S. Halsted St.

Lunch, Dinner, late,

11 a.m.-midnight M-Th; -2 a.m. F-Sa

Res. recommended. Largest table: 16.

Private room (115). Free valet parking. [\$\$\$]

(Opened in 1968, The Parthenon is the city’s oldest full-service, classic Greek restaurant. The gyros is still made in-house. Other specialties: Lamb with artichokes; quail; snapper; baklava. Vegetarian dishes available.)

*Socrates drank hemlock
And that was the end of him.
So much for high thinking,
you’re better off drinking
WIDOWERS LONDON DRY GIN*

Chicken Vesuvio

Vic Giannotti, owner of two eponymous suburban steakhouses, says that chicken Vesuvio, a dish served at most of Chicago's classic Italian restaurants and steakhouses, was invented by his father, Nick, during the 1960s. "He was from Naples and Mount Vesuvio is right near there," Giannotti says.

In the early '60s, Giannotti recalls, "He had a place called Giannotti's on Mannheim Road in the Air Host Hotel (in Forest Park). Orlando's Hideaway Lounge was downstairs and we were upstairs."

When I first came to Chicago and encountered Vesuvio, I assumed from the name that the dish would be volcanically spicy — but that's not the case.

Chicken Vesuvio is chicken on the bone, first sautéed with generous amounts of garlic, oregano, white wine and olive oil, and then baked till the skin browns and crisps. It's served with savory skin-on wedges of potato, treated likewise, and a few green peas for color.

Today, you often see the savory technique given to other foods — "steak Vesuvio," or "pork chops Vesuvio," for example, or even just "Vesuvio potatoes."

Says Giannotti, "Whatever restaurant you see it in, they worked for me or my father."

See also: Italian Village (page 31).

Harry Caray's, 312/828-0966; Fax: 312/828-0962

www.harrycarays.com; 33 W. Kinzie St.

*Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. M-F; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F. Res. recommended.*

[\$\$\$\$] (Named for the late sportscaster, this steakhouse remains popular for its food. Specialties: Chicken Vesuvio; lamb chops; octopus; whitefish; veal chop; dry-aged steaks; pasta. The building, once Chicago Varnish Co., dates to 1900.)

Rosebud, *www.rosebudrestaurants.com*;

• 312/942-1117; Fax: 312/942-1224,
1500 W. Taylor St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. M-Th;

-11:30 p.m. F; 5-11:30 p.m. Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su [\$\$\$]

• 312/266-6444; Fax: 773/325-9708, 720 N. Rush St.

Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. M-Th;

-11:30 p.m. F-Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su

Lunch, noon-3 p.m. 7 days

Live music — piano, -2 a.m. W-Sa. [\$\$\$]

(The original of this local chain of big, noisy Italian restaurants opened on Taylor Street in 1977. All of them are immensely popular for their fun atmosphere and huge portions. Specialties: Chicken Vesuvio; ricotta cavatelli; pappardelle; steaks and chops; panzanella; "Square Noodle," house-made signature pasta; sausage and peppers; baked clams.)

Shrimp de Jonghe

Shrimp de Jonghe has the oldest pedigree of any of Chicago's specialties.

Pierre de Jonghe and his brothers came to Chicago from Belgium in 1891 and opened a restaurant at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. From 1899 to 1923, they operated de Jonghe's Hotel and Restaurant at 12 E. Monroe St. It was there shrimp de Jonghe was created, possibly by an employee, Emil Zehr.

Classic de Jonghe is a luscious casserole of plump shrimp doused in garlic butter, blanketed with a velvety layer of garlic- and sherry-infused breadcrumbs, and then baked till it sizzles and a crispy crust forms around the ramekin.

See also: Eli's the Place for Steak (page 26).

Cape Cod Room, 312/787-2200 Ext. 25;

Fax: 312/787-1431;

Drake Hotel, 140 E. Walton Place

Lunch, Dinner, noon-10:30 p.m. 7 days.

Res. recommended 2 weeks ahead. Largest table: 12.

Dress code: Jackets required.

3 hours discount valet parking with validation.

[\$\$\$\$\$] (A classic seafood restaurant, opened in 1933 and little changed. Old-fashioned dishes feature here: Shrimp de Jonghe and Dover sole are specialties, along with clam chowder; Bookbinder soup; lobster bisque; crab cake with mustard sauce; chocolate truffle cake with raspberry *soufflé glacé*. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Shucker's Restaurant, 312/266-6057;

Fax: 312/787-3324; *shuckersrestaurant.com*;

150 E. Ontario St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th;

-midnight F-Sa

Live music — piano bar, noon-2 p.m. M-F;

6-10 p.m. M-Sa. Largest table: 15.

Valet parking, 6 p.m.-midnight. [\$\$\$]

(New England-style seafood house offers a seafood bar and serves clam chowder; swordfish; king salmon; and San Francisco-style prime rib. They're best known for jumbo shrimp, offered steamed in beer, in beer batter, in tarragon butter and de Jonghe-style.)

Avoid restaurants with names that are improbable descriptions, such as the Purple Goose, the Blue Kangaroo or the Quilted Orangutan.

— Calvin Trillin

The Big Meat

For years and years, when anybody thought about Chicago cuisine, what they thought of was steak. It was kind of like the gangster thing — till Michael Jordan, the most famous Chicagoan anybody'd heard of was Al Capone.

Well, we're beyond that now. We have cosmopolitan, contemporary dining rooms to rival any city's. We have world-class Italian, French and Mexican fare. We have fusion, fer Ghu's sake.

But I'm not going to tell you not to have a steak. I love steak. Most Chicagoans love steak. We have *great* steak. Just promise to try a few other types of eateries, too, OK?

See also: **Carson's** (page 58); **Gene & Georgetti** (page 29); **Harry Caray's** (page 23); **Jilly's** (page 44); **The Palm** (page 38); **Smith & Wollensky** (page 99); and **Stetson's** (page 36).

Chicago Chop House, 312/787-7100; Fax: 312/787-3219; www.chicagochophouse.com; 60 W. Ontario St.

Open Labor Day for dinner only.

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. M-Th; -11:30 p.m. F;

4-11:30 p.m. Sa; -11 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 5 days ahead.

Largest table: 8. Private room. No separate checks.

Dress code: Shirts must have collars; no shorts.

Wheelchair access is "with assistance."

Live music — piano bar 7 days. [\$\$\$\$\$] (This highly acclaimed multi-story steakhouse offers a casual atmosphere filled with photos and Chicago memorabilia. A February 2000 Chicago Magazine piece lauded it as serving the best boneless NY strip steak, a thick and flavorful option. The signature hunk of beef is the nicely marbled Chop House prime rib, a kind of cross between a rib steak and the traditional roast beef — it's first roasted, then grilled — excellent. Nonbeef options include chicken Vesuvio. The shrimp de Jonghe is not the authentic article, however, but merely sautéed garlic shrimp, and the creamed spinach is gloppy. Entrees come with a nice salad and potato. There's an award-winning, 450-bottle wine list. Service is attentive, if a bit chummy.)

Morton's of Chicago, 312/266-4820; www.mortons.com; Newberry Plaza, 1050 N. State Parkway

Dinner, 5:30-11 p.m. M-Sa; 5-10 p.m. Su [\$\$\$\$\$]

(The original of the national chain, opened in 1978, and still one of Chicago's great steakhouses, with a quiet and elegant dining room. Specialties: 14-ounce filet; 20-ounce NY strip; 24-ounce porterhouse; veal chops; Maine lobster; soufflé for two.)

Good food, good meat, good fen, let's eat!

☹☹☹**Eli's the Place for Steak**, 312/642-1393;

Fax: 312/642-4089; www.eliplaceforsteak.com;
215 E. Chicago Ave.

Dinner, 4-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended. Live music — piano bar, M, W-Sa

Private room (40). [\$\$\$\$] (It doesn't get any more Chicago than this: A classic Chicago steakhouse whose Jewish-deli soul is reflected in the free chopped liver appetizer delivered to each table. This is the birthplace of the most famous Chicago-style cheesecake, created by founder Eli Schulman in 1980. The hushed dining room sports huge bright pictures of local scenes.

Besides very good steaks, there is excellent shrimp de Jonghe, calf's liver and potato pancakes. But save room for dessert!)

☹☹☹**Millennium**, 312/455-1400; Fax: 312/455-0651;

832 W. Randolph St.

Dinner, 4-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. F

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$\$] (This is probably my favorite steakhouse, despite the fact that service is indifferent.

It's arguably the highest-quality meat among Chicago's many steakhouses — they dry-age their own prime beef. The smoked prime rib is awesome. If you can get over there at lunch on Friday, try the burger; the same prime, aged beef is ground, grilled and then topped with a bit of blue cheese. Noisy, steakhouse ambiance — the ground floor is quieter than upstairs.)

Nine, 312/575-9000; Fax: 312/575-9901;

Randolph Place, 440 W. Randolph St.

Dinner: 5:30-10 p.m. M-W; -11 p.m. Th;

-midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su

2 private rooms. [\$\$\$] (The elegant and contemporary but noisy dining room at this hot, new steakhouse features mirrored pillars and a circular center bar. The prime steaks are cooked in a 1200° F. broiler.

Specialties: Caviar cones; Chilean sea bass wrapped in pancetta with celery root, black trumpet mushrooms and white truffle oil; steaks; seafood; chocolate cake.

Co-owner Michael Morton is son of veteran Chicago restaurateur Arnie Morton, founder of the famous steakhouses. The name of the restaurant reflects the age he and partner Scott DeGraff were when they met. Hot chef Michael Kornick is managing partner.)

Grillroom Chophouse & Wine Bar, 312/960-0000;

Fax: 312/960-0026; www.rdgchicago.com;

33 W. Monroe St.

Chicon discount: 1 free glass of wine with meal.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F;

5-10 p.m. Sa-Su (hours extremely variable). Outdoor

seating. [\$\$\$\$] (A new place from Chicago's veteran Restaurant Development Group. They never seem to be

open when I want to go there, though. Specialties:

Steaks; chops; seafood; pasta; 40-plus wines by the glass. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Wildfire Steak & Chop House, 312/787-9000;

Fax: 312/787-9123; www.lettuceentertainyou.com;

159 W. Erie St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa [\$\$\$\$]

(OK, so the flames you can see are gas. Wildfire still does a good job with wood-roasted and flame-broiled

fare. High-end choice-grade beef, rather than prime, make this more affordable than many steakhouses, and

there are plenty of nonbeef options. Specialties:

Horseradish-crusted filet, wood-roasted mussels, prime rib; barbecue ribs and various other wood-roasted fare, including pizza and chicken.)

Nick & Tony's Italian Chophouse, 312/467-9449;

Fax: 312/222-0628; www.RDGChicago.com;

1 E. Wacker Drive

Chicon discount: 1 free cocktail with meal.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;

5-11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su

Res. recommended. Outdoor seating.

Valet parking after 5 p.m. [\$\$\$\$] (Steaks, chops and Southern Italian fare. Specialties: Pastas; chicken

Vesuvio; veal chop; lasagna. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Magnum's Prime Steakhouse, 312/337-8080;

Fax: 312/337-7573 www.aceplaces.com/magnums;

225 W. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su

Res. recommended for 5+ and F-Sa 4-5 days ahead.

Largest table: 10. Dress code: "Business casual."

Live music — Piano bar, 6-11 p.m. 7 days. Dancing in lounge. [\$\$\$\$] (Very noisy steakhouse known for its

ribeye and Kansas City strip. Other specialties: prime rib; lamb and veal chops; lobster; pasta.)

Kinzie Chophouse, 312/822-0191; Fax: 312/822-1060;

www.kinziechophouse.com; 400 N. Wells St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su

Largest table: 45. Outdoor seating. Private room

(10-50). [\$\$\$] (Specialties: Dry-aged steaks; lamb chops; poultry; seafood; pastas.)

Erie Cafe, 312/266-2300;

Fax: 312/266-9545; 536 W. Erie St.

*Chicon discount: Free dessert.**Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight 7 days**Res. recommended F-Sa. Largest table: 6. Private room (25-150). Outdoor seating. Free valet parking.*

[\$\$\$\$] (Italian steakhouse. Specialties: Mussels marinara; lamb chops; T-bone; prime rib.)

Red Rock Grill, 312/255-1600; www.RDGChicago.com;

Radisson Hotel and Suites, 160 E. Huron St.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days**Brunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Su**Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$] (Southwestern-style steakhouse serves guacamole made tableside; Texas-style barbecue, steaks; and plank-grilled seafood.)***Capital Grille**, 312/337-9400; Fax: 312/337-1259;www.thecapitalgrille.com; 633 N. St. Clair St.*Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa**Lunch, 11:30-2:30 p.m. M-F**Live music, 7 days. Res. recommended 3-5 days ahead.**Largest table: 16. Dress code: "Business casual."**Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (Local branch of a Washington, D.C.-based steakhouse chain. Specialties: Dry-aged steaks; veal and lamb chops, steak au poivre; seafood; filet hash at lunch. Vegetarian dishes available. Large wine list.)***Ruth's Chris Steak House**, 312/321-2725;

Fax 312/321-1365; 431 N. Dearborn Parkway

*Dinner, 3-11 p.m. M-F; 5 p.m.-midnight Sa**Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F*

[\$\$\$\$] (Huge steaks served topped with sizzling butter are the forte of this New Orleans import. Specialties: Porterhouse; veal chop; potatoes au gratin.)

Shula's Steakhouse, 312/670-0788;

Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers,

301 E. North Water St.

*Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. 7 days**Private room (28). Discount hotel valet parking with validation. [\$\$\$\$\$\$] (New to Chicago, this is one of a national chain of steakhouses owned by ex-Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula. The décor, honoring the 1972 Dolphins' 17-0 perfect season, sports NFL memorabilia, while the menus, hand-painted on footballs, offer such items as a signature 48-ounce porterhouse, steak tartare and lobster.)*

I've run more risk eating my way across the country than I have in all my driving.

— *Duncan Hines*

More Chicago favorites

The Berghoff, 312/427-3170; www.berghoff.com;
17 W. Adams St.

Closed Labor Day. Lunch, Dinner,

11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th; -9:30 p.m. F; -10 p.m. Sa.

Limited res. (5:30-7 p.m. and 5+) recommended 2 days ahead. Largest table: 20. Dress code: No cut-offs.

Discount parking with validation after 4 p.m. at 55 E.

Monroe St. and 50 E. Adams garages. [\$\$\$] (Chicago's

oldest restaurant, opened in 1898 by Herman Joseph

Berghoff, whose family still runs it. The Berghoff

proudly displays liquor license #1, issued in 1933 at the

end of Prohibition. It's known for its brusque waiters

and classic German and American fare, such as

schnitzel; sauerbraten; German pot roast; wurst plate;

roast turkey; catfish; bouillabaisse on Fridays; house

beers; and arguably the city's best creamed spinach.

Expect to wait in line at lunch and before 7 p.m.

There's a stand-up bar for sandwiches if you're short

on time at lunch. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Gene & Georgetti, 312/527-3718; Fax: 312/527-2039;
500 N. Franklin St.

Dinner, 3-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa

Free valet parking and lot ½ block east. [\$\$\$\$]

(This old-fashioned Italian steak joint, opened in 1941,

is a Chicago landmark. Specialties: Steaks; chicken

Vesuvio; linguini with white clam sauce; lamb chops;

shrimp de Jonghe; spumoni.)

Como Inn, 312/421-5222; Fax: 312/421-4822;

www.ristorante.net/comoinn; 546 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;

4 p.m.-midnight Sa; noon-10 p.m. Su

Free parking. Live music. [\$\$\$] (Giuseppe Marchetti, a

recent immigrant from San Ginese, a small village in

Tuscany, opened Como Inn in 1924. In 1933, Italy's

Balbo Squadron celebrated its transatlantic flight and

Lake Michigan landing with a banquet at the Como

Inn. The menu of Italian classics, concentrating on

veal, chicken and steaks, seems as if it's hardly

changed since. Marchetti's four sons still run the

restaurant, and chef Augie Sanchez has been working

there since 1959; his son, Enrique, has been cooking by

his side since 1971. It's been a special-occasion and

date restaurant for generations of Chicagoans. Intimate

booths, one feature of the 14-room layout based on

European courtyards, are one reason people keep

coming back.)

*But if you don't like crottled greeps,
why did you order them?*

Billy Goat Tavern & Grill,

312/222-1525; 430 N. Lower Michigan Ave.

May close early on Labor Day.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 6 a.m.-2 a.m. 7 days

Breakfast, 7-11 a.m. 7 days [\$] (Enter at your own risk.

This is the place that spawned "Cheezborger, cheezborger. No Pepsi, Coke. No fries, cheeps." If that doesn't mean anything to you, suffice to know that the Goat is a greasy, raucous, dingy bar once frequented by newspaper people, but now, increasingly, by tourists.

Your best signpost is the Wendella boat tours — use their staircase but go down only halfway; Billy Goat's is about a block straight ahead.)

Zaven's, 312/787-8260; Fax: 312/787-1212;

260 E. Chestnut St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-F; -11 p.m. Sa

Live music — guitar/violin F-Sa

Discount parking. [\$\$\$\$] (Classic Continental restaurant is essentially unchanged since it opened in 1975. Steaks, seafood, rack of lamb and cultured service are its hallmarks. The wine list, with mainly French and American choices, features more than 100 bottles.)

❖❖❖Lawry's the Prime Rib, 312/787-5000;

Fax: 312/787-1264; 100 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa; 3-10 p.m. Su

Lunch, sandwich bar only, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Brunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Su

Private room. Valet parking at dinner. [\$\$\$\$] (Lawry's began on the West Coast, but since it recently celebrated its 25th anniversary in Chicago, the chain's second location, I think I can safely call it a local classic. Elegantly housed in the former L. Hamilton McCormick mansion, Lawry's offers a limited menu of traditional fare with old-fashioned service. Waitresses still refer to one another as Mrs. or Miss. Prime rib is the thing to eat here. The meat, available in several cuts, and cooked to your desired degree of doneness, is carved at your table from a special charcoal-fired cart resembling headless horse armor. Spinning salad, mashed potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and horseradish cream come with the meat. You can order sides of baked potato, peas or terrific creamed spinach. Chef Jackie Shen's "chocolate bag" dessert is legendary. There's a daily fish special for those who don't do red meat.)

The Italian Village, 312/332-7005; Fax: 312/332-2656;
71 W. Monroe St.

Valet parking after 5 p.m. (A complex of three restaurants under the same ownership. The first opened in 1927 and all three are still run by the family. They share a pastry chef and an award-winning list of nearly 1,000 wines. All have vegetarian dishes available.)

❖❖❖ **Vivere: Chicon discount:** *Free dessert with dinner.*

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. M-Th; 5-10:30 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended a week ahead.

Dress code: No shorts. [\$\$\$\$] (The dressiest of the three Italian Village restaurants, with a stunning dining room like a Venetian fantasy and excellent food.

Specialties: Pheasant-filled pasta with butter and sage; saffron noodles and seared salmon with cinnamon and cream sauce; duck breast with sausage and *mostarda di cremona*; veal medallions with black-olive crust and truffle sauce; roast boar.)

The Village: *Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight 7 days*

Lunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F; noon-5 p.m. Su

Res. recommended. Delivery (\$30 min. 10 percent

charge). No wheelchair access. [\$\$\$] (Opened in 1927 by Alfredo Capitanini and offering a huge menu of well-made Italian standards, The Village has long been a standby for the after-theater crowd. Specialties:

Oysters Rockefeller; lasagna; chicken *cacciatore*; pork chops and chicken Vesuvio; veal scaloppine; pastas; shrimp de Jonghe.)

La Cantina Enoteca: *Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. M-Th;*
-11:30 p.m. F-Sa (Variable)

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F [\$\$\$] (A little more emphasis on seafood than The Village and just slightly pricier. Specialties: Calamari; chicken Vesuvio; veal; seafood pastas; shrimp de Jonghe; scampi.)

Trader Vic's, 312/917-7317; Fax: 312/917-7388;

www.tradervics.com;

Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St.

Chicon discount: *Free "Cosmo Tidbit" with entrée purchase. Call for Labor Day hours.*

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Appetizers, 2:30-5 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Largest table: 20. Discount parking with validation at 55 E. Monroe St. [\$\$\$\$] (The Polynesian restaurant, first opened here in 1957, is as campy as ever.

Specialties: Volcano shrimp; Indonesian rack of lamb; sea scallops *malagazy*; almond pressed duck; tropical drinks. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Feed me! Fe-e-ed me!

Chicago Flat Sammies, 312/664-BRED;*www.lettuceentertainyou.com;*

Pumping Station, 811 N. Michigan Ave.

Chicon discount: 10 percent off.*Lunch, Dinner, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days**Breakfast, 7:30-11 a.m. 7 days**Outdoor seating — dogs welcome. No res.**Largest table: 8. No cc. Beer and wine only.*

No parking. [\$] (The Joliet limestone building housing this cafe is one of the few structures to survive the Great Fire of 1871. Although the standpipe of the Water Tower across the street was removed in 1911, this Pumping Station, built in 1866, and designed by architect William W. Boyington, is still in operation. “Flat Sammies” are sandwiches served on a unique, focaccia-like bread. Soups, salads, breakfast items and coffee drinks also feature. This is a nice place to stop for a snack while sightseeing on the Mag Mile.)

A little about Lettuce

In 1971, Richard Melman and Jerry Orzoff opened R.J. Grunts in Lincoln Park, and Chicago dining has never been the same since.

That hippie-oriented burger joint was the first to introduce Chicago to the salad bar and to play contemporary music. Other innovations, such as Chicago’s first risotto and its first tapas bar, followed as they expanded into a string of unique restaurants under the umbrella of Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises.

Other local restaurateurs have followed suit, eschewing the all-alike chain idea in favor of diversity — notably Levy Restaurants, Restaurant Development Group and KDK Restaurant Group.

Early Lettuce eateries were fun, boisterous spots with distinctive themes and amusing names — Lawrence of Oregon; Jonathan Livingston Seafood; Fritz, That’s It! (all, alas, now closed) — but later restaurants have concentrated more on ethnic dining and include some of Chicago’s most upscale restaurants, such as the highly rated Everest and Ambria and the excellent, new Tru. Recently, Lettuce has moved away from the every-restaurant-different concept to open clones of such popular places as Big Bowl, Wildfire and Maggiano’s (which they operate for Brinker International).

Today’s Lettuce restaurants, which number more than 40, including a number outside Chicagoland, run the gamut from sandwich shops to elegant fine dining. Just to list those in this guide will give you a clue of their range: **Ben Pao** (*Chinese, page 61*); **Big Bowl** (*Pan-Asian, page 701*); **Brasserie Jo** (*French, page 71*); **Cafe Ba-ba-reeba!** (*Spanish, page 85*); **Chicago Flat Sammies** (*sandwiches, page 32*); **Everest** (*Alsatian, page 34*); **foodlife** (*upscale*

food court, page 102); **Maggiano's** (*Italian, page 81*); **Mity Nice Grill** (*American, page 49*); **Nacional 27** (*Nuevo Latino, page 88*); **Papagus** (*Greek, page 75*); **Scoozi!** (*Italian, page 79*); **Shaw's Crab House** (*seafood, page 92*); **Tucci Benucch** (*Italian, page 82*); **Tru** (*upscale New American, page 54*); **Wildfire** (*steak, page 27*); and **Vong** (*Asian/French fusion, page 33*).

Some are better than others, but all are underlain by a sense of fun, good service and skilled management. I've never had a bad meal in a Lettuce Entertain You restaurant.

Best of the imports

While I urge you to sample Chicago's homegrown cuisine, there are a few imported restaurants that are worthwhile. Here are my favorites.

❖❖❖Park Avenue Cafe,

312/944-4414; Fax: 312/948-5338;

DoubleTree Guest Suites, 199 E. Walton St.

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. 7 days. Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Su [\$\$\$\$\$] (A basket of good breads and crudites starts off your meal in this cozy room decorated in light woods and antique toys, part of the New York-based Smith & Wollensky chain. Don't miss the savory flan appetizer; pastrami salmon; and the signature Park Avenue dessert, a chocolate bench atop opera cake with a chocolate lamppost. Opt for one of the two *prix-fixe* menus, with wine for the best bargain. The American "*dim sum*" brunch on carts features chicken pot pies, miniature beef Wellington, tuna carpaccio, lobster wontons, wild-mushroom *cavatelli*, stuffed french toast, mini pancakes and eggs benedict.)

❖❖❖Vong, 312/644-8664; Fax: 312/644-9551;

www.jeangeorge.com; www.lettuceentertainyou.com;

6 W. Hubbard St.

Closed Labor Day. Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 5-10 Su. Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F Res. recommended 2 weeks ahead for prime times (7-9 p.m.). Largest table: 12.

Dress code: No denim, T-shirts or sports shoes.

[\$\$\$\$\$\$\$] (New York-based Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten is building a chain of these places, but there's nothing ordinary about the food. The restaurant calls it Thai, but it's more Pan-Asian/French fusion. The exotic blend of specialties include breaded prawn satay; crab spring rolls; foie gras with ginger and mango; Thai spiced quail; spiced halibut; lobster with Thai herbs; muscovy duck breast in tamarind sesame sauce. Tasting menus and the Black Plate appetizer assortment and White Plate dessert combo offer excellent options for those who can't decide.)

- ???****Coco Pazzo**, 312/836-0900; Fax: 312/836-0257;
 300 W. Hubbard St.
Dinner, 5:30-11 p.m. M-Sa; 5-10 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F
*Res. req. [\$\$\$\$\$] (This New York transplant has finally settled into Chicago, losing the grim stuffiness service had at its opening. Chicago-native Chef Tony Priolo does a brilliant job with Tuscan inspired dishes such as wood-roasted rack of pork and salmon; *cacciucco* seafood stew; pastas; risotti; and *cicciolata fondante*.)*
- ???****McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant**,
 312/397-9500; Fax: 312/397-1740;
 Railroad Union Building, 41 E. Chestnut St.
Dinner, 4-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F
Res. recommended. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$\$]
 (This West Coast transplant offers a huge menu of excellent fresh seafood. They've made a sincere attempt to fit in, too — decorating the dining room with all kinds of Chicago photos and memorabilia. Specialties: Oysters; crabcakes; calamari sausage; stuffed halibut; cedar-roasted salmon; seafood newburg; cashew-crusting mahi-mahi. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Looking down on the city

In general, the food in skyscraper eateries tends to be less than stellar. With the exception of Everest, that's true here as well. Still, sky-high restaurants can be a lot of fun.

- ???****Everest**, 312/663-8920; Fax: 312/663-8802;
www.brasseriejo.com;
 One Financial Plaza, 440 S. LaSalle St., 40th Floor
Dinner, 5:30-9 p.m. Tu-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa
Res. req. 6-8 weeks ahead.
Dress code: Jacket required. View. Free valet parking in garage — enter on Financial Place. [\$\$\$\$\$\$\$]
 (Not the loftiest view, but towering cuisine. Chef Jean Joho's Alsatian-influenced French restaurant offers luxurious atmosphere, excellent views and the finest of French-inspired fare prepared from the freshest of American ingredients. Specialties: An *amuse-bouche* of savory mousse — perhaps velvety cauliflower fondant topped with caviar and a sprig of dill — served on a long-handled spoon shortly after you sit down; foie gras terrine with marinated figs; salmon soufflé; sea bass wrapped in thin slices of crisply roasted potato; *pot au feu* of beef tenderloin with horseradish cream; lobster in gewürztraminer butter spiked with ginger. The pre-theater three-course dinner is a bargain at \$44.)

Signature Room at the 95th, 312/787-9596;

Fax: 312/280-9448; John Hancock Center,
875 N. Michigan Ave., 95th Floor

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch buffet, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F; 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Sa

Res. req. Dress code: "Jacket and tie optional." View.

Live music — jazz in lounge, 8 p.m.-midnight Su-Th.

[\$\$\$\$\$] (You come here for the view, but the American and Continental fare has improved considerably under the current chef. Specialties: Portobella-tomato tart; rack of lamb; duckling; smoked pork chop. Vegetarian dishes available. The lunch buffet, \$10.95, is a bargain. The extensive brunch buffet is very good, too, and includes an omelet station, crepe station, pasta station and carved leg of lamb. Tourism hint: The drinks in the 96th floor lounge are expensive, but they come with that marvelous view and a place to sit while you look at it — a much better deal than the observation deck, which is only a few floors above, and where you get views and no drink for about the same price.)

**Cité, 312/644-4050, 312/595-4716; Lake Point Tower,
505 N. Lake Shore Drive, 70th Floor**

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. 7 days

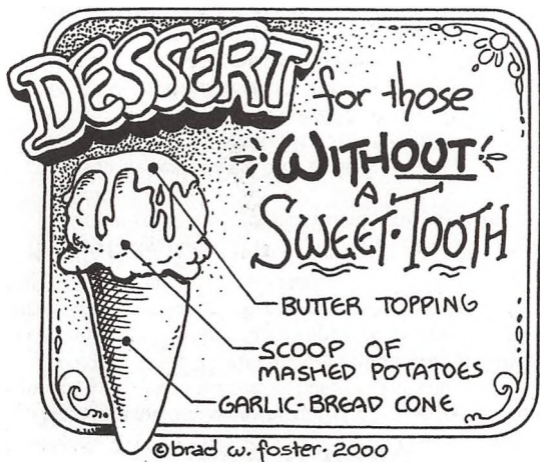
Lunch, noon-3 p.m. M-F

Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Su

Res. recommended. Dress code: Jacket required. View.

Live music — piano Tu, W-Su [\$\$\$\$]

(The view of the lakefront is perhaps more of a draw than the old-fashioned Continental fare. Specialties: Chateaubriand; salmon raspberry; bananas Foster. Unlimited-champagne buffet brunch features omelet station, carving station, seafood, chicken, pasta, desserts, cheeses and pastries.)



Close at hand

Hate to walk far? Too cheap to taxi? Can't stand to tear yourself away from the con? These are for you.

Note that at press time, the committee was still trying to convince some of the nearby spots to extend their hours during Chicon, so some places, particularly in the hotels, may be open longer than is listed.

In the **Hyatt Regency**, 312/565-1234; 151 E. Wacker Drive
Discount valet parking with dinner purchase and validation.

Stetson's Steak and Chop House:

*Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-Th; -10:30 p.m. Sa
Res. recommended. Largest table: 8.*

No dress code but business attire is usual. [\$\$\$\$\$]
(Popular with local business types, this steakhouse is known for prime, aged steaks; veal chops; Lake Superior whitefish; steamed lobster; lobster bisque; twice-baked potatoes; creamed spinach; seven-layer chocolate delight and strawberry shortcake supreme. Between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. Su-Th, a \$25 early-bird, three-course, *prix-fixe* dinner offers salad, a choice of chicken or 10-ounce prime rib with potato and vegetable, and strawberry shortcake. An open kitchen gives you something to look at while you eat.)

All Seasons Cafe: *Dinner, late, 5:30 p.m.-midnight
7 days, extended during Chicon to 1 a.m.*

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. 7 days

Breakfast, 6-11:30 a.m. 7 days

Brunch, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa-Su

Res. 6+ only. Largest table: 22. [\$\$\$\$] (Fairly typical hotel coffeeshop fare — decent but unexciting American cuisine, as well as omelets, sandwiches, salads, pastas, and a daily breakfast buffet. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available. Service can be slow.)

Big Brasserie and Bar: *Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 7 days
Appetizers, desserts, 5 p.m.-midnight 7 days*

Bar open till 2 a.m. View. [\$\$] (The food is light — salads at lunch, plus appetizers, gourmet pizzas and desserts in the evening — but Big offers more than 1,400 wines and liquors. The longest freestanding bar in America.)

Knuckles Sports Bar: *Dinner, late,*

5 p.m.-midnight 7 days [\$\$] (Bar food includes burgers, chicken wings and pizza.)

Skyway Restaurant: *Breakfast buffet,*

7-11 a.m. 7 days. View. [\$\$] (Buffet offers muffins, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, french toast, pancakes, seasonal fruit and views of the Chicago River.)

J's Express: *Breakfast, Lunch, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. 7 days
[\$] (Coffee drinks and light fare such as pastries and sandwiches.)*

In the **Fairmont Hotel**, www.fairmont.com;

200 N. Columbus Drive:

Entre Nous, 312/565-7997:

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Tu-Sa

Res. recommended one day ahead.

Largest table: 10-14. Private room (10-14).

*Dress code: Jacket "requested"; no denim, T-shirts or sports shoes. Live music — piano. [\$\$\$\$\$] (American regional cuisine with a French flair, with such specialties as lobster bisque; white asparagus mousse and osetra caviar; veal filet mignon with prosciutto and sage; terrine of American Kobe beef cheeks and Hudson Valley duck foie gras with red radish vinaigrette; pan-fried, chili-rubbed yellowfin tuna with bonito puree and caramelized cipolline onions; buffalo filet mignon; *crème brûlée*; bittersweet chocolate mousse with crisp phyllo wafer and Bailey's Irish Cream custard. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)*

Primavera, 312/565-6655:

Chicon discount: Special beer of the day (in the bar).

Dinner, 5:30-10:30 p.m. M-F; -11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. 7 days

Breakfast, 6-11:30 a.m. 7 days.

Res. recommended 1-2 days ahead. Private room (20).

*[\$\$\$\$] (Highly regarded Italian restaurant offers classics like prosciutto-wrapped shrimp; seafood mixed grill; *bruschetta Italiana*; jumbo shrimp with herbs on linguini; tiramisu and cannoli. But people come here as much for the music as the food; the waiters, all professional singers, provide operatic accompaniment to dinner on Friday and Saturday nights. Get them to sing "Happy Birthday." The Primavera Bar provides lighter fare and is known for yards and half-yards of ale. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)*

Metropole, 312/565-7444:

Chicon discount: Special beer of the day.

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Appetizers, 5-10 p.m. Tu-Sa

Live music — jazz, Tu-Sa. [\$\$] (Carved sandwiches, soups and salads at lunch. The space is a jazz club in the evenings, when it offers appetizers such as jumbo shrimp, saté and spring rolls.)

Lobby Lounge: (312) 565-8000;

Continental breakfast, 6 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F;

8 a.m.-11 p.m. Sa-Su. Tea, 3-5 p.m. 7 days

[\$\$] (At afternoon tea, tail-coated servers offer an international selection of teas and tisanes, with finger sandwiches, scones with Devonshire cream and preserves, and pastries, all served on elegant Villroy and Boch china (\$15). A pianist plays beginning at 3:30 p.m.)

*Sherlock Holmes gave up detecting
And took up keeping bees.
That raised quite a buzz
but no more than does*

WIDOWERS WONDERFUL CHEESE

In the **Swissôtel**, 312/565-0565; 323 E. Wacker Drive

Café Suisse: *Breakfast, 6:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. 7 days*

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 days

[\$\$] (Breakfast and lunch buffets.)

Konditorei: *Breakfast, 6:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. 7 days*

[\$\$] (Coffee, pastries and continental breakfast items.)

Hideaway Lounge: *Bar food, 2 p.m.-1 a.m. 7 days*

[\$\$] (Sandwiches and appetizers.)

The Palm, 312/616-1000; Fax: 312/616-3717;

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days

Res. recommended. Outdoor seating. View.

[\$\$\$\$\$] (An expensive, ho-hum chain steakhouse popular with conventioners. Specialties: Crabcakes; NY strip steak; lamb chops.)

Chicago: A Bar & Grill, 312/856-1844;

Fax: 312/856-0048, 120 E. Randolph St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:15 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F

No parking. Res. recommended for lunch.

Delivery. View. [\$\$] (This bar offers a full menu of seafood, steak, burgers, chicken and pasta entrees.)

Brian's Juice Bar & Deli, 312/332-3435; 80 E. Lake St.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Dessert, 6 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F;
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sa-Su.*

No parking. No cc. No res. No alcohol.

Largest table: 4. Limited seating. Outdoor seating.

No wheelchair accessibility. [\$] (A Mediterranean-influenced delicatessen serving sandwiches, Jerusalem salads, *tabbouleh*, hummus, stuffed grape leaves, protein drinks, smoothies and nonfat frozen yogurt. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

Caffè Classico, 312/856-1400; Fax: 312/782-0702;

180 N. Stetson Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dessert, 6 a.m.-5:30 p.m. M-F

No cc. No smoking. [\$] (This outlet of a San Francisco-based chain offers sandwiches and light fare, coffee drinks and gelato.)

La Strada Ristorante, 312/565-2200; Fax: 312/565-2216;
www.lastradaristorante.com;
Doral Plaza, 155 N. Michigan Ave.
Dinner, 4-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F; 5-11 p.m. Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m. M-F
Live music — piano. Valet parking on Beaubien Court.
[\$\$\$\$\$\$] (An underground restaurant with a clubby, white-tablecloth atmosphere, tuxedo-clad waiters and a menu of old-fashioned Northern Italian classics. It's perfectly OK, but far from the best Italian Chicago has to offer, especially at this price range. Pastas are available as half orders for a first course. Try the veal scaloppine, and *tartufo* for dessert. The bar stocks lots of Italian liqueurs, such as Averna.)

Whole Grain, 312/938-4220; Fax: 312/856-0048;
120 E. Randolph St.
Lunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F
Breakfast, 6:30-11 a.m. M-F
No parking. No cc. No alcohol. [\$\$] (This lunchroom's name is more macrobiotic than its menu, which includes some healthier fare — veggie burgers, turkey burgers, salads, soups — but also routine grill items like bacon cheeseburgers and french fries, plus breakfast egg sandwiches, pancakes and omelets, accompanied by television soap operas.)

Illinois Center

Illinois Center is a complex of five office buildings, two hotels and a residential building connected by an enclosed concourse lined with 100 or so shops and restaurants. The trick is navigating the mazelike walkways to find your destination. The maps posted throughout and signs overhead are somewhat helpful. Odds are, you will have to stop once or twice to ask for directions.

The Illinois Center pedway connects:

- One Illinois Center, 111 E. Wacker Drive;
- Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker Drive;
- Columbus Plaza, 233 E. Wacker Drive;
- Three Illinois Center, 303 E. Wacker Drive;
- Swissôtel Chicago, 323 E. Wacker Drive;
- Boulevard Towers South, 205 N. Michigan Ave.;
- Boulevard Towers North, 225 N. Michigan Ave.;
- Two Illinois Center, 233 N. Michigan Ave.

Most of the pedway is open 24 hours, seven days a week, but some of the buildings close on the weekends. Shop hours vary; most stores are open roughly 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, with limited hours on Saturdays, and closed on Sunday and holidays.

Restaurants tend to open early and close early (3 p.m.) Monday through Friday. A few have limited hours Saturday. At press-time, concomm members were trying to persuade some to keep longer hours.

The fast food in the pedway turns over too quickly to keep track of, but when I last checked it included Oriental Express, Sbarro, Burger King and Baskin Robbins.

Other restaurants in Illinois Center include:

Bennigan's, 312/938-9080; Fax: 312/958-0171;
Illinois Center, 225 N. Michigan Ave.

Chicon discount: They said "maybe." Ask.

Largest table: They claim they can seat any size party.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight Su-Th;

-1 a.m. F-Sa. Res. 8+ only. No parking. [\$\$]

(Classic American fern bar. The Monte Cristo sandwich is my favorite.)

Bingley's Restaurant, 312/856-0997;

Illinois Center, 303 N. Wacker Drive

Largest table: 20. Closed Labor Day.

Breakfast, Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F;

No res. No parking. [\$] (This deli offers pasta, a salad bar, sandwiches. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

Christie's Restaurant and Lounge, 312/856-1810;

Illinois Center, 233 N. Wacker Drive

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F

Will open for Chicon Sa-Su. Largest table: 20.

Private room. Delivery. [\$\$] (I have no idea what this place serves but I expect a lot of people will find out.)

Houlihan's Food & Spirits, 312/616-FOOD;

Fax: 312/616-6675; www.houlihans.com;

Illinois Center, 111 E. Wacker Drive

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11:30 p.m. M-Sa; -10 p.m. Su

View. [\$\$\$] (Part of a national chain of fern bars serving eclectic fare — steaks, fish, jambalaya, fajitas.)

Faycurr's Urban Kitchen & Cafe, 312/819-0250,

Illinois Center, 233 E. Wacker Drive

Breakfast, Lunch, 7 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 days.

Offering dinner and extended hours during Chicon, as business justifies. Delivery. [\$\$] (Specialties: Penne alla vodka and other pastas; Cajun chicken sandwiches; burgers, Italian beef and other Chicago favorites; soup-and-sandwich specials; and breakfast items.)

Alonti Deli, 312/240-0349; Illinois Center,

225 N. Michigan Ave.

Lunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F; Breakfast, 6-10 a.m. M-F

No res. Largest table: 8. Outdoor seating. [\$]

(This casual Italian deli, an outlet of a Houston-based chain, serves salads, sandwiches, pastas and more.

Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

Restaurant rows

Randolph Market

Chicago is an ever-changing mosaic of neighborhoods, and no neighborhood exemplifies this better than the Randolph Street/Fulton Market district in the West Loop Gate neighborhood. In 1992, when Jerry Kleiner, Howard Davis and Danny Krasny opened Vivo at the corner of Randolph and Halsted streets, there was nothing here but warehouses. Then United Center was built in 1994, and the Democratic Convention was held there in 1996, and now West Randolph Street is one of Chicago's most vibrant restaurant rows.

It's a short cab ride, or you can catch the #20 Madison bus at Wacker Drive and Michigan Avenue, take it west to Halsted Street and walk north two blocks.

Vivo, 312/733-3379; Fax: 312/733-4436;

www.vivo-chicago.com; 838 W. Randolph St.

Chicon discount: 10 percent off (except alcohol).

Closed Labor Day. Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-W;

-11 p.m. Th; -midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 2-3 days ahead. Largest table: 14.

Outdoor seating. Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (Hip, loud,

Southern Italian eatery offers pastas; house-made ravioli; risotti; veal chop; tonno pepato, pepper-crusting tuna; baked sea bass. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Marché, 312/226-8399; Fax: 312/226-4169;

www.marche-chicago.com; 833 W. Randolph St.

Closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-W; -11 p.m. Th;

-midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended. Largest table: 25. Private room.

(120). [\$\$\$\$] (Lively and very noisy French bistro,

with an open kitchen. Specialties: Steak tartare; peppered ostrich; roast chicken; duck. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

Bluepoint Oyster Bar, 312/207-1222; Fax: 312/207-5447;

www.RDGChicago.com; 741 W. Randolph St.

Chicon discount: 1 free cocktail with meal.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;

5-11 p.m. Sa; -10:30 p.m. Su (variable)

Res. recommended. Valet parking after 5 p.m.

Outdoor seating. Private room. Delivery. [\$\$\$\$]

(An extensive raw bar is the highlight of this noisy seafooder, with eight kinds of oysters daily. Also try the crab-stuffed shrimp; octopus; chili-glazed halibut; lobsters; steaks; and desserts.)

Sushi Wabi, 312/563-1244; Fax: 312/563-9579;

www.sushiwabi.com; 842 W. Randolph St.

Chicon: *No discount but "VIP service and reservation requests."*

Dinner, 5 p.m.-11:30 p.m. M-Sa; -10:30 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 3-4 days ahead. Largest table: 20.

[\$\$\$\$\$] (From the owners of Sushi Roku in Los Angeles comes this very hip, cramped, noisy and expensive sushi bar decorated in industrial chic — i.e., uncomfortable seating. They offer excellent *nigiri zushi* and maki, including various creative types, plus a few cooked-food options and a long list of premium chilled sakes. Vegetarian dishes available. Service can be slow.)

Hi Ricky Asia Noodle Shop & Satay Bar, 312/491-9100; 941 W. Randolph St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;

-11 p.m. F-Sa. No parking. BYOB. [\$\$] (This pan-Asian storefront offers inexpensive and tasty, if not overly authentic, versions of a variety of noodle dishes and skewered meats representing the cuisines from around the Pacific Rim. Grunge-tech décor.)

Red Light, 312/733-8880; Fax: 312/733-8571;

www.redlight-chicago.com; 820 W. Randolph St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-W; -11 p.m. Th;

-midnight F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Limited late menu in lounge,

W-F 10 p.m.-2 a.m.; -3 a.m. Sa

Res. recommended. Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (Red Light is hard to miss. A 22-foot steel and red fiberglass light towers above the entrance. The interior is just as dramatic, with waving ribs that climb the walls and move across the undulating ceiling, flowing into the open kitchen. The well-prepared menu isn't quite so exotic, but reflects the cuisines of a variety of Asian countries. Choices include such things as grilled rack of lamb with sweet-sour eggplant salad; Peking duck with peach sauce; and Shanghai noodles with shrimp.)

Few of us are adventurous in the matter of food; in fact, most of us think there is something disgusting in a bill of fare to which we are unused.

— *William James*

Rush Street

Rush Street is a diagonal avenue about a mile long, just northwest of Streeterville. It's the nearest thing Chicago has to New Orleans' Bourbon Street, though you can't carry your booze down the street here. This very busy stretch of restaurants, bars and nightclubs is always mobbed with tourists, suburbanites and Chicago's fast crowd, especially on summer weekends.

It's a long walk or a short cab ride to Rush Street, or you can catch the #151 Sheridan bus on Michigan at Wacker, ride north to Oak Street (1000 N) and walk a couple of blocks west.

See also: Heaven on 7 (page 52), Le Colonial (page 69) and Rosebud (page 23).

Fuzio, 312/988-4640; 1045 N. Rush St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;
-11 p.m. F-Sa*

Res. recommended 1 day ahead. Largest table: 20.

Private room (80). [\$\$] (Local outlet of a chain of eclectic noodle restaurants serving both Asian-influenced and Italian-style dishes. Not exciting but cheap for this area and fairly good.)

Gibson's Bar & Steakhouse, 312/266-8999;
1028 N. Rush St.

*Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight M-Sa; 4 p.m.-midnight Su
Bar food service -12:30 a.m. Live music — piano.*

Res. recommended 2-3 weeks ahead. Largest table: 12.

Private room (90). [\$\$\$\$] (Hugely popular see-and-be-seen spot offers massive and expensive steaks and lobsters, which servers display raw before they take your order. For all their size, though, steaks here lack flavor. Filet mignon is the best bet. Other specialties: Chopped liver; strawberry shortcake.)

Hugo's Frog Bar, 312/640-0999; Fax: 312/787-5649;
1024 N. Rush St.

*Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight M-Sa; 4 p.m.-midnight Su
Res. recommended. Live music — piano bar, 7 days*

[\$\$\$\$] (A straightforward fish house owned by the proprietors of the adjoining Gibson's steakhouse, whose steaks they also serve. The main advantage of this place is that it's open late and less crowded than its next-door neighbor. Its short, pricey menu offers such items as crabcakes, pan-fried halibut with bean salsa, grilled trout with red wine butter and shrimp de Jonghe, plus frogs' legs, of course, and a staggeringly expensive surf-and-turf.)

Life itself is the proper binge.

— Julia Child

Jilly's Italian Steakhouse, 312/664-2100;

Fax: 312/664-0009; 1009 N. Rush St.

*Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight 7 days**Largest table: 25. Outdoor seating. Live music F-Sa;**disco dancing in Jilly's Retro club downstairs,**8 p.m.-2 a.m. Tu-F; -3 a.m. Sa (Free with dinner);**live music in piano bar, 3 p.m.-2 a.m. M-F; 1 p.m.-3**a.m. Sa; 5 p.m.-2 a.m. Su [\$\$\$\$] (If you yearn for the**days of the Rat Pack, this is the place for you. Named**for the New York nightspot owned by Jilly Rizzo, a pal**of Frank Sinatra's, this Italian steak joint is part of a**complex of three that includes a piano bar "Where the**men wear suits, the women wear skirts, the music is**swingin' and the joint is jumpin'," and a discotheque.**Vegetarian dishes available.)***Carmine's**, 312/988-7676; Fax: 773/325-9708;*www.rosebudrestaurants.com; 1043 N. Rush St.**Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;**-midnight F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su**Breakfast, 8 a.m.-11:30 Sa; 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Su**Res. req. 1 week ahead (you may wait anyway).**Largest table: 30. Live music — piano, Tu-Sa. Outdoor**seating. [\$\$\$\$] (One of the Rosebud Restaurants, a**highly popular local group of noisy Italian eateries**erving huge portions. Signature items include chicken**Vesuvio; ricotta cavatelli; and "Square Noodles." Other**possibilities include baked clams; *misto de pesce*,**mixed seafood; and a 2-pound lobster tail.)*

The Americans are a funny lot; they drink whiskey to keep them warm; then they put some ice in it to make it cool; they put some sugar in it to make it sweet, and then they put a slice of lemon in it to make it sour. Then they say 'here's to you' and drink it themselves.

— *B. N. Chakravarty*

Navy Pier

Built in 1916 as a dock for cargo ships, Navy Pier has been a naval port, a college campus, an exposition hall and, since its renovation in 1995, a prime tourist attraction.

The restaurants, I warn you, are all overpriced, including the little snack-food stands out on Dock Street, but if you can't splurge a bit when you're on vacation, when can you? Besides the sit-down restaurants listed below, there's a large, better-than-average food court, which includes outposts of real Chicago restaurants like King Wah and Twisted Lizard, and options for vegetarians. Several of the restaurants offer outdoor seating with Lake views. There will be fireworks here on the weekend.

Don't drive to the Pier, if you can help it. Take one of the free trolleys (see page 14).

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant and Market,

312/595-5000; Fax: 312/595-5501;

www.bubbagump.com; Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days

No res. Outdoor seating. View. Largest table: 6. [\$\$\$]

(Specialties: Drunken shrimp, peel 'n' eat shrimp, scampi, coconut shrimp, shrimp etouffée — you get the picture. I can't comment on quality — the wait for tables is so long I have never managed to eat here.)

Perchy's Bar and Grill, 312/595-5570;

Fax: 312/595-5972; Navy Pier, 700 E. Grand Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (Casual tavern with an

emphasis on seafood offers fried perch; shrimp; macadamia-crusted mahi mahi; alligator diavolo; coconut chicken; pastas; grilled grouper and other sandwiches; tropical drinks. Both food and service are no better than adequate, which is probably why it's easier to get in here than at Bubba Gump's.)

Charlie's Ale House, 312/595-1440;

Navy Pier, 700 E. Grand Ave.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-midnight 7 days**View. Largest table: 8. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (Casual tavern serves such items as chili, pot roast and chicken pot pie. Brunch offers egg dishes, including Scotch eggs on sausage patties, eggs Florentine and steak and eggs; french toast; a half-pound burger; and oven-baked meatloaf. 68 types of beer.)***Riva, 312/644-7482; Fax: 312/644-4377;***www.stefanirestaurants.com;*

Navy Pier, 700 E. Grand Ave.

*Discount valet parking with validation at north side of Pier V.**Dining room: Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. M-Th;**-11:30 p.m. F-Sa; noon-8:30 p.m. Su**Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa**Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Su**Res. req. Dress code: No tank tops or cut-offs.**Cafe: Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. 7 days**Outdoor seating. View. [\$\$\$\$] (Overpriced but fun Italian-American seafood house. Stick to the simpler dishes and enjoy the view of the Lake. You'll have plenty of time, given the slowness of the service. Best bets: Crabcakes; oysters; lobster; grilled fish.**Vegetarian dishes available and lots of options for meat eaters. Big wine list with many by-the-glass options.**The nautically decorated second-floor dining room is lively and a bit noisy. Lighter fare is served in the outdoor café. If you need to visit the restroom, have a tip ready for the attendant.)***Joe's Be-Bop Café and Jazz Emporium, 312/595-5299;**Fax: 312/595-5483; *www.joesbebop.com;*

Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight M-F**Jazz brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su**(music starts at 11:30 a.m.) Live music — jazz,**7-11 p.m. M-Sa; 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.,**6-11 p.m. Su. Largest table: 10. Outdoor seating.**Valet parking at Pier entrance; discount self-park with validation. View. [\$\$\$] (Southern-style and barbecue specialties include tender ribs; barbecue chicken; jambalaya; steak; sandwiches. All-you-can-eat buffet brunch features lox, bagels and cream cheese, chilled pasta, marinated bean salads, assorted breakfast pastries, fresh fruit, Caesar salad, rib tips, jambalaya, pasta, scrambled eggs and bacon, peach cobbler, brownies and a bloody mary bar, with 140-plus spices, condiments and garnishes.)*

Food afloat

Lake Michigan is Chicago's greatest jewel and a number of companies will be glad to take you cruising on it for a price. You should do that.

Three of the cruise boats that dock at Navy Pier do meals. However, I've been on them all and can tell you that you're better off eating ashore and taking one of the architecture cruises. But here are the basic details, in case you're hungry to dine on the water.

Odyssey Cruises, 312/321-7620; Fax: 312/321-7630;
www.odyssey-cruises.com. Lunch, Dinner, Brunch.
Call for cruise times and prices. Res. req. (Odyssey, a 750-passenger dinner boat, serves American fare. This one probably has the best food, about the level of a hotel banquet, but you're still better off eating on land and opting for a meal-free boat ride.)

Spirit of Chicago, 312/836-7899; Fax: 312/836-7889;
www.spiritcruises.com; Lunch, Dinner, Brunch.
Call for cruise times and prices. (The 600 passenger boat offers a choice of three rather pedestrian options for dinner and a disco- and Motown-oriented floor show and dance music.)

uglyduck, 630/916-9007; *www.uglyduckcruises.com;*
Lunch, Dinner. Call for cruise times and prices. (This 550-passenger boat, the cheapest of the dinner boats, is aimed at Gen-Xers. An obnoxious DJ and buffet fare of the meatloaf and macaroni-and-cheese vein feature.)

In highly mechanised countries, thanks to tinned food, cold storage, synthetic flavouring matters, etc., the palate is almost a dead organ.... Look at the factory-made, foil-wrapped cheeses and 'blended' butter in any grocer's; look at the hideous rows of tins that usurp more and more of the space in any food-shop, even a dairy; look at the sixpenny Swiss roll or a twopenny ice cream; look at the filthy chemical by-product people will pour down their throats under the name of beer. Wherever you go you will see some slick machine-made article triumphing over the old-fashioned article that still tastes of something other than sawdust.

— *George Orwell*

Hurrah for the red, white and blue!

Good, old traditional American food.

Plaza Tavern and Oyster Bar, 312/977-1940;
www.plazatavern.com; 70 W. Monroe St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;
-midnight F; 5 p.m.-midnight Sa; 3-11 p.m. Su
Live music — jazz/big band, 7-11 p.m. 7 days;
dancing, 7-11 p.m. F. Outdoor seating. Free parking
with validation in First National garage (Clark Street).
[\$\$\$\$\$] (This fun 1940s-style supper club serves good,
but not great versions of such classic American and
Continental specialties as oysters Rockefeller, rumaki,
chateaubriand, tournedos of beef, lobster thermidor,
beef Wellington; and retro drinks such as sidecars and
sazeracs. The bar serves a seafood platter and other
casual fare. Nice wine list offers good selection of half
bottles. Food service can be slow. The big band that
plays on Friday nights is terrific.)

Hubbard Street Grill, 312/222-0770; Fax: 312/222-1822;
www.greatribs.com; 351 W. Hubbard St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th; -10 p.m. F;
5-10 p.m. Sa. Live music — piano, W-Sa. [\$\$\$\$] (Chef
David Schy serves excellent, upscale American
comfort food with a contemporary twist. Try the
chicken soup; ahi-tuna burger; grouper; or skirt steak.)

R.J. Grunts, 773/929-5363; Fax: 773/929-9183;
www.lettuceentertainyou.com;
2056 N. Lincoln Park West
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;
-11 p.m. F-Sa; 3:30-10 p.m. Su
Brunch, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su
Largest table: 20. Dress code: No roller blades.
Valet parking at dinner and Sa-Su lunch. [\$\$]
(The restaurant that began the Lettuce Entertain You
empire. Good burgers, salad bar, hand-dipped shakes,
'70s atmosphere. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Johnny Rockets, 312/337-3900; Fax: 312/337-2804;
www.johnnyrockets.com; 901 N. Rush St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;
-1 a.m. F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su
Breakfast, 7-10:45 a.m. M-Sa; 8-10:45 a.m. Su
Parking garage above restaurant. No res.
Largest table: 6. No alcohol. [\$] (A '40s-style malt
shop featuring tabletop jukeboxes and a menu of
burgers, chili and hand-dipped shakes and malts.
Vegetarian dishes available.)

Mity Nice Grill, 312/335-4745; Fax: 312/335-3984;
www.lettuceentertainyou.com;
Water Tower Place, 835 N. Michigan Ave., Mezzanine
Early closing (9 p.m.) on Labor Day.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Sa; -9 p.m. Su
Brunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Su
Res. recommended. Largest table: 18. Discount
parking after 5 p.m. with validation in Water Tower
Place garage. [\$\$\$] (This American eatery makes a
mighty nice respite from Boul Mich shopping.
Specialties: Meatloaf; pot roast; burgers; flatbreads;
garlic-cruste d whitefish; pies. A la carte brunch
includes cinnamon brioche french toast, omelets. Low-
cholesterol and vegetarian dishes available.)

Kukla's Supper Club & Lounge, 312/670-9711;
Fax: 312/670-9718; *www.kuklassupperclub.com*;
509 N. Wells St.
Closed Labor Day and Tuesday, Sept. 5
Dinner, 5:30-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F
Res. recommended 1 week in advance.
Largest table: 15. Private room (6-15).
Valet parking after 4 p.m.
Dress code: "Smart casual." Live music W-Th. [\$\$\$\$\$]
(Modern American fare in a retro setting. Specialties:
Prime, house-aged beef; rosemary-seasoned rack of
lamb; bourbon-glazed veal chop with tarragon-fennel
relish; shrimp cocktail; duck confit risotto. Vegetarian
dishes available.)

Mike Ditka's Restaurant, 312/587-8989;
Fax: 312/587-8980; *www.mikeditkachicago.com*;
Tremont Hotel, 100 E. Chestnut St.
Dinner, 4-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa (variable)
Lunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 7 days
Breakfast, 7:30-11 a.m. 7 days
Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sa-Su
Res. recommended. Live music — piano in cigar bar,
F-Sa. Outdoor seating. Private rooms (250). Valet
parking 5-11 p.m. [\$\$\$] (The namesake of the former
Bears coach offers better fare than many celebrity
restaurants, and he hangs out here too. The clubby
dining room is wrapped in dark woods and decorated
with sports memorabilia. Specialties: Duck cigar, a fat,
faintly greasy, crisply fried egg roll; cream-topped
lobster bisque "cappuccino"; sesame-coated lamb
chops; "da pork chop," a 20-ounce double-cut chop
served with green peppercorn sauce, cinnamon apples
and spätzle; paddle steak; banana cream pie; pot roast
at lunch. Vegetarian dishes available. Large single-malt
selection and wine list. The a la carte brunch features
crabcake benedict, omelets, french toast, pancakes.)

Big Downtown Bar and Restaurant, 312/917-7399;

Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St.

*Chicon discount: Free dessert with dinner.**Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight 7 days**Lunch, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 7 days**Res. recommended 1 week ahead. Largest table: 30-40.*

[\$\$\$\$] (The rail-station theme décor features exposed ironwork as well as gleaming tiled walls, wood floors, high-backed booths and a miniature elevated train circling the restaurant. The menu offers burgers, steaks, pizza and pasta. The Palmer House is the oldest continuously operated hotel in North America: Built by Potter Palmer; it was completed Sept. 26, 1871; and burned down in the Great Fire 13 days later. It was rebuilt; torn down and rebuilt again in 1925. Conrad Hilton bought it in 1945.)

Andrew's Coffee Shop, 312/337-4401;

Lenox Suites Hotel, 616 N. Rush St.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late,**6 a.m.-midnight 7 days**No res. [\$] (Coffeeshop offers stuffed shrimp; crêpes; steak.)***Houston's, 312/649-1121; Fax: 312/649-6804;**

Lenox Suites Hotel, 616 N. Rush St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F;**11:30 a.m.-midnight F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su**Live music — piano. [\$\$\$] (A dimly lit outpost of a national chain known for steaks and spinach artichoke dip.)***Bandera, 312/644-3524; Fax: 312/832-9414;**535 N. Michigan Ave. *Largest table: 25.**Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;**-10:30 p.m. F-Sa**Res. recommended 1 day ahead. No parking. [\$\$\$]**(A branch of the national chain of American eateries. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)*

Regional American

Good, old traditional American food from somewhere specific.

Paige's Place, 312/397-9390; Fax: 312/397-9391;

16 E. Huron St.

*Dinner, 4-10 p.m. Tu-Th; -midnight F-Sa; 3-10 p.m. Su**Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Tu-F*

No parking. BYOB. [\$\$\$] (Fried catfish, ribs, grilled salmon and macaroni and cheese are among the Southern-style specialties at this soul-food restaurant. The dining room, a comfortable, wood-paneled space, is decorated with African-American artwork)

Blackhawk Lodge, 312/280-4080; Fax: 312/587-7306;
www.blackhawklodge.com; 41 E. Superior St.
Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa
Bluegrass brunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Su
Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$] (They took the cheese grits off the menu, but perhaps by now enough complaints have come in that it's back. Otherwise solace yourself with crabcakes, Jack Daniel's smoked beef tenderloin, citrus- and lavender-cured pork or other American regional fare. An a la carte brunch menu includes salmon benedict, french toast filled with raspberry preserves and seasonal berries, spiced pumpkin waffles, turkey filet mignon, mustard-crusting trout and curry chicken salad sandwich, served to the tunes of a bluegrass band.)

Prairie, 312/663-1147; Fax: 312/939-2468;
Hyatt on Printer's Row, 500 S. Dearborn St.
Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Sa; -9 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa
Brunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Su [\$\$\$\$\$] (Hotel dining room serving American fare with an emphasis on Midwestern ingredients, but they're not purists about it anymore. It was a lot better when it opened than it is today. Specialties: Ostrich medallions; duck breast; onion-crusting pork; catfish; lamb rack. A la carte brunch menu features pan-seared venison rack with cream barley, oven-roasted chicken breast with apple-cornmeal stuffing, sweet potato praline cheesecake, Prairie eggs benedict.)

Zinfandel, 312/527-1818; Fax: 312/527-4808;
www.zinfandelrestaurant.com; 59 W. Grand Ave.
Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F
Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sa [\$\$\$\$\$]
(Contemporary takes on regional American cuisines, with specials concentrating on a different region each month. Specialties: Dungeness crab spring rolls; crayfish cakes; wood-grilled portobella with goat-cheese corn pudding; pot roast; pork chop with cheese grits; vegetarian specials; large selection of domestic wines and spirits. A la carte brunch menu includes lobster scramble, breakfast bread pudding and vegetarian omelets.)

I see no objection to stoutness in moderation.

— W.S. Gilbert

Heaven on Seven, www.heavenon7.com;

? 312/263-6443;

Garland Building, 111 N. Wabash Ave.

Dinner, 5:30-9 p.m. 1st and 3rd Fridays of month

Breakfast, Lunch, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F

Brunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sa

No res. No cc. No parking.

? 312/280-7774; 600 N. Michigan Ave.

(entrance on Rush Street at Ohio Street),

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Brunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa-Su

Limited res. Outdoor seating. Discount parking with validation at Ontario Place Self-Park, 10 E. Ontario, and Northbridge Self-Park, Ohio and Wabash.

[\$\$\$] (Chef Jimmy Bannos' Chicageaux-style versions of such New Orleans specialties as gumbo; jambalaya; barbecued shrimp; etouffée; po'boys; coconut cake. Not exactly authentic Cajun/Creole fare, but mighty tasty all the same. Vegetarian dishes available. A la carte brunch menu items include french toast, poached eggs and andouille sausage.)

Redfish, 312/467-1600; Fax: 312/467-0325

www.RDGChicago.com; 400 N. State St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;

5-11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su

Live music — zydeco, R&B, Th-Sa. Valet parking after 5 p.m. [\$\$\$] (Cajun fare such as crabcakes; gumbo;

Cajun meatloaf; fried catfish; pecan pie. Big beer selection. Reports on service aren't good, though.)

Club Creole, 312/222-0300; www.clubcreole.com;

226 W. Kinzie St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th;

-10 p.m. F; 5-11 p.m. Sa

Outdoor seating. Private room (25-75). [\$\$\$] (A narrow, shotgun space loaded with New Orleans kitsch to highlight such Cajun/Creole specialties as crawfish tart; po'boys; shrimp; Creole calamari; muffalettas.)

French Quarter, 312/726-7500 Ext.7363;

Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St.

Chicon discount: Free dessert with dinner.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 7 days

Breakfast, 6:30-10:30 a.m. 7 days

Brunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su

Largest table: 18. [\$\$\$] (This American restaurant with a slant toward Cajun and Creole offers such dishes as crispy fried fresh mozzarella with marinara and pesto sauces; grilled shrimp brochettes on angel-hair pasta with lemongrass sauce; chocolate marquise cake with raspberry and mango coulis.)

Isabel's Puerto Rican Eatery, 312/243-2929;

Fax: 773/243-9933; 1329 W. Chicago Ave.

Chicon discount: 10 percent off (except alcohol).

Closed Labor Day; call before visiting Su

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. Tu-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa;

2-7:30 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tu-F

Res. F-Sa only. Largest table: 28. No parking.

Live music — Latin W. [\$\$] (One of Chicago's few Puerto-Rican restaurants, serving such dishes as mofongo, garlicky plantains filled with seafood; camarones al mojo de ajo, garlic shrimp; and steak and plantain fritters.)

New American

Not old, not traditional, but good.

Spruce, 312/642-3757; Fax: 312/642-1375;

www.sprucerestaurant.com; 238 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 5-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. M-F

Res. req. [\$\$\$\$\$] (Light woods dominate an airy room at this New American, which has consistently been very good despite a revolving door on chefs. There's been yet another change since I was there last. In the past, the elegant contemporary fare offered items to satisfy adventurous palates as well as meat-and-potatoes lovers. Typical offerings have been diver scallops with lentils; beef tenderloin with Manila clams; steak with lavender-infused jus. Do have a glass of elderflower water.)

Cuisines Restaurant, 312/372-7200;

Renaissance Chicago Hotel, 1 W. Wacker Drive

Dinner, 5:30-10:30 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended. Dress code: Jacket required.

Discount valet parking with restaurant validation.

*[\$\$\$\$\$] (A hidden treasure. Second-floor hotel dining room serves excellent contemporary American fare, such as Jonah crab in phyllo with shiitake mushrooms, manchego cheese, chives and basil; lamb chop in port wine sauce with potatoes *dauphinois* and sautéed spinach; triple chocolate pyramid cake with cappuccino sauce. Good wine list. Mediterranean buffet at lunch.)*

Grace, 312/928-9200; Fax: 312/928-0550;

www.gracerestaurant.com; 623 W. Randolph St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa; -9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tu-F

Res. req. [\$\$\$\$\$] (A hip New American with a bent toward game dishes. Specialties: Lamb sweetbreads, venison, wild boar; veal chop.)

*****Caliterra**, 312/274-4444;

Wyndham Chicago Hotel, 633 N. St. Clair St.
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 6 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days
Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Su [\$\$\$\$] (Chef John Coletta's complex, classically influenced contemporary fare is more "Cal" than "Ital," perhaps, but however you categorize it, it's awfully good. A signature appetizer, not to be missed is the crisp Santa Barbara shrimp "cigar" with mustard fruits. The menu changes frequently, but representative dishes include venison chops with braised cardoons and lemon chutney; porcini-crusting halibut; hot *pannettone* bread pudding with chocolate ice cream. They've just started offering an American "dim sum" brunch served from carts.)

*****Tru**, 312/202-0001; Fax: 312/202-0003;

www.lettuceentertainyou.com; 676 N. St. Clair St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, noon-2 p.m. M-F

Res. req. 2-3 months ahead.

Dress code: Jackets required. No smoking.

[\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$] (OK, so if you don't already have a reservation, you might not be able to get in here, but it's worth trying. Rick Tramonto and Gale Gand's fine-dining restaurant offers both high-impact New American food and a sense of fun. The airy open dining room is full of energy, with nice but silly touches like padded purse rests. The menu is prix-fixe, but you can have as few as three (regular-sized) courses, as well as elaborate tasting menus of smaller dishes for \$75 to \$125, or order a la carte. Tramonto is fond of witty creations like cappuccino of carrot with orange, a soup served in a coffee cup and topped with foamed milk; "Mirror Image of Tartars," made with tuna, salmon and yellowtail; or a "Surf and Turf" of ahi tuna and sautéed foie gras in a pinot noir reduction. The signature caviar appetizer features a variety of fish roes, from sevruga to wasabi-flavored tobiko; its serving dish, a custom-designed glass staircase, is just a forerunner of the restaurateurs' fascination with funky dinnerware. Pastry chef Gand's desserts include a duo of blood-orange and chocolate soufflés; rhubarb poached in strawberry juice with strawberry mousse and candied rose petals; fudge tart with caramelized banana, peanut-butter ice cream and cabernet-infused caramel.)

Fahrenheit, 312/733-7400; 695 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Dinner, 5:30-10:30 p.m. Tu-Th;

-11 p.m. F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$] (This New American hot spot serves such items as lamb carpaccio; peeky-toe crab cake; duckling; salmon with scallion-ginger crust; smoked pork chops; truffle-roasted chicken for two.)

☛☛☛ **Seasons**, 312/280-8800 Ext. 2041;

Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware Place
(900 N. Michigan Ave.)

Dinner, 6-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa

Breakfast, 6:30-10:30 a.m. M-Sa

Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Su

Res. req. 2-3 weeks ahead. Largest table: 12.

Dress code: Jacket required. [\$\$\$\$] (Not just another hotel dining room. Chef Mark Baker's New American fare manages to be both cutting edge and comforting. Consider such selections as crab cake with bell pepper aioli; rosemary lamb rack with truffled white-corn grits; lobster and scallop risotto with roasted salmon; guinea hen with blackberry juice; Jonah crabcakes; milk-chocolate pyramid, dusted with gold leaf and dubbed the "Eighth Wonder of the World," with a filling of chocolate mousse and caramelized bananas; or berry cobbler, made according to Baker's mother's recipe. Vegetarian dishes available. Great brunch features a seafood station, carving station, eggs Benedict, shrimp salad, Caesar salad, roast beef and Peking duck.)

Blackbird, 312/715-0708; 619 W. Randolph St.

Dinner, 5:30-10:15 p.m. M-Th; -11:15 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 1 month ahead. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$] (You'll sit cheek-by-jowl with your fellow diners at this uncomfortably cramped and hideously noisy hot spot. Chef Paul Kahan's terrific contemporary fare doesn't quite compensate for the discomforts, but a late seating may help. Specialties: Ahi-tuna tartare; venison; quail; cocoa crepes. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Printer's Row, 312/461-0780; Fax: 312/461-0624;

550 S. Dearborn St.

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. M-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F [\$\$\$\$] (The menu changes rapidly at this quiet, 20-year-old restaurant serving contemporary American fare. But

representative dishes include peppered duck breast with Moroccan spices, white-raisin and almond couscous and red pepper sauce; rosemary-infused sturgeon with red-wine mashed potatoes; sea scallops with leek potato puree drizzled with white-truffle oil; and banana bread pudding.)

Drink blog — it's good for what ails you!

mk, 312/482-9179; Fax: 312/482-9171;

www.mkchicago.com; 868 N. Franklin Ave.
Closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 4-6 weeks ahead. [\$\$\$\$]

(The initials are those of Chef Michael Kornick, who cooks New American with an emphasis on seafood at this hugely popular restaurant. Specialties: Tuna tartare; monkfish with lobster; consommé of poached beef with truffle cream; loin of venison in currant-peppercorn sauce; tuna with red-wine syrup; soft-shell crab; desserts. Vegetarian dishes available.)

one sixtyblue, 312/850-0303; Fax: 312/829-3046;

160 N. Loomis St. (at Randolph and Ogden)

Closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa

Limited res. recommended 1 week ahead.

Dress code: No denim, sports shoes, shorts or T-shirts.

Private room (14). [\$\$\$\$] (An open kitchen

dominates this very modern dining room, a popular spot for celebrity watching — it's no secret that Michael Jordan is part owner. The food is urban and sophisticated. Specialties: Peeky-toe crab sandwich; duck a l'orange with truffle honey; foie gras; salmon with crushed cucumber, walnuts and medjool dates; veal cheeks.)

Harvest on Huron, 312/587-9600; Fax: 312/587-9617;

217 W. Huron St.

Closed Labor Day. Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-W;

-11 p.m. Th; -midnight F-Sa; 4:30-9:30 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Largest table: 20. [\$\$\$\$] (The expansive wine list at this dimly lit hot spot accompanies complex New American fare such as scallops on crayfish mashed potatoes with corn tortilla coulis and roasted poblano peppers; sweetbreads with ragout of mushrooms and leeks; and drunken monkfish in rice paper with sake-ginger broth. High-quality selection of Cognacs, Armagnacs and ports.)

Crofton on Wells, 312/755-1790; Fax: 312/755-1890;

535 N. Wells St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. req. 1 week ahead. Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (Chef Suzy Crofton's 64-seat restaurant serves her complex, contemporary American fare. Do try one of her soups. Other specialties include oyster shooters; pan-roasted, spice-dusted diver scallops; venison medallions with huckleberries and potato-cabbage *galette*; and an apple tart.)

Charlie Trotter's, 773/248-6228;

www.charlietrotters.com;

816 W. Armitage Ave.

Probably closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 6 and 9 p.m. Tu-Th; 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. F-Sa

Res. req. 2-3 months ahead;

6 months ahead for kitchen table.

Dress code: Jacket required. No smoking.

[\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$] (Multiple award winning chef is probably Chicago's best-known restaurateur. His namesake restaurant, an AAA Five-Diamond and Mobil Five-Star award winner, is a culinary mecca for foodies from around the world. Trotter, named the James Beard Foundation 1999 chef of the year, serves unique, formal fare containing elements of many cuisines, and based on fresh and costly ingredients — Japanese beef, for example, organic vegetables, line-caught fish. The menu is confined to \$90 to \$100 six-course degustations or \$150 10- to 12-course meals at the exclusive kitchen table. Dining here is almost work — it requires concentration to appreciate the complex flavors, and the portions are small: A few inattentive bites and you've missed it. One course might be a square of tuna layered with osetra caviar, smoked salmon, horseradish potato salad and a pair of tiny oysters, followed by a little plate of shiitake mushroom risotto with red-wine sauce, or a lobster claw with jicama slaw and vanilla-scented anglais sauce. The dining room is small, hushed, elegant and unadorned. The restaurant's staff tells me that people sometimes have good luck getting in by calling at the last moment, due to cancellations.)

Zealous, 312/475-9112; 419 W. Superior St.

Dinner, 5:30-10:30 p.m. M-Sa

*Res. recommended. [\$\$\$\$] (Chef Michael Taus is a protégé of Charlie Trotter's. His elegant post-modern restaurant — a former garage — features post-modern fare of over-the-top complexity. In an attempt to be exclusive, they haven't troubled to erect a sign. Look for "H. Piehl Transfer Co." embedded in the masonry above the door. Recent offerings included grilled foie gras with spicy lobster toast and pineapple vinaigrette, pan-seared *hamachi* with sweet-and-sour beet sauce; and pan-roasted sweetbreads with black-pepper beignets. Portions are small.)*

*The most important things to do in
the world are to get something to eat,
something to drink and somebody to love you.*

— Brandan Francis Behan

Barbecue

In Chicago, barbecue means pork ribs, particularly baby backs, anointed with a slightly sweet, somewhat tangy, tomatoey sauce.

But the barbecue scene here has deteriorated mightily in the past few years. At the moment, there are no great ribs downtown and few in neighborhoods to which we'd feel comfortable sending tourists. (I hate to tell you "M*A*S*H" fans, but there was never an Adam's Ribs.)

Our favorite places for ribs just now are a North End Mexican eatery and a fast-food joint in the northwest suburbs. It's pitiful.

Carson's, The Place for Ribs, 312/280-9200;

Fax: 312/280-7872; www.ribs.com; 612 N. Wells St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. M-Th;

-midnight F; noon-midnight Sa; noon-10:30 p.m. Su.

No res. [\$\$\$] (Probably the best ribs available downtown. Tell them, "light on the sauce," which is tangy but pretty sweet, and can be kind of gloppy. The ribs are nicely chewy baby backs but not as smoky as the perfect barbecue would be. The steaks are good. Beverly Friend says the pork chops are excellent.)

Famous Dave's Ribs n' Blues, 312/266-2400;

Fax: 312/266-2212; www.famousdaves.com;

739 N. Clark St.

Dinner, late, 4 p.m.-midnight Su-F; -1 a.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 7 days

Res. recommended F-Sa. Private room (25)

Live music — blues (no cover) 7 nights. [\$\$\$]

(Minneapolis-based barbecue chain specializes in pull-off-the-bone St. Louis-style ribs; blackened chicken; Texas-style beef brisket; catfish; rich bread pudding.)

Robinson's No. 1 Ribs,

• 312/431-1001, Metcalfe Federal Building,

77 W. Jackson Blvd., mezzanine

Lunch, 6:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m. M-F. Closed Labor Day.

No parking. No res.

• 312/337-1399, 655 W. Armitage Ave.

Dinner, 4-9:30 p.m. M-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa;

3-8:30 p.m. Su

[\$\$\$] (The Metcalfe building's food court contains an outpost serving these celebrated ribs, a stalwart of Taste of Chicago. However, ownership has changed since Charlie Robinson opened these places after winning "No. 1" in the Royko Ribfest, and I haven't had a chance to try them since. Condiments Division Head John Donat's still a devotee of the Oak Park branch, though.)

Diners

Chicago is full of a sort of coffeeshop that I call “Grecian diners” — they serve largely American food but menu items like “Athenian chicken” and Greek salads attest to the ethnicity of their ownership. All of them have similar menus — sandwiches, salads, burgers, and hot plates like roast turkey and stuffing or salisbury steak. Most serve breakfast all day. They look much the same, usually, with a counter, booths and some central tables. Somewhere in front there’s usually a big, round rotating display of cakes that always look much better than they taste.

Lou Mitchell’s, 312/939-3111; Fax: 312/939-4400,
565 W. Jackson Blvd.

*Breakfast, Lunch, 5:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa;
7 a.m.-3 p.m. Su*

No res. [S] (A highly acclaimed diner, which opened in 1923, and is known for its breakfast fare. Be prepared to wait on weekends.)

Newsmakers, 312/787-3100; Fax: 312/573-3140;

Best Western Inn of Chicago, 162 E. Ohio St.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 6 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;
-11 p.m. F; 6:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su*

[\$\$] (An old-fashioned coffeeshop serving burgers and diner fare.)

Artists’ Restaurant and Café (George Mitchell’s),
312/939-7855; 412 S. Michigan Ave.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 7:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;
-midnight F-Su.*

No res. F-Su. Largest table: 30. Private room. Outdoor seating. [\$\$] (Burgers and other diner fare feature at this 40-year-old South Loop diner near the Art Institute.)

Cambridge House, 312/828-0600; Fax: 312/828-1177;
176 E. Ohio St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late,

6 a.m.-12:30 a.m. 7 days [\$\$] (A classic coffeeshop offering breakfast fare, sandwiches, complete dinners in the chopped-steak and fried-shrimp vein, and fountain creations. Breakfast served all day.)

Ed Debevic’s, 312/664-1707; Fax: 312/664-7444;
640 N. Wells St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;
-midnight F-Sa; 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su*

No res. [\$\$] (Kitschy ’50s-style retro diner features wisecracking waiters and blue-plate specials such as meatloaf, chili, burgers and apple pie.)

Vaster than eggplants, and more purple.

Dining partners ... should be chosen for their ability to eat — and drink — with the right mixture of abandon and restraint. They should enjoy food and look upon its preparation and degustation as one of the human arts.... Above all, friends should possess the rare gift of sitting. They should be able, no eager, to sit for hours over a meal of soup and wine and cheese, as well as one of twenty fabulous courses.

— *M.F.K. Fisher*

Oy, gevalt

For reasons I have never been able to figure out, Chicago is not a great deli town, compared to other Midwestern cities like Detroit or Cleveland. Still, there are a few places to get a decent corned beef sandwich.

Manny's Coffee Shop & Deli, 312/939-2855;

Fax: 312/939-2856; www.mannysdeli.com;

1141 S. Jefferson St.

Breakfast, Lunch, 5 a.m.-4 p.m. M-Sa

No cc. [\$] (A famous and venerable cafeteria-style deli, known for breakfast fare and huge corned beef and pastrami sandwiches; knishes; latkes; soups.)

Ada's Famous Deli, 312/214-4282; Fax: 312/214-4370;

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 14 S. Wabash Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late, 6 a.m.-midnight 7 days

[\$\$] (This Kosher-style deli, the offspring of one that opened in 1948 near Kedzie and Montrose avenues, offers traditional deli fare, sandwiches, desserts and breakfast items served all day. Not a great deli, but a good one.)

Chalfin's Deli, 312/943-0034;

Seneca Hotel, 200 E. Chestnut St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner,

7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Su-M; -8 p.m. Tu-Sa

No res. [\$\$] (A New York-style deli serving smoked fish; matzo-ball soup; latkes; egg creams; and breakfast items.)

Mrs. Levy's Delicatessen,

312/993-0530; www.levyrestaurants.com;

Sears Tower, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Plaza Level

Breakfast, Lunch, 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F [\$] (This Kosher-style deli serves corned beef; soups; salads; omelets; and ice-cream fountain creations.)

On the Pacific Rim

Beyond the Great Wall

?? Ben Pao Chinese Restaurant & Satay Bar

312/222-1888; Fax: 847/222-0925;

www.lettuceentertainyou.com; 52 W. Illinois St.

Chicon discount: Free chocolate spring roll dessert.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 4-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa-Su

Res. recommended 4-5 days ahead. Largest table: 8.

Private room (70). Outdoor seating.

Full bar and BYOB (\$12 corkage).

Dress code: No T-shirts. [\$\$\$] (A dramatic dining

room and freshly made Chinese fare with a real

difference. They took my favorite dish off the menu,

but there's still plenty here to like. Try the chicken

soong, diced, seasoned chicken in lettuce cups — we

ate this in Hong Kong, though there it was made with

pigeon. Other good bets: Seven-flavor chicken;

Shanghai peanut noodles; steamed sea bass; wrinkled

string beans; and whole crispy fish, if they have it.

Vegan and vegetarian dishes available.)

Sixty Five Restaurant, 312/372-0306,

336 N. Michigan Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. M-F; -7 p.m. Sa-Su

[\$\$] (Downstairs is a fast-food cafeteria, offering a

variety of *dim sum* items — pork buns, egg rolls, etc.

— and about nine dinner options. An upstairs dining

room offers a more complete menu of Cantonese and

seafood items.)

P.F. Chang's China Bistro, 312/828-9977;

Fax: 312/828-1155; 530 N. Wabash Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Res. 8+ only exc. kitchen-“captain's” and semi-private

tables; call ahead for wait list. Valet parking dinner

only. [\$\$\$] (An outlet of the national chain of upscale

eateries featuring fresh, but somewhat dumbed-down

Chinese fare. Specialties: *Dan dan* noodles; honey

shrimp; wonton chicken salad.)

Lam's Express, 312/332-4388; Fax: 312/332-8290;

19 N. Wabash Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Sa

No parking No cc. No res. [\$] (The combo plates,

\$4.95, include an entree — such as barbecue pork, roast

duck, beef chop suey or sweet-and-sour pork — rice

and eggroll.)

*Is it not delightful to have friends
coming from distant quarters?*

— *Confucius*

Mr. Fong and Son Cantonese Restaurant,

312/855-9393; Fax: 312/855-9397; 35 E. Wacker Drive
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Sa

No parking. Delivery. [\$\$] (The lunch buffet, about \$8, features all-you-can-eat egg rolls, chow mein and other Cantonese favorites. Table service in the evenings.)

Szechwan Restaurant, 312/642-3900;

625 N. Michigan Ave.

Brunch, Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch buffet, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Discount parking at Ontario and St. Clair. [\$\$] (Skip the tame, routine fare in favor of more adventurous items, which are better prepared, but even so-called spicy items are on the mild side. Dim sum served all day. Peking duck available without advance notice.)

Szechwan East, 312/255-9200; Fax: 312/642-3902;

340 E. Ohio St.

Dinner, 2-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch buffet, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa

Brunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Su

Limited late menu, live music, in Orchid Room lounge, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. F-Sa

Outdoor seating. Delivery. Private room. Reduced-price parking with validation, at McClurg Court garage and at Erie/Ontario Self-Park at Fairbanks — \$7.50, pay at restaurant, good 12 hours — enter restaurant through McClurg Center, 333 Ontario.

[\$\$\$] (Until late last year, I would have said this was one of Chicago's best Chinese restaurants. Its specialties include delicious steamed sea bass in ginger sauce; spicy governor's chicken and beef with orange peel, crisp ginger duck; black-bean salmon; and honey garlic chicken. A 30-item lunch buffet, \$8.95, includes cold appetizers, salads, fresh fruit, vegetable, fish and meat noodle dishes, dessert bar and Chinese sweets. The Sunday champagne brunch, \$12.95, adds lobster and Peking duck. Why isn't it still at the top of my list? The city closed it down briefly due to a roach infestation. The owner blames the temporary problem on construction next door, the city allowed the place to reopen, and I have eaten there since without incident. Calvin Trillin says it never pays to inquire too closely into the preparation of Chinese food. But I thought I ought to mention it.)

Chinatown

Chinatown is a small but bustling neighborhood of ethnic restaurants, bakeries and shops, and a center for the Chicago Chinese community. Pass through the Chinatown Gate, and you'll find yourself immersed in the fragrant aromas of the oldest section, with its busy eateries, ornamental street lamps and dragon carvings on the sidewalks.

Chicago's first Chinese immigrants arrived in the 1870s, when the completion of the transcontinental railroad and anti-Chinese sentiment along the Pacific Coast dispersed many Chinese laborers to the Midwest and East. By 1900, Chicago had 430 laundries and 167 restaurants operated by Chinese residents. Its first Chinese community was built around Van Buren and Clark streets, but racial tensions at the turn of the century forced a move south to Cermak Road and Wentworth Avenue.

The largest influx of Chinese came in 1950s and 1960s, after the Communist takeover of mainland China. By 1970, Chicago ranked fourth in Chinese population in America.

Major road projects over the years reduced Chinatown to eight blocks, bounded by Cermak, the railway embankment, Wentworth and 26th Street. However, Chinatown Square Mall, north of Cermak Road, is a recent expansion and will ultimately anchor a 32-acre commercial and residential complex. A new parking lot and other improvements have also been added in recent years, sparked largely by the expansion of the nearby McCormick Place convention center.

Most of the restaurants here are Cantonese, but you'll find plenty of regional specialties, oceans of seafood, fragrant roast duckling and more. Chinatown is also home to Chicago's largest concentration of *dim sum* houses, tea rooms that supply a rolling Chinese smorgasbord of plump dumplings, fried delicacies and other delicious small bites served from wheeled carts for breakfast, brunch or lunch. Get there early to avoid lines and point at what you want as it comes past your table.

To get to Chinatown, take a taxi or catch the Red Line L at the State and Lake station and take it south to the Cermak/Chinatown stop.

Joy Yee's Noodle Shop, 312/328-0001;

Chinatown Square Mall, 2159 S. China Place

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. 7 days

BYOB. Free parking. [\$\$] (This small, lively and

casual Chicago cafe offers a long list of

unexceptionable and inexpensive Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese dishes plus excellent nonalcoholic fruit drinks.

Very large portions — lighter eaters may wish to split a single entree.)

Penang, 312/326-6888; Fax: 312/326-6822;
2201 S. Wentworth Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-1 a.m. 7 days

\$25 min for cc. BYOB — liquor license pending.

*Discount parking with validation. [\$\$] (As far as I know, this is Chicago's only Malaysian restaurant, a branch of a national chain. There's a huge menu that I've only begun to explore. The food is exotic, often spicy, and full of unfamiliar flavors. Popular options are *roti canai*, an Indian pancake served with bony chicken curry for dipping; chicken satay; and *hokkien mee*, noodles with meat, vegetables and seafood in a sweet, thick soy sauce. It's never as good as I hope it's going to be, but I always think I've ordered the wrong thing. The service is slow, and food comes out in whatever order it's ready, but they're open late. There's also a sushi bar, about which I know nothing.)*

August Moon, 312/842-2951, 225 W. 26th St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Tu-F, 3-9 p.m. Sa-Su
Limited free parking. BYOB. [\$\$]*

*(The Midwest's only Indonesian restaurant, run by friendly, Java-born Esther Wong and her husband, Gary, the chef. Popular dishes and this quiet and venerable storefront, opened in 1970, include *lumpia*, Indonesian egg rolls; fried string beans; *rendang padang*, spicy beef; *sambal tomat udang*, shrimp in spicy gravy; *opor sapi*, Grandma's pot roast; and fried bananas. The 18-dish rijsttafel, \$35 each for a minimum of four diners, must be guaranteed by credit card at least 24 hours in advance. Vegetarian dishes available.)*

Won Kow Restaurant, 312/842-7500;

2237 S. Wentworth Ave., Second Floor

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner,

9 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Dim sum brunch, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 days

No handicapped access. Private room. [\$\$]

(Chinatown's oldest restaurant, opened in 1927, serves mostly Cantonese fare, but also Northern-style dishes, including lobster and crab, steamed pike, oysters, mussels, and noodles.)

King Wah, 312/842-1404; 2225 S. Wentworth Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

*No parking. [\$\$] (Established in 1962, King Wah offers a large menu of Cantonese and Mandarin specialties like Marco Polo steak; tea-smoked duck; lemon chicken; Mongolian beef; oysters. *Dim sum* on the weekends is from a menu — no carts.)*

Phoenix and Phoenix Cafe, 312/328-0848;

2131 S. Archer Ave.

Discount parking with validation.

Main dining room, second floor:

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 8 a.m.-10:30 p.m. 7 days

Dim sum brunch, 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 7 days

Res. dinner only. [\$\$\$]

Cafe, ground floor: Lunch, Dinner, late,

2 p.m.-1 a.m. M-F; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa-Su [\$] (This very popular Chinatown spot, arguably Chicago's best *dim sum* house and certainly the cleanest, is very crowded on weekends with long waits for seating. Good choices include plump pork and shrimp *shui mai*, taro cakes, sticky rice in lotus leaves and fluffy steamed barbecued-pork buns. At dinner, specialties include drunken crab and spicy jellyfish. On the main floor, the cafe is a kind of juice bar serving light fare, such as shrimp burgers; Taiwan thick toast; pickled chicken feet; crêpes; herbal teas; strange iced "bubble" teas with tapioca; and uniquely flavored milkshakes such as taro, green bean and grape.)

Three Happiness, 312/791-1228; 2130 S. Wentworth Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Brunch,

10 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days

Discount parking with validation. [\$\$] (Chicago's biggest and best-known *dim sum* restaurant. It's huge, crowded, noisy and often dirty, but there's a vast array of fried pastries, steamed dumplings, and other tidbits rolled out on carts for you to choose from. Expect to wait on the weekend. Don't bother with trying to eat dinner here; there are better places up the street, including the identically named but separately owned place across the street on Cermak.

NEWS FLASH — *Just as we were going to press, the city shut them down for the three R's: rodents, roaches and problems with refrigeration. They'll probably have reopened before the con, but expect lines at Phoenix to be longer than ever.)*

Emperor's Choice, 312/225-8800;

2238 S. Wentworth Ave.

*Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:45 a.m.-12:15 a.m. M-Sa;
-11:15 p.m. Su*

Res. recommended. Largest table: 12. Discount parking with validation at northeast corner of Cermak and Wentworth, one block north of restaurant. [\$\$\$] (This Cantonese restaurant specializes in seafood. Try the pot stickers; spicy soft-shell crab; lobster Peking style and eight-treasure duck. The adventurous can order such exotic dishes as rattlesnake soup and pork bellies. Vegetarian dishes available.)

I think somebody should come up with a way to breed a very large shrimp. That way, you could ride him, then, after you camped at night, you could eat him. How about it, science?

— *Jack Handey*

Hong Min, 312/842-5026; 221 W. Cermak Road
Brunch, Lunch, Dinner, late, 10 a.m.-2 a.m. 7 days
Dim sum brunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 days (from menu — no carts). BYOB. Res. 6+ only. 2 hours free parking at Cermak and Wentworth. [\$\$] (This no-frills eatery receives high marks for its cooking. There are two menus — order appetizers from the first, which otherwise consists mainly of Chinese-American standards, consider the seasonal specials clipped to the front and then set it aside in favor of the second, more interesting list. Specialties: Hot and sour soup; curried chicken puffs; Mr. Weil's shrimps, lightly sautéed, shrimp mixed with crumbled pork in peppery garlic and black-bean sauce; shrimp in lobster sauce; lobster; crab; chow fun noodles — order them extra-crispy. Service is brusque.)

Triple Crown Seafood Restaurant, 312/791-0788;
 22 W. 22nd Place
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-2 a.m. 7 days
Free parking with validation at Cermak and Wentworth. [\$\$] (Kind of on the dingy side, but this late-night restaurant offers good seafood items and Peking duck without advance notice.)

Sixty Five Restaurant, 312/225-7060; Fax: 312/326-0940;
 2414 S. Wentworth Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;
-11 p.m. F-Sa
Dim sum brunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 7 days
 (Tanks of live lobsters, crabs and fish let you know immediately this Cantonese restaurant's forte. Look for the seafood to be steamed or stir-fried with ginger and green onions or served under pungent black bean sauce.)

Royal Pacific Restaurant, 312/842-4444;
 2217 S. Wentworth Ave.
Dinner, late, 4 p.m.-midnight 7 days
Discount parking with validation. [\$\$] (Ma po tofu, taro root duck, and Cantonese-style lobster are among the specialties at this casual Cantonese restaurant that also features a large tropical-drink menu.)

The sushi nation

See also: **Sushi Wabi** (page 42).

❗❗❗Kamehachi of Tokyo/Kamehachi Cafe,

312/664-3663; 1400 N. Wells St.

Downstairs: Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. Tu-Th;

-11:30 p.m. F-Sa; 4:30-9:30 p.m. Su.

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Tu-Sa. Res. recommended.

Cafe: (same menu): *Dinner, late,*

5 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Tu-Sa; 4:30-11:30 p.m. Su.

Lunch, 11:30-2 Tu-Sa [\$\$\$] (An excellent sushi bar with two dining rooms. The upstairs cafe, entered through a separate doorway, features the same menu as the restaurant downstairs, but stays open later.

Specialties: Oyster shooters; sushi combinations; *nigiri zushi*; and “Sushi 101,” with no raw ingredients.)

Hatsuhana, 312/280-8808; 160 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-F; 5-10 p.m. Sa

Lunch, 11:45 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (An upscale Japanese eatery serving excellent sushi and sashimi as well as teriyaki and tempura. A variety of *bento* combinations are available.)

Naniwa, 312/255-8555; 607 N. Wells St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th

-11 p.m. F-Sa. Delivery. [\$\$\$\$] (A pretty traditional sushi bar, somewhat expensive, but with well-made sushi and attentive service. There’s a pageful of *maki* — the Naniwa roll is a good choice — impeccably fresh *nigiri zushi*, and a short list of cooked-food items. Try the *goma ae*, an appetizer of chilled spinach with peanut sauce, and plum-wine ice cream for dessert.)

CoCoRo Shabu de Fondue, 312/943-2220;

www.lifecoco.com; 668 N. Wells St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30-2:15 p.m. Tu-Sa

Largest table: 18. Discount parking with validation across the street. Delivery. [\$\$\$] (As the name says, this restaurant specializes in *shabu-shabu*, a kind of Japanese fondue; however, they also have sushi; and standards like tempura. Vegetarian dishes available.)

The Dick Smith diet:

‘All the sushi you can afford.’

Benihana of Tokyo; 312/664-9643;

Summerfield Suites Hotel, 166 E. Superior St.
Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 3-9 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa; 1-3 p.m. Su
Largest table: 10. Res. recommended.

Dress code: No sports shoes or denim. No parking.

[\$\$\$\$] (One of a national chain specializing in *teppanyaki*: Chefs cook steak, seafood and chicken on the table in front of you, juggling utensils and flipping knives. It's best to go in a group, as you'll be seated with strangers if you don't fill a table, though that can be fun, too. They also serve sushi.)

Ron of Japan, 312/644-6500 Fax: 312/644-8613;

230 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5-9 p.m. M-Th; -10:30 p.m. F;

-11 p.m. Sa; 4-9 p.m. Su [\$\$\$] (Flashing knives and the rest of the *teppanyaki* schtick. The shrimp with egg yolk sauce and prime rib served on a Samurai sword distinguish it from Benihana.)

Elsewhere in Asia**Arun's**, 773/539-1909; Fax: 773/539-2125;

4156 N. Kedzie Ave.

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. Tu-Su

Res. req. with credit-card guarantee 3-4 weeks ahead.

Largest table: 12. Dress code: Jacket req. No smoking.

[\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$] (Chicago's most luxurious Thai restaurant. You don't order here. They'll merely ask about your tastes. There's no menu — only the \$75 chef's-choice *prix fixe*. They'll bring about a dozen small courses: Curries such as fragrant *masaman* beef curry, poached sea bass and cabbage in souplike sour curry, and fried catfish in a light red curry; dumplings, such as light, pork-filled pockets with chili-shallot dipping sauce; salads, such as seafood and grilled-vegetable. It's very good — but you're paying more for service and snob appeal than cuisine. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Star of Siam, 312/670-0100; 11 E. Illinois St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Su-Th;

-10:30 p.m. F-Sa

[\$\$] (Attractive, popular restaurant, somewhat tonier than many Thai eateries, offers seating on cushions at low tables. When they say spicy, they mean it.

Specialties: "Chicken Delight," chicken stir fried with cashews, vegetables and chilies; and satay.)

Singha, 312/467-0300, 340 N. Clark St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

[\$] (Thai specialties include chicken satay; vegetable spring rolls; *tom ka kai* soup; *somtorn*, papaya salad.)

Taste of Siam, 312/939-1179; Fax: 312/939-1195,
Transportation Building; 600 S. Dearborn St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. M-Th;
-10:30 p.m. F-Sa; 3:30-9:30 p.m. Su [\$\$] (Exotic duck,
seafood curry and spicy catfish are among the
specialties at this well-regarded Printers Row Thai, a
sister to My Thai.)

My Thai Restaurant, 312/345-1234; 30 S. Michigan Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, 10:30 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Sa [\$\$] (Popular
dishes at this bustling Thai place include cashew
chicken, ginger chicken, spicy basil leaves with beef,
chicken or tofu and penang curry. The *pad Thai* and
satay are good but not great. Dessert options include
creamy Thai custard and pineapple-coconut ice cream.
Vegetarian dishes available. Service can be brusque.)

Thai Spoon, 312/427-6470; Fax: 312/427-7887;
623 S. Wabash Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F;
11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sa; 11:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Su
Res. 10+ only Private room. Delivery. BYOB. [\$\$]
(Specialties: *Pad Thai*; *tom yum soup*; *pad siew ew*;
Thai coffee and tea; espresso and cappuccino.
Vegetarian dishes available.)

Le Colonial, 312/255-0088; Fax: 312/255-1108;
937 N. Rush St.
Dinner, 5-11 p.m. M-F; -midnight Sa; -10 p.m. Su
Lunch, noon-2:30 p.m. M-Sa
Appetizers (outdoors), 2:30-4 p.m.
Outdoor seating. (sidewalk and second floor terrace).
[\$\$\$\$] (A beautiful setting, decorated in bamboo and
live plants, is the draw at this rare downtown
Vietnamese. Both the room and the food are dressier
than at Uptown Vietnamese storefronts, and you'll pay
more too. Specialties: *Cha gio*, Vietnamese spring
rolls; wok-seared monkfish with lemongrass; *chao tom*,
grilled shrimp with sugar cane; beef salad; seared
whole red snapper; steamed sea bass with cellophane
noodles. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Quang Noodle Vietnamese & Thai Cuisine,
312/951-9030; 804 N. State St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;
-11 p.m. F-Sa; -9 p.m. Su
BYOB. No parking. [\$\$] (Besides *pad Thai* and other
noodle dishes, options at this Thai/Vietnamese
restaurant include chicken, beef and seafood in black-
bean sauce, satay and sizzling dishes.)

Lan's Bistro Pacific, 312/397-1800; Fax: 312/397-9233;
680 N. Lake Shore Drive
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F;
4:30-11 p.m. Sa [\$\$\$\$] (Sushi and stir-fried Chinese,
Korean, Japanese and Thai dishes feature in this
minimalist, industrial chic dining room.)

???

Big Bowl, 312/640-BOWL (Delivery);

www.bigbowl.com. Limited res. Outdoor seating.

• 312/787-8297; Fax: 312/787-8190; 159½ W. Erie St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;
noon-11 p.m. Sa; 4-9 p.m. Su. No smoking.

• 312/951-1888; Fax: 312/951-9888; 60 E. Ohio St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
[\$\$] (Fun and festive casual restaurants with great Pan-Asian food. Specialties: Won tons, summer rolls, five kinds of Asian noodle dishes — such as fresh Chinese egg noodles with sesame chicken and sizzled shrimp with hand-cut Shanghai wheat noodles — and other one-dish meals, freshly made from scratch, plus a stir-fry bar. Don't miss the house-made ginger ale. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Flat Top Grill, 312/829-4800; Fax: 312/829-4820;
1000 W. Washington Blvd.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. Sa; 4-9 p.m. Su [\$\$]

(Asian stir-fry bar offers a somewhat upscale take on Mongolian barbecue. Choose from 70 items — meat and seafood, vegetables, rices, noodles and sauces — and they'll fry it for you on a big flat Mongolian-style grill. The drawback of this kind of place is that your food is only as good as your own ability to choose combinations of food and sauces — believe me, simpler is better — and you can't talk to your dining companions because they're always getting up to go through the line. Flat Top improves the process somewhat, because you don't have to wait at the grill for your food to be cooked; just deliver the raw ingredients and they'll bring it to your table.)

The Auld Country

Fadó Irish Pub & Restaurant, 312/836-0066;

Fax: 312/836-0036; 100 W. Grand Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days

Limited late menu, -midnight 7 days

Res. 6+ only. Live music, Tu, Sa-Su. [\$\$\$] (An Irish pub with authentically smoky atmosphere. Specialties: Shepherd's pie; boxties, potato pancakes; corned beef and cabbage; Irish breakfasts.)

Lizzie McNeill's, An Irish Pub, 312/467-1992;

Fax: 312/464-9640; 400 N. McClurg Court

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. 7 days

Bar open till 2 a.m. No parking. Largest table: 20.

Outdoor seating. View. [\$\$] (This Irish/American pub offers seating on the river and Irish stew, smoked salmon; sandwiches, salads; appetizers; and Bailey's Irish Cream torte. Vegetarian dishes available.)

On the Continent

Bon appetit

❖❖❖ **The Dining Room**, 312/573-5222,

Ritz-Carlton Chicago, Water Tower Place,
160 E. Pearson St.

Dinner, 6-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Su

Res. recommended 3 weeks ahead. Largest table: 12.

*Dress code: Jacket required. 3 hours free parking in
Water Tower garage with validation. [\$\$\$\$\$\$\$]*

(One of my very favorite restaurants. Chef Sarah Stegner's contemporary French cooking is creative without being twee, immensely satisfying and easy to appreciate. Stegner was the James Beard Foundation 1998 Best Chef in the Midwest. Her sumptuous cuisine features dishes like foie gras with figs in a port reduction, or glazed with a balsamic rhubarb sauce; sea bass over fingerling potatoes with saffron and tomato remoulade; salad of warm goat cheese with cucumbers, olive bread and almonds in tomato vinaigrette; marinated grilled rack of Colorado lamb with goat-cheese artichoke terrine, black olive and oven-roasted tomato jus. The cheese course alone is to die for. Extensive and costly brunch buffet includes roasted tenderloin of beef, waffle station, made-to-order omelets, halibut with watercress and mushroom vinaigrette, dessert buffet and a children's buffet with sandwiches, pizza and chicken fingers. Excellent service.)

❖❖❖ **Brasserie Jo**, 312/595-0800; Fax: 312/595-0808;

www.brasseriejo.com; 59 W. Hubbard St.,

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended. Largest table: 7. Private rooms

(12, 20, 80). Outdoor seating. Live music — jazz, F.

[\$\$\$\$] (Chic, casual French in a classic brasserie style.

The chef, John Joho, is also proprietor of Everest, one of the city's best; The food here is more laid back. The room has a very Parisian feel; it's a bit noisy at peak hours. The fare leans towards Joho's native Alsace, with onion tart; pâtés; *choucroute à l'Alsacienne*; grilled hanger steak; *coq au vin lyonnaise*; lobster bouillabaisse; crêpes; and French aperitifs. Don't miss the raw bar seafood combination and be sure to take a gander at the chariot full of French cheeses after dinner.)

Gourmets ... have broad faces, sparkling eyes, small foreheads, short noses, full lips and round chins. The females are plump, rather pretty than handsome, with a tendency to embonpoint. It is under this exterior that the pleasantest guests are to be found: they accept all that is offered, eat slowly and taste with reflection. They never hurry away from places where they have been well treated; and you are sure of them for the evening, because they know all the games and pastimes which form the ordinary accessories of a gastronomic meeting.

— *Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin*

Bistro 110, 312/266-3110; Fax: 312/266-3116;

www.bistro110restaurant.com; 110 E. Pearson St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;

-11 p.m. F-Sa; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su

Jazz brunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Su

Largest table: 20. Discount parking with validation.

[\$\$\$\$] (Before emigrating from France, Chef Dominique Tougne was a protege of Joel Robüchon's. His food's much less stuffy, though. Perfectly roasted chicken is the specialty here. Other items to try are roasted calamari; brie-stuffed artichoke; steak *au poivre*; wood-roasted scallops. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available. The a la carte jazz brunch offers waffles with pecan maple syrup and fruit compote and eggs with andouille sausage plus selections from the regular lunch menu, and a kids' menu.)

Rhapsody, 312/786-9911;

Symphony Center, 65 E. Adams St.

Dinner, 4:30-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

(and 1 hour after concerts)

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2:15 p.m. M-Sa

Outdoor seating. Res. req. for early seatings on concert nights. [\$\$\$] (Located in the building that houses the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, this is a great restaurant for pre-concert meals, but even better *during* concerts when the place is quieter and less busy. Chef Roland Liccione of Les Nomades is in charge of the menu here, which offers his contemporary, Asian-influenced take on French cuisine. Good options are foie gras; sturgeon; risotto; rack of lamb; and salmon terrine.)

❖❖❖ **Thyme**, 312/226-4300; www.Thymechicago.com;
464 N. Halsted St.

Chicon discount: 15 percent off.

Dinner, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Su-W; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Res. recommended 2 weeks ahead for F-Sa. Largest

table: 20. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$\$] (Chef John Bubala offers excellent contemporary French and American fare. Good bets include spit-roasted poultry, rabbit and pork; duck breast with apricots; foie gras; yellowfin tuna carpaccio with wasabi caviar; shrimp with vanilla nage and red-wine syrup; game.)

Bistrot Zinc, 312/337-1131; Fax: 312/337-6937;
1131 N. State St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; -9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sa-Su

Brunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sa-Su [\$\$\$] (This noisy and casual bistro offers bouillabaisse; roast chicken; dessert crepes; and crême brûlée. An a la carte brunch menu includes brioche french toast, crepes, quiches and omelets.)

La Sardine, 312/421-2800; Fax: 312/421-2318;
111 N. Carpenter St.

Closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa (variable)

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 1 week ahead. Largest table: 20. [\$\$\$\$] (A casual, noisy French bistro with excellent Lyonnaise fare. Specialties: Leek-bacon tart; sweetbreads; bouillabaisse; steak frites; soufflé.)

Cyrano's Bistrot & Wine Bar, 312/467-0546;
Fax: 312/467-1850; 546 N. Wells St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;
5:30-11 p.m. Sa*

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (Chef Didier Durand is from Bergerac in the southwest of France, hence the reference to the town's most famous character. He serves such regional French fare as an onion tart, bouillabaisse and apple tarts.)

Les Nomades, 312/649-9010; Fax: 312/649-0608;
222 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Tu-Sa

Res. req. Dress code: Jacket required. [\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$] (An elegant dining room serving excellent

contemporary French cuisine with a touch of Asian influence. You choose from a variety of dishes to create a four-course prix fixe, \$70. Specialties: Unctuous foie gras duo with caramelized pineapple; plump lobster ravioli; tender sweetbreads and veal with sauce perigeaux; soufflés.)

The Pump Room, 312/266-0360; Fax: 312/266-9866;
 Omni Ambassador East Hotel, 1301 N. State Parkway
Dinner, 6-10 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa; 5-10 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F
Breakfast, 6:30-10:30 a.m. 7 days
Brunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su
Dress code: Jackets at dinner; no jeans.
*Res. req. 2-3 weeks ahead. Live music, dancing in lounge. [\$\$\$\$\$] (A Chicago landmark — historically, *the* place to see and be seen. The Pump Room's celebrated Booth One was a vied-for spot among the rich and famous who ordered a variety of viands brought to them flaming on skewers. A huge collection of celebrity diners' photographs decorates its foyer. Today's specialties, with a decidedly French flair, include Gold Coast salad, a Pump Room classic, with chips of dried pear to sweeten and add texture to the traditional greens and blue cheese; appetizers of sweetbreads with a ragout of enoki mushrooms and smoked-salmon and cream-cheese terrine; foie gras with ginger and hibiscus; duck breast over a mix of couscous with dried cherries and sea bass in vegetable bouillabaisse and olive tapenade; individual baked Alaskas. The room is hushed and elegant. Service, however, is mixed.)*

Cru Café & Wine Bar, 312/387-4001; Fax: 312/337-4123;
 888 N. Wabash Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight Su-Th
Brunch, 11:30-4 p.m. Su
Res. 10+ only. Largest table: 20. Outdoor seating.
Live music — jazz, 8-11 p.m. W. [\$\$\$] (This new wine bar offers 50 types by the glass as well as flights plus such light fare as a charcuterie plate; beef carpaccio; European cheeses; salads; and sandwiches, such as a lobster tenderloin club. Vegetarian dishes available. Programming head Steven Silver's brother Alex is the manager here, but they still didn't offer Chicon members a discount.)

Yvette Wintergarden, 312/408-1242;
 311 S. Wacker Drive
Dinner, 5-8 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F
Live music nightly; dancing F-Sa [\$\$\$\$] (French restaurant offers both a dark and intimate dining room and a spacious glass-vaulted atrium, with marble, towering palm trees, and a fountain. There's a large wine list and an eclectic, French-influenced menu offering such items as honey-glazed salmon and duck shepherd's pie.)

Opaa!

Papagus Greek Taverna, 312/642-8450;

Fax: 312/642-8132; www.lettuceentertainyou.com;

Embassy Suites Hotel Downtown, 620 N. State St.

Chicon discount: Free dessert with meal.

Dinner, 4-10 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa;

noon-10 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa

Dress code: No cut-offs. Limited res., recommended 2 days ahead. Largest table: 20. Private room.

Outdoor seating. Valet parking plus discount parking in underground lot at dinner; free parking at lunch with validation. [\$\$\$\$] (Arguably Chicago's best

Greek restaurant — certainly one that stands out from

the rest. Specialties: "Petals of Poros," crispy fried

eggplant with *skordalia*, garlic spread; *spanakopita*,

spinach-cheese pie; grilled octopus; lamb chops; pork

kebabs; whole fish; chocolate *kataifi*. Vegetarian dishes available. A little noisy.)

QP, 312/751-2100; www.qpdining.com;

Seneca Hotel, 200 E. Chestnut St.

Chicon discount: 15 percent off in dining room.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; -9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11-3 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 3-5 days ahead.

Dress code: "Semi-casual." [\$\$\$\$] (This white-tablecloth restaurant is more formal and expensive than many Greek restaurants. They don't flame the *saganaki*. Specialties: *Yuvetsi*, meat, pasta, vegetables and seasonings covered with a pastry dome; squid stuffed with Greek cheeses, olive oil, herbs and a touch of hot pepper; grilled octopus in lemon vinaigrette; *skordalia*, garlic paste; good quality steaks and chops; and *ravani*, honeyed semolina cake. There's a long wine list, too.)

Eating takes a special talent. Some people are much better at it than others. In that way, it's like sex, and like sex, it's more fun with someone who really likes it. I can't imagine having a lasting friendship with someone who is not interested in food.

— Alan King

Greektown

The first Greeks arrived in Chicago as ship captains in the 1840s. The settlers became food peddlers, and then, naturally, restaurateurs.

During the 1960s, construction of the Eisenhower Expressway and the University of Illinois displaced Chicago's first Greek neighborhood, called "The Delta," forcing the community to move north a few blocks to the current Greektown site along Halsted between Van Buren and Monroe streets.

The business district began to thrive during the 1970s and is still growing, thanks in part to millions of dollars worth of street renovations and the erection of traditional Greek pavilions as part of the city's preparations for the 1996 Democratic National Convention.

The differences between the various Greektown restaurants can be subtle. Some suspect that there's one long kitchen at the back serving them all.

To get to Greektown, your best choice is to cab, but you could also catch the Blue Line L at the Dearborn and Washington station and take it south to the Halsted/U. of Ill. stop, then walk north along Halsted.

See also: The Parthenon (page 22).

Greek Islands, 312/782-9855;

200 S. Halsted St., (entrance on Adams)

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight M-Th;

-1 a.m. F-Sa

Free valet parking. [\$\$\$] [Mike Resnick's favorite, this Greektown landmark is big, cheery and traditional. The downside is noise and uncomfortable chairs. A mix-and-match menu lets you choose your own combination plate. The daily specials are good options, as are lamb dishes and the house-made gyros. Vegetarian dishes available.]

Pegasus Restaurant & Taverna, 312/226-3377;

Fax: 312/226-4972; www.pegasuschicago.com;

130 S. Halsted St.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight M-F;

noon-1 a.m. Sa; -midnight Su

Free valet parking. Outdoor seating. View. [\$\$\$]

(The rooftop garden is one thing that distinguishes this Greektown restaurant. Specialties: Taramasalata; spanakopita; octopus; sea bass.)

Costa's Greek Dining and Bar, 312/263-9700;

Fax: 312/263-0766; 340 S. Halsted St.

Dinner, Lunch, late, 11 a.m.-midnight 7 days

Free valet parking. Live music — piano, W-Su. [\$\$\$]

(More elegant than many Greektown spots. Specialties: Taramasalata; whole sea bass; Athenian chicken; kataifi.)

Santorini, 312/829-FISH; Fax: 312/829-6263;
www.santorinirestaurant.com; 800 W. Adams St.
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight Su-Th;
-1 a.m. F-Sa
Free valet parking. [\$\$\$] (Specializing in seafood, Santorini offers Greek-style octopus, whole black sea bass; scampi; walleye; and such standards as *taramasalata*.)

Hellas Cafe, 312/474-9340; *www.hellasgreektown.com*;
310 S. Halsted St.
Dinner, late, 8 p.m.-4 a.m. W-Su
Free valet parking. Live music — Greek [\$\$\$]
(This late-night spot specializes in *meze*, or Greek hors d'oeuvres. The *skordalia*, garlic paste, and lamb chops are very good. It can be a little smoky and the music is very loud. Sometimes Greek men get up and dance.)

Roditys, 312/454-0800; Fax: 312/454-6126;
222 S. Halsted St.
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-midnight Su-Th;
-1 a.m. F-Sa
No res. Free parking. [\$\$\$] (They make their own gyros here instead of buying it from Kronos. Lamb, seafood and Greek standards fill out the menu.)

*Preeyatnava apeeteeta** *Smacznego*

☛☛☛**Russian Tea Time**, 312/360-0000; Fax: 312/360-0575;
77 E. Adams St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. M-Th; -10 p.m. F;
11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Sa; -9 p.m. Su
No parking. No smoking. Res. recommended (Lunch, 5+ only). [\$\$\$\$] (One of Chicago's few Russian restaurants and, rarer still, one that isn't a nightclub. Don't miss the Tashkent carrot salad. Blintzes; knishes; *piroshki*; and *vereniky*, potato-stuffed dumplings, are also good, as are the chicken Kiev and stuffed quail with pomegranate sauce. Give the stroganoff a miss. They also offer flavored vodkas and caviar. Vegetarian dishes available.)

European Sunny Café, 312/663-6020; 304 S. Wells St.
Breakfast, Lunch, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F;
9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sa
Limited seating. Outdoor seating. No parking. No cc.
No res. [\$\$] (Polish lunchroom serves pierogi, stuffed cabbage, hunter's stew.)

Protect your bagels: put lox on them.

* The @!#&% Cyrillic won't translate into the @!#&% Adobe PDF file! @!#&%!!!!

Ciao

There's no excuse for having a bad Italian meal in Chicago, there are so many good Italian restaurants here.

See also: **Alonti Deli** (page 40); **Bar Louie** (page 100); **Barnelli's** (page 21); **Carmine's** (page 44); **Coco Pazzo** (page 34); **Como Inn** (page 29); **Erie Cafe** (page 28); **Faycurr's** (page 40); **Gene & Georgetti** (page 29); **Harry Caray's** (page 23); **The Italian Village** (page 31); **J & C's Bombacigno Inn** (page 21); **Jilly's** (page 44); **La Strada** (page 39); **Maggiano's** (page 81); **Mangino's** (page 83); **Nick & Tony's** (page 27); **Primavera** (page 37); **RL** (page 109); **Riva** (page 46); and **Vivo** (page 41).

☛☛☛ **Spiaggia**, 312/280-2750; Fax: 312/943-8560;

www.levyrestaurants.com;

980 N. Michigan Ave., Second Floor

Dinner, 5:30-9 p.m. Su-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa

Res. req. 6-7 weeks ahead.

Dress code: Jacket required.

Live music — piano. [\$\$\$\$] (Chicago's best Italian restaurant, with stunningly elegant presentations of beautifully prepared fare. The chef here left recently and I haven't been there to check out what the new one is doing — however, the longtime sous chef is still there and the chef who opened the place, Tony Mantuano, has just been appointed the new executive chef, so I expect little has changed. Seafood is a fabulous option — try Mediterranean sea bass in citrus sauce; wood-roasted scallops over greens with truffle vinaigrette; and, if you're very lucky, glass eels in butter with sage. Meats, pastas, risotti and everything else excel, too. Other specialties include Dover sole; pancetta-wrapped rabbit; gnocchi; fresh pasta.)

Cafe Spiaggia, 312/280-2755; Fax: 312/943-8560;

www.levyrestaurants.com;

980 N. Michigan Ave., Second Floor

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th;

-10:30 p.m. F-Sa; -9:30 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-Sa; noon-2:30 p.m. Su

Brunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su

No res. [\$\$\$\$] (More casual, less expensive sister to Spiaggia, across the hall, offers tradition-based, contemporary Italian dishes, such as smoked salmon with shaved fennel salad and ravioli filled with spinach and ricotta. Brunch items are based on the regular menu with additions such as an Italian omelet with sweet onions, fresh tomatoes, zucchini and provolone.)

Pane Caldo, 312/649-0055, 72 E. Walton St.

Dinner, 5-10:30 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Th; -2:30 p.m. F-Sa

Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Su [\$\$\$] (An intimate little trattoria whose name means "warm bread." Indeed, some very good, though not warm, bread starts off your meal. The presentations are beautiful and the Northern Italian fare is always well prepared. Try duck breast with cherries in a port wine sauce, or folded layers of chicken, prosciutto, collard greens, and mozzarella with roasted tomatoes in morel and wine sauce. Risotti and pastas also win. Chaz Boston Baden tried venison and truffles for the first time here during a Chicon meeting. He liked Bambi, but gave the fungi a pass. More for us! Vegetarian dishes available.)

Scoozi! 312/943-5900; Fax: 312/943-8969;

www.lettuceentertainyou.com; 410 W. Huron St.

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. M-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa;

4-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F

Outdoor seating. Dress code: No tank tops or athletic wear. [\$\$\$\$] (Always popular Italian with an emphasis on wood-roasted fare. The roasted vegetable antipasti and thin-crust gourmet pizzas are first-rate. Good entrée choices include *filetto di maiale arrosto*, wood-roasted pork tenderloin; *stinko di agnello*, chianti-braised lamb shank; smoked chicken rigatoni; pastas.)

Coco Pazzo Cafe, 312/664-2777; Fax: 312/664-0871;

Motel 6, 636 N. St. Clair St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10:30 p.m. M-Sa;

-10 p.m. Su

Brunch, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Su

Res. recommended 1 week ahead. Largest table: 20.

Outdoor seating. Valet parking at dinner. [\$\$\$\$]

(Casual Italian eatery, a sister to Coco Pazzo, page 34, highlights fresh pastas, seafood and meats and features such Tuscan-inspired specialties as grilled salmon with fennel, tomato and citrus vinaigrette; spinach gnocchi; pepper-crusting salmon. Vegetarian dishes available. A la carte brunch menu includes grilled Italian sandwiches, spaghetti with spicy tomatoes, *penne* with roasted chicken, and apple bread pudding with vanilla ice cream.)

La Scarola, 312/243-1740; 721 W. Grand Ave.

Dinner, 5-11 p.m. M-F; 4-11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su

[\$\$\$] (Classic Italian. Specialties: chicken Vesuvio; sautéed escarole; *pasta e fagioli*; eggplant *parmigiana*; pastas; veal dishes; cannoli.)

Bella Luna Café, 312/751-2552; 731 N. Dearborn St.

Chicon discount: 1 free drink with meal.

Labor Day open 3-10 p.m.

Dinner, 3:30-11 p.m. M-Sa; 3-10 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. M-Sa

Largest table: 20. Private room (30). Delivery. [\$\$\$]

(Cozy storefront Italian serving subs and house-made pastas. Vegetarian dishes available.)

La Borsa, 312/563-1414; 375 N. Morgan St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 M-Sa [\$\$\$] (Housed in an old freight warehouse, off the beaten path, La Borsa is vast, dark and funky. Once, we were there during a power failure, and we didn't realize the lights had gone out till the waiter told us why they were unable to serve coffee. A sister to Pane Caldo, it serves the same great breads and a similarly well-prepared Venetian trattoria menu, perhaps a bit heavier on seafood. Note that the location, a couple of blocks north of Randolph Street's restaurant row, is not always familiar to taxi drivers.)

Trattoria No. 10, 312/984-1718; Fax: 312/787-5453;

10 N. Dearborn Parkway

Dinner, 5:30-9 p.m. M-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Th

Res. recommended. Valet parking after 5:30 p.m.

[\$\$\$\$] (Very good Northern Italian fare: Squash ravioli; pastas; polenta with game sausage; beef tenderloin.)

La Rosetta, 312/332-9500; Fax: 773/325-9708;

www.rosebudrestaurants.com;

Three First National Plaza, 70 W. Madison St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F; 5-10 p.m. Sa

Free valet parking after 6 p.m. with validation. [\$\$\$\$]

(One of the family of Rosebud restaurants — which means it's very popular, very noisy and serves large portions. Specialties: La Rosetta chopped salad with shrimp, chicken, cucumbers, roasted peppers, onions and mixed greens; bistro steak, veal *parmigiana*, chicken Vesuvio, rigatoni; pasta with vodka sauce.)

Centro, 312/988-7775; *www.rosebudrestaurants.com;*

710 N. Wells St.

Closes at 10 p.m. Labor Day.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Sa; 4-10 p.m. Su

Res. req. 2 days ahead. Largest table: 14.

Outdoor seating. Dress code: No denim or sports shoes. [\$\$\$\$] (Another big and noisy member of the Rosebud family. Specialties: Steamed mussels; fish salad; chicken marsala; chicken Vesuvio; *cavatelli*; tiramisu.)

Maggiano's Little Italy, 312/644-7700;
Fax: 312/644-1077; www.maggianos.com;
516 N. Clark St.
Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;
noon-11 p.m. Sa; -10 p.m. Su
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Th; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. F
Res. recommended. Largest table: 15. Outdoor seating.
Private room (30-300). [\$\$\$] (Fresh, well-made Italian-
American fare is served family-style in huge portions.
Expect long waits. Specialties: Rigatoni; lunchtime
sandwiches; veal scaloppine; roast chicken; shrimp
oreganata; chocolate zuccoto.)

Bice Ristorante,
312/664-1474; Fax: 312/664-9008; 158 E. Ontario St.
Dinner, 4-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 7 days
Res. req. Private room. Valet parking after 4 p.m.
[\$\$\$\$] (This outlet of a Milan-based chain features
often-snooty Italian-born staff members and good but
pricey Northern Italian fare. Specialties: Lobster
ravioli; veal chops; salmon in lobster sauce; house-
made pastas and risotti.)

Caffè Italó, 312/902-2900; Fax: 312/902-4630;
Presidential Towers, 555 W. Madison St.
Chicon discount: 25 percent off food only.
Dinner, 5-9:45 p.m. M-Sa
Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F
3 hours free parking in Presidential Towers garage
after 5 p.m. with validation. Live music — piano bar.
Private room. [\$\$\$] (Classic and familiar Italian fare
such as veal marsala, pizza and pastas in an intimate
dining room. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Club Lago, 312/951-9444; Fax: 312/951-6028;
331 W. Superior St.
Chicon discount: 10 percent off.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Th; -9 p.m. F;
11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sa
Res. recommended F lunch and dinner, one day ahead.
Largest table: 30. Not wheelchair accessible. [\$\$\$]
(Opened in 1952, this Italian spot leans toward Tuscan
fare, plus the usual pastas, veal, steaks and salads.
Vegetarian dishes available.)

Nana's Cafe, 312/527-0300; Fax: 312/527-4204;
7 W. Kinzie St.
Closed Labor Day.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F; 5-10 p.m. Sa
Outdoor seating. Delivery. Live music F-Sa. [\$\$\$]
(Specialties: Farfalle with onions and sausage; square
noodles with tomato-basil sauce; chicken Vesuvio.
Italian sandwiches at lunch. Vegetarian dishes
available.)

Leona's Pizzeria, 312/867-0101; www.leonas.com;

646 N. Franklin St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F;

11 a.m.-midnight Sa-Su

[\$\$\$] (Leona's is a family-owned local chain, established in 1950. Fun, funky atmosphere and hearty Italian-American fare are the highlights here. Nothing brilliant, but tasty and filling — big sandwiches; romano chicken breast; pizza; pasta. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Nicolinas Cucina, 312/832-2600;

Fax: 312/832-2602;

NBC Tower, 455 N. City Front Plaza Drive

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Sa; -9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Carryout marketplace, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F

[\$\$\$\$] (One of the newer Italian restaurants.

Specialties: Flaming garlic shrimp; brick oven salmon with pomegranate glaze; veal *parmigiana*; cioppino.)

Sorriso Ristorante, 312/644-0283; Fax: 312/644-0318;

Quaker Tower, 321 N. Clark St., River Level

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th;

-11 p.m. F; 5-11 p.m. Sa

Outdoor seating. View. Live music — piano, F-Sa.

[\$\$\$\$] (An old-fashioned Italian restaurant offering river views and such menu items as baked shrimp, grilled pork chop with potatoes and peppers, pastas and salads.)

❗❗❗**Trattoria Parma**, 312/245-9933; 400 N. Clark St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa; 5-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (This pleasant, rustic dining room delivers very good, deceptively simple fare. Try the stuffed portobella; rigatoni with roast chicken; lamb chops; or *cacciucco*, fish stew, on Friday; and *panna cotta* for dessert.)

Tucci Benucch, 312/266-2500; Fax: 312/266-7702;

www.lettuceentertainyou.com;

900 N. Michigan Ave., Fifth Floor

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. M-Th;

-10:30 p.m. F-Sa; noon-9 p.m. Su

No smoking. Res. recommended Sa.

Largest table: 7. Discount parking with validation at

900 N. Michigan Self-Park. [\$\$\$] (This casual Italian restaurant is a pleasant spot for taking a break from Magnificent Mile shopping. Specialties: Salads, including an excellent chopped salad; pastas; chicken.)

Mangino's Italian Subs, 312/630-0005;

Fax: 312/630-0017; 27 E. Lake St.

Breakfast, Lunch, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. M-F; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa
No alcohol. Delivery. [\$\$] (Specialties: Subs piled with
Italian cold cuts; tuna- and chicken-salad sandwiches;
meatball sandwiches; Italian beef; pepper-and-egg
sandwiches on F. Vegetarian sandwiches available.)

Ricobene's Choice Pizza, 312/346-1446; 60 E. Lake St.

Lunch, Dinner 10 a.m.-6 p.m. M-F; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sa

No cc. No res. No parking. [\$] (Pronounced "rik o
bennys" and known for its Herculean breaded-steak
sandwich, coated with cheese, peppers and sauce.
There's a similar sandwich made with eggplant, too.
And people rave about the french fries. But you can
also get deep-dish pizza, hearty portions of pasta and
frozen Italian lemonade. The large dining room
resembles a '50s diner, with red-speckled chairs, black-
and-white tile floors, and walls full of automotive
memorabilia.)

Little Italy

Italian immigrants began flooding into Chicago's Near West Side in the 1890s. By the 1920s, they had become the Near West Side's largest ethnic group, settling between Polk and Taylor Streets near Jane Addams' Hull House to create a neighborhood full of Italian grocery stores, restaurants, churches, and civic organizations.

Beginning in the 1940s, however, Little Italy was almost fatally disrupted by construction of the University of Illinois campus, the Eisenhower Expressway and a public housing project built in the heart of it on Taylor Street. But several old-time businesses hung on, and in recent years, the area's proximity to United Center has prompted new ones to join them, returning the restaurant district, at least, to some of its former vibrancy.

The project is still there, however, creating a kind of no-man's land between the two ends of the Taylor Street restaurant row, so if you take transit, it's best to go in a group.

It's better to take a cab, but you can catch the Blue Line L at Dearborn and Washington, take it south to the Racine stop and walk about five blocks south to Taylor Street.

See also: Al's No. 1 Italian Beef (page 21) and Rosebud (page 23).

Francesca's on Taylor,

312/829-2828; Fax: 312/829-2831; 1400 W. Taylor St.

Dinner, 5-9 p.m. Su-M; -10 p.m. Tu-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. req. [\$\$\$] (A very popular Italian restaurant

known for its large portions and noisy dining room.

Specialties: Pizzas; mushroom risotto; veal; pastas.)

Pompei Little Italy, 312/421-5179; Fax: 312/421-8060;
1531 W. Taylor St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner,
7 a.m.-7 p.m. M-F; -5 p.m. Sa

No parking No res. [\$\$] (Opened as an Italian bakery in 1909, Pompei has morphed into a cafeteria-style purveyor of sandwiches, pizzas and pizza strudel, a thick, bready version of the traditional pie. This store is new, but just down the street from the original location.)

☺☺☺**Mario's Italian Lemonade**, 1068 W. Taylor St.

10 a.m.-midnight 7 days

No seating. [\$] (This frozen treat is the best reason to go to Taylor Street. It's enormously refreshing.

Mario's, which dates back to the 1950s, is such an institution that one Chicago TV station used it as part of its sign-off. Standing in line here is a multi-ethnic experience; people come from all over the city and the hottest days create traffic jams. Italian lemonade is not unique to Chicago, but as far as we can tell it's at its best here. At Mario's, the premier stand in the city, it's made from fresh lemon juice and pure cane sugar, with bits of lemon peel and pips in the mix to vouch for its authenticity. In what seems to be an innovation introduced by owner Mario DePaolo's father, there are numerous flavors. Note that they all start with the same lemon base, so choose a flavor you think blends well with lemon. Dick Smith likes coconut, which has flakes of real coconut in it, too. Most are flavored with Italian fruit syrups — do try the fresh-fruit flavors, such as cantaloupe, watermelon and tutti-frutti. If they have peach, that's the best.)

RoSal's Cucina, 312/243-2357; 1154 W. Taylor St.

Chicon discount: Free appetizer with dinner

Closed Labor Day.

Dinner, 4-9 p.m. M-Tu; -10 p.m. W-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended one day ahead.

Private room (20-30). [\$\$] (Inexpensive, old-fashioned Italian fare in a small, family-run restaurant.

Specialties: Fried ravioli; pork chops; seafood. Lunch buffet, \$5.95. "Big Night" 11-course dinner available for groups of 20-plus. Vegetarian dishes available. The reports on service have been mixed.)

Carm's Beef & Italian Ice, 312/738-1046;

Fax: 312/738-1051; www.carms.com; 1057 W. Polk St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F;

10 a.m.-11 p.m. Sa-Su [S] (Mary Carm opened a

grocery store here in 1929. Her family still runs the Italian beef stand, also serving house-made Italian ice.)

There is no sincerer love than the love of food.
— *George Bernard Shaw*

¡Olé!

Emilio's Tapas & Wine Bar, 312/467-7177;

215 E. Ohio St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;
-midnight F-Sa

Res. recommended 1 week ahead. Outdoor seating.

Largest table: 60. Private room (77).

Dress code: No tank tops. [\$\$\$\$] (A tapas bar, where you can order plate after plate of small dishes while sipping sherry or sangria. Don't miss the *tenera asada*, cold veal with raspberry vinaigrette; the *patatas ali-oli*, garlic potato salad; or the *queso de cabra*, goat cheese baked in tomato-basil sauce. You can have an American-style meal of appetizer, entree and dessert, but grazing through the tapas is more fun.)

☛☛☛ **Café Iberico**, 312/573-1510; Fax: 312/751-0098;

www.cafe-iberico.com; 737 N. LaSalle St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th; -1:30 a.m. F;
noon-1:30 a.m. Sa; -11 p.m. Su

Res. 6+ only, Su-Th only. [\$\$\$] (Very popular and noisy tapas bar serves excellent paella; *patatas ali-oli*, garlic potato salad; and sangria. The kitchen can be a little slow. Take-out deli offers Spanish sausage, cheeses, empanadas and tapas items. La Bodega del Iberico is in the basement.)

☛☛☛ **Cafe Ba-ba-reeba!** 773/935-5000; Fax: 773/935-0660;

www.lettuceentertainyou.com; 2024 N. Halsted St.

Chicon discount: Free dessert with meal.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; 5 p.m.-midnight Sa;
noon-10 p.m. Su

Lunch, noon-5 p.m. M-Sa

Brunch, noon-3 p.m. Su

Outdoor seating. Limited res., recommended.

Largest table: 20. [\$\$\$\$] (Chicago's first tapas bar, and arguably still the best. Don't miss the *tenera asada*, thinly sliced cold veal in raspberry vinaigrette, and the bacon-wrapped dates. Other good bets are soups; Spanish omelet; warm goat cheese in tomato sauce; paella. The Spanish-style brunch features a menu of tapas, plus ham and lamb dishes. There's a wide selection of sherries. Expect a wait for a table — though you might land seats in the bar more quickly — and be prepared for a din.)

For Latin lovers

¡Qué rico!

Chicago is home to more Mexicans than anywhere in the world that doesn't touch Mexico. The fare tends to lean more toward authentic regional and away from Tex-Mex and Southwestern-style fare. But the finest Mexican food in town is cooked by a gringo.

Frontera Grill and Topolobampo, 312/661-1434;

Fax: 312/661-1435; 445 N. Clark St.

Frontera: *Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Tu-Th; 5:20-11 p.m. F-Sa*

Lunch, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tu-Sa

Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sa

Res. 5+ only (you may wait anyway). [\$\$\$] (Excellent, authentic, Mexican fare and rude service. Long waits.

Specialties: Enchiladas; *queso fundido*; *sopa de ajo*,

roasted-garlic soup; salmon with pumpkinseed *molé*;

pork with *pasilla* sauce. A la carte brunch menu

includes *huevos motulenos*, *chilaquiles*. Said to be good for groups.)

Topolobampo: *Dinner, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Tu-Th;*

-10:30 p.m. F-Sa; Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Tu-F

Res. req. (you may wait anyway). [\$\$\$\$] (This

restaurant-within-a-restaurant, which serves more

elaborate cuisine than its sibling, has been called the

best Mexican restaurant in North America.. It has an

international reputation. The food is very different from

what you probably think of as Mexican food, richer,

more interesting, and excellent. The service doesn't

measure up, however. Specialties: Garlic soup; *ceviche*;

tequila-cured salmon; stuffed trout; lime tart.)

¡**Salpicon!** 312/988-7811; Fax: 312/988-7715;

www.salpiconrestaurant.com; 1252 N. Wells St.

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. M-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa

Brunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su

No smoking. Res. recommended two weeks ahead.

Largest table: 12. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$]

(This upscale Mexican offers authentic and elegant

cuisine far above the usual: Tortilla soup; shredded-

pork tostadas; tamales; lobster and octopus *ceviche*;

garlic shrimp; tequila-marinated halibut; chicken with

Oaxacan *molé*; Yucatan-style chicken; oranges

poached in cinnamon sauce. A la carte brunch features

huevos motulenos, *chilaquiles* and grilled steak with

spicy salsa. More than 80 premium tequilas; extensive

wine list. Vegetarian dishes available.)

- La Canasta**, 773/975-9667; 1119 W. Webster St.
Chicon discount: 25 percent off.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;
-midnight F-Sa
Largest table: 10. Live music. [\$\$] (Specialties: Fajitas; margaritas. Vegetarian dishes available.)
- La Margarita**, 312/902-4600; Fax: 312/902-4630;
 Presidential Towers, 555 W. Madison St.
Chicon discount: 25 percent off food only.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th;
-midnight F-Sa
Live music; TVs. 3 hours free parking in Presidential Towers garage after 5 p.m. with validation. [\$\$]
 (Mexican standards served amid the trees and plants in the patiolike atrium of Presidential Towers under soaring skylights.)
- Salvador's Barro Mexican Restaurant**, 312/346-8457;
 Fax: 312/606-0665; 73 E. Lake St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa
Res. 6+ only. (Tex-Mex fare in generous portions. Specialties: Whole red snapper, enormous burritos, enchiladas, tacos.)
- Vallarta Mexican Grill & Cantina**, 312/755-0420;
 Fax: 312/755-0424; 431 N. Wells St.
Chicon discount: 25 percent off food only.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -midnight F-Sa
 (Tex-Mex restaurant specializes in fajitas and margaritas and offers a tequila bar. Vegetarian dishes available.)
- Su Casa**, 312/943-4041; 49 E. Ontario St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;
-midnight F; noon-11:30 p.m. Sa; 4-9 p.m. Su
Res. recommended. Valet parking at dinner. [\$\$\$]
 (Standard Tex-Mex: Chicken fajitas; whole snapper; shrimp *chimichangas*; margaritas.)
- Taco Fresco**, 312/641-9912; www.tacofresco.com;
 218 S. Clark St.
Chicon discount: 50¢ off per order.
Lunch, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F
No cc. No res. Largest table: 6. Delivery. No parking. BYOB. [\$] (Taqueria offers healthy, fresh versions of Mexican dishes, including tacos, burritos and quesadillas. Vegetarian dishes available.)
- Lindas Margaritas**, 312/939-6600; 47 W. Polk St.
Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-10:30 p.m. M, W, F;
2:30-10:30 p.m. Tu, Sa-Su [\$\$] (The 45-ounce margaritas are the draw at this restaurant serving mainly Tex-Mex standards.)

*Whoever hears of fat men heading a riot,
or herding together in turbulent mobs?*

— *Washington Irving*

Nuevo Latino

Nacional 27, 312/664-2727; Fax: 312/649-0256;
www.lettuceentertainyou.com; 325 W. Huron St.
 Closed Labor Day. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.-9:45 p.m. M-Th;
 -10:30 p.m. F-Sa; 5-9:15 p.m. Su
 Res. recommended 1 week in advance.
 Largest table: 12. Outdoor seating.
 Dress code: No denim, shorts or sports shoes.
 Valet parking after 5 p.m.
 Salsa dancing, 11 p.m.-2 a.m. F-Sa. [\$\$\$\$] (The name
 stands for the 27 Latin-American countries from which
 the menu is supposedly drawn, but authenticity takes
 second place to the kitchen's flavorful experiments.
 Specialties: Black bean soup; sea bass stew; *ropa viejo*;
 nut-crusted snapper; braised beef short ribs; Argentine
 beef; *chimichurri* chicken; Latin drinks. Vegetarian
 dishes available.)

Club Macanudo, 312/642-2400; Fax: 312/642-3487;
 60 E. Walton St.
 Dinner, late, 4 p.m.-1 a.m. M-Th; -2 a.m. F-Sa
 Live music — jazz. [\$\$\$\$] (A cigar bar, with private
 humidors. For a place whose *raison d'être* is the stinky
 stogie, this place serves surprisingly sophisticated
 contemporary fare with a Latin edge . . . if you can
 taste it amid the cigar smoke. Actually, it's not that bad
 — an extensive filtration system keeps the haze at bay.)

Mambo Grill, 312/467-9797; Fax: 312/467-0634;
www.mambogrill.com; 412 N. Clark St.
 Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
 Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F
 Res. recommended 4 days ahead. Largest table: 14
 (call Billy Rollins, 312/467-9797 for groups larger than
 10). Live music — Latin jazz, 6-9 p.m. Th, Sa.
 Outdoor seating. Private room (10-30). [\$\$\$]
 (The dark, postmodern décor of this Pan-Latin eatery
 features what the restaurant calls "cyber-Chicano
 iconography." Specialties: *Ceviche*; seafood; roast
 chicken; house-made desserts such as *tres leches* and
 orange-caramel flan; Latin drinks; *tortas*, burritos, etc.
 at lunch. Several vegetarian dishes available.)

The Subcontinent

Chicago's major Indian/Pakistani center is along Devon Avenue on the Far North Side, but there are a few good options nearby.

Bukara, 312/943-0188; Fax: 312/751-8795;

2 E. Ontario St.

Dinner, 5:30-9:45 p.m. 7 days

Lunch buffet, 11:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m. M-F;

noon-2:45 p.m. Sa-Su

Res. recommended 1 hour ahead. Largest table: 15.

Private room (50). Discount parking with validation at

10 E. Ontario St. garage. [\$\$\$] (A fairly traditional

Indian restaurant offers excellent tandoori dishes and

good curries, plus 42 beers from 22 nations. Vegetarian

and vegan dishes available.)

Klay Oven, 312/527-3999; Fax: 312/527-1563;

414 N. Orleans St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tu-F; noon-3 p.m. Sa-Su

No parking. Res. recommended. [\$\$\$] (Upscale décor

and wide selection of beer and wine complement the

fare. Specialties: Rack of lamb, marinated shrimp;

lobster tails, tandoori mahi-mahi; tiger prawns.)

Gaylord India, 312/664-1700; 678 N. Clark St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 7 days [\$\$\$] (Northern

Indian specialties, such as vindaloo, biriyani, curried

lamb, tandoori chicken, vegetarian dishes, breads.)

Indian Garden, 312/280-4910; Fax: 312/280-4934;

www.theindiangarden.com;

247 E. Ontario St., Second Floor

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. 7 days

Lunch buffet, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Su-Th;

11 a.m.-3 p.m. F-Sa [\$\$\$] (Specialties: Vegetable

fritters; samosa; mulligatawney soup; crab and lobster

curries; chicken tikka masala.)

Jaipur Palace, 312/664-1700; Fax: 312/595-0135;

22 E. Hubbard St.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -10:30 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch buffet, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F; -3 p.m. Sa-Su

[\$\$\$] (Tandoori, vegetarian, and other Indian favorites

in an elegant setting. Specialties: Lamb mughlai

hiriyani; chicken vindaloo.)

*Preach not to others what they should eat,
but eat as becomes you, and be silent.*

— Epictetus

I am not a glutton — I am an explorer of food.
 — *Erma Bombeck*

Points East

Tizi Melleul, 312/670-4338; Fax: 312/670-4254;

www.tizimelloul.com; 531 N. Wells St.

Chicon discount: 10 percent off dinner excluding F-Sa.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-W, 5-10 p.m. Th;

-11 p.m. F-Sa; 5:30-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 1 week ahead. Largest table: 25.

Outdoor seating. Dress code: "Business casual."

Valet parking \$8 at lunch and dinner. [\$\$\$\$]

(Dramatic main dining room features Morocco-inspired contemporary cuisine. A second, round communal dining room features low banquettes and flatware-optional dishes. Specialties: *Quezbur*, roasted vegetable terrine; *xizzu*, carrot soup; *bisteeya*, saffron-scented chicken pie; lamb; variety of *tagines*, oven-cooked stews, served with couscous. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Olive Branch, 312/751-9600; 615 N. Wells St.

Chicon discount: 10 percent off on orders over \$20.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th; -10:30 p.m. F;

noon-10:30 p.m. Sa

Beer and wine only. Res. F-Sa only. Largest table: 60.

Delivery: \$15 after 5:30 p.m. [\$\$] (Lebanese restaurant

offers such specialties as *dolmeh*, stuffed grape leaves;

kebabs; couscous; *tajin*, stewed vegetables over rice;

shawarma, Lebanese gyros; *falafel*. Vegan and

vegetarian dishes available.)

Sayat Nova, 312/644-9159; Fax: 312/644-6324;

159 E. Ohio St.,

Dinner, 3:30-9:45 p.m. M-Sa; 3-9 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11-3:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended one day ahead. Largest table: 25.

No parking. [\$\$\$\$] (This popular Armenian eatery offers a different take on Mediterranean fare. Don't miss the *yalanchi sarma*, chilled vegetarian stuffed grape leaves; and *lamajoun*, Armenian pizza with lamb. They aren't as good here as those made by the parish women for St. Gregory Armenian Orthodox Church's annual festival, which was two weeks ago, but you won't find better in a restaurant. Other fare includes kebabs; hummus; *tabbouleh*; trout. Vegan and vegetarian dishes available.)

In America, even your menus have the gift of language.... 'The Chef's own Vienna Roast. A hearty, rich meat loaf, gently seasoned to perfection and served in a creamy nest of mashed farm potatoes and strictly fresh garden vegetables.' Of course, what you get is coleslaw and a slab of meat, but that doesn't matter because the menu has already started your juices going. Oh, those menus. In America, they are poetry.

— Laurie Lee

Something fishy

Seafood is expensive in Chicago — everything has to be flown in — but we get a great variety: As long as you're paying for air freight, you may as well get the best, and O'Hare Airport makes that easy to do. If you live somewhere where you can get great local fish or shellfish, you probably aren't looking for that here. But if you live in a landlocked region, you might want to try one of the seafood options below.

See also: **Bluepoint Oyster Bar** (page 41), **McCormick & Schmick's** (page 34).

☛☛☛**Nick's Fishmarket and Grill**, 312/621-0200; Fax: 312/621-1118; www.harman-nickolas.com; One First National Bank Plaza (Clark north of Monroe Street). Private rooms (30, 70, 120). Free parking with validation in First National garage (Clark St.); valet (\$8) at dinner. Closed Labor Day.
Dining room: Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F
Res. req. Dress code: Jacket "requested"; no denim or sports shoes. [\$\$\$\$\$\$]
Grill: Lunch, Dinner 11 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F; 5 p.m.-midnight Sa
Live music, dancing. [\$\$\$]
(Probably Chicago's best seafood house, with prices to match. Specialties: Ahi tuna; Dover sole; mahi-mahi; lobster; seafood crepe. Reasonably good choices for meat eaters, too. Excellent service. The ground-floor bar and grill offers lighter fare in a more casual atmosphere. If you need to visit the restroom, have a tip ready for the attendant.)

♥♥♥**Shaw's Crab House and Blue Crab Lounge,**

312/527-2722; Fax: 312/527-4740;
www.shaws-chicago.com; 21 E. Hubbard St.

Dinner, 5-9:30 p.m. M-Th;

-10:30 p.m. F-Sa; -10 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Live music in lounge-jazz/blues, Tu, Th.

Res. recommended. Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$\$] (Wide range of excellent fish and seafood dishes, but not too many options for meat eaters. Try the blue crab fingers as a starter. If they have it, the lobster bisque is wonderful. Other specialties: Fresh oysters; crab cakes; Dover sole; spicy shrimp. Don't miss the Key lime pie. Raw bar and lighter fare are available in the lounge.)

Catch 35, 312/346-3500; Fax: 312/346-3534;

Leo Burnett Building, 35 W. Wacker Drive

Closed for dinner on Labor Day.

Dinner, 5:15-9:15 p.m. M-Th; -9:45 p.m. F-Sa;

5-8:45 p.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 24 hours ahead. Largest table: 20.

Live music — piano bar 5-9 p.m. Tu-Sa.

Dress code: No T-shirts or cut-offs. Valet parking at dinner. [\$\$\$\$\$] (Asian touches highlight the seafood options at this Loop fish house. Specialties: Salmon in puff pastry; diver scallops; Key lime pie. Vegetarian dishes available.)

One of the few plays upon words that was not played first by (Forrest J.) Ackerman seems to have been fanquet as a term for a formal eating session for fans. This seems to have been another of the many (Walter J.) Daugherty creations. He planned, financed, and drew up the invitation list for what was planned as the first of a quarterly series of fanquets, then promoted the sale of 36 tickets at \$2.50 each. The event was held at the Pacificon-hall-to-be, the Park View Manor at 2200 West Seventh Street, on February 10, 1944. The 16-page program booklet said that it culminated 'several years of hopes for a science fiction banquet.' As a sort of practice for the war-delayed Pacificon, it attracted three genuine celebrities, A.E. van Vogt, Ross Rocklyne, and Claude Degler.

— Harry Warner Jr.

Vegetable love and kosher cuisine

As far as I know, there are no kosher or strictly vegetarian restaurants downtown. Below are some that are especially good bets for vegetarians and a couple that might be worth a trip for those who keep kosher.

Kosher meals may also be available through the Hyatt hotel — check with the food and beverage department.

Check the index for more places that claim to have vegetarian fare.

Gourmand Coffeehouse, 312/427-2610;

728 S. Dearborn St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 7 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;

-midnight F; 8 a.m.-midnight Sa; -11 p.m. Su

Beer, wine and coffee drinks only. Largest table: 20.

Outdoor seating. Poetry night, F. [\$] (A clean, sparse coffeehouse offering a full menu with mostly vegetarian options and desserts. Vegan dishes too.)

Reza's Restaurant and Brewery, 312/664-4500;

www.reza's.com; 472 W. Ontario St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-11:30 p.m. 7 days

Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Su

Free shuttle to restaurant. Free parking at 457 S. Erie from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Res. recommended 2+ F-Sa. [\$\$] (People rave about this Persian restaurant but I have to say I've never liked it much. The food's just OK and the service is, at best, efficient. It does, however, offer lots of inexpensive and vegetarian options. Other specialties: Lamb and other grilled items; lamb shank in tomato sauce; cornish hen in pomegranate sauce; grilled shrimp.)

Pattie's Quick and Lite, 312/751-7777;

Fax: 312/751-2766;

Chicago Place, 700 N. Michigan Ave., Eighth Floor

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. 7 days

No alcohol. No res. [\$] (Housed in an urban shopping mall's atrium food court, Pattie's specializes in eclectic light and healthy fare, including wraps, veggie burgers and pasta. Vegetarian dishes available.)

*Part of the secret of success in life
is to eat what you like and
let the food fight it out inside.*

— Mark Twain

So: maybe our traditional eating habits doom us to deadly disease, while a carefully chosen diet will spare us. On the other hand, maybe some scientists are just being officious, interfering experts, and their prescriptions for this oil, that bran, that relative of cabbage aren't necessarily any more trustworthy than some similarly eccentric fad diet.

— *Harold McGee*

Shallots, 773/755-5205; Fax: 773/755-5204;

2324 N. Clark St.

Dinner, 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th

Limited grill menu, dusk-1 a.m. Sa [\$\$\$\$\$] (If it weren't for the other customers in beards and sidelocks, dining with their hats on, you might not realize this is a kosher restaurant till you ask for cream for your coffee. The cuisine at this restaurant in trendy Lincoln Park is very contemporary American and Mediterranean, and couldn't be farther from what's usually thought of as kosher fare. Typical menu items include foie-gras and truffle ravioli; pomegranate-glazed lamb, porcini-dusted veal; Moroccan-style duck breast; and baked Alaska. Certified by the Chicago Rabbinical Council.)

Bugsy's Charhouse/Ken's Diner,

3353-55 W. Dempster St., Skokie

Chicon discount: Free dessert.

Will deliver a large order downtown for a \$30 charge.

Free parking. BYOB mevushal kosher wine. [\$\$\$\$]

Bugsy's: 847/675-BUGS;

Dinner, 5-9 p.m. Su-Th. Res. recommended.

Ken's: 847/679-2850;

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Su-Th. No res.

(Bugsy's is a 1920s-style steak joint named for a Jewish gangster. Ken's is a '50s-style diner serving hot dogs and hamburgers. Moshe Yudkowski says both are excellent. Both are certified glatt kosher by the Chicago Rabbinical Council. Skokie is about a half-hour's drive north; you can take the CTA Yellow Line to Skokie and then a PACE #250 bus east across Dempster.)

Caffeine and sugar fixes

Hey, so this isn't Seattle.

See also: **Bin 36** (page 106), **Caffè Classico** (page 38), **Chicago Flat Sammies** (page 32), **Faycurr's Fine Food** (page 113), **Gourmand Coffeehouse** (page 93), **J's Express** (page 36), **Konditorei** (page 38), **Sam's Wines & Spirits** (page 114) and **Taza** (page 102).

Ghirardelli Chocolate Shop & Soda Fountain,

312/337-9330; Fax: 312/337-9327;

830 N. Michigan Ave.

Dessert, 9 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Su-Th; -11:30 p.m. F-Sa

(The San Francisco chocolatier's only outpost east of the San Andreas fault. Ice cream treats and coffee drinks feature, along with the chocolates.)

Le Paris Croissant & Coffee Co., 312/263-1977;

Fax: 312/263-1964; 320 N. Michigan Ave.

Breakfast, Lunch, 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. M-Sa

No parking No res. Outdoor seating. (Specialties: French breads and pastries; soups; coffee; hot sandwiches such as *croque monsieur*, ham and cheese, and *madame*, turkey and cheese; cold sandwiches; salads; pizzas.)

Buckingham Cafe & Grill, 312/922-6847;

Buckingham Fountain, Grant Park

Lunch, Dinner, 10 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days [\$] (This outdoor cafe in the park features light fare, coffee drinks and desserts by the side of the Buckingham Fountain. The fountain, a Beaux Arts vision in Georgia pink marble embellished with bronze seahorses, was presented to the city in 1927, a gift from Kate Buckingham in honor of her brother, Clarence. At night, it's lit with 780 colored lights that interact with music recorded by the Grant Park Symphony and Chorus. The fountain sits at the approximate origination point for former U.S. Route 66.)

Starbucks Coffee Co., 312/541-1313,

202 N. Michigan Ave.

6 a.m.-8 p.m. M-F; 7:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Sa; 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Su. (If you don't know what they sell, you've been living on Mars.)

*Good communication is as stimulating as
black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.*

— *Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

The pause that refreshes

Americans often confuse afternoon tea and high tea, mistakenly thinking "high" means "high class," but the distinction comes from the tables used for the two meals: Elegant afternoon tea, with cakes and finger sandwiches, was served in the drawing room from low tea tables (similar to coffeetables), while hearty high tea was eaten in the kitchen at a regular-height dining table. High tea, usually eaten lieu of supper, might include roast pork, meat pie or "toad-in-the-hole" (sausages in batter) and a heavy suet pudding like "spotted dick."

Chicagoans turned on to afternoon tea in the early 1980s, when Britain's Prince Charles visited Marshall Field's on State Street, then owned by British-American Tobacco, and the store's Walnut Room began serving afternoon tea regularly. (Now owned by Dayton-Hudson, Field's no longer has tea time.)

Below are a few places to take tea in Chicago. Besides a complete afternoon tea service, most also offer a la carte tea items, as well as champagne or sherry to accompany your tea. Reservations are recommended.

See also: Fairmont Hotel Lobby Lounge (page 37).

The Greenhouse, 312/573-5154,

Ritz-Carlton Chicago, Water Tower Place,
160 E. Pearson St.

Lunch buffet, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-Sa

Tea, 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. M-Sa; 1:30-5:30 p.m. Su

Appetizers, Dessert, -1 a.m. Su-Th; -2 a.m. F-Sa

Res. req. for lunch, F-Sa; tea, Sa-Su.

Dress code: "Business casual." [\$\$] (American fare features in a lunch buffet aimed at businessmen and shoppers. Vegetarian dishes available. Afternoon tea, \$18.95, offers a choice of 20 looseleaf blends served in Wedgwood china, with tea sandwiches, scones with Devonshire cream and lemon curd, pastries and tea breads.)

Great Street Restaurant and Bar, 312/372-7200, Ext. 60;

Renaissance Chicago Hotel, 1 W. Wacker Drive

Dinner, 4-10:30 p.m. 7 days

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 7 days

Breakfast, 6-10:30 a.m. 7 days

Tea, 3-5 p.m. Sa-Su

Discount valet parking with restaurant validation.

View. [\$\$\$] (Terrific city views and weekend afternoon tea are the main reasons to visit this casual hotel restaurant. Afternoon tea in this sunny room features tea sandwiches, scones with Devonshire cream, pastries and tea, for \$14.50. Lunch offers hot and cold buffets.)

??Seasons Lounge, 312/280-8800 Ext. 2041;
Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware Place
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-Sa
Tea, 3-5 p.m. M-Sa
Dessert, 5 p.m.-1 a.m. Su-F; -2 a.m. Su
Live music, Sa. [\$\$] (An elegant watering hole for martinis, ports, madeiras and cognacs, also serving a lovely afternoon tea — \$18.75, with tea, sandwiches, scones and pastries.)

Palm Court, 312/787-2200 Ext. 28; www.hilton.com;
Drake Hotel, 140 E. Walton Place
Tea, 1:30-5 p.m. 7 days
3 hours discount valet parking with validation. [\$\$]
(Afternoon tea, \$18.50, features an assortment of finger sandwiches, such as egg salad and tomato-cucumber, accompanying Twinings teas, flavored teas and tisanes, along with scones, fruit breads and pastries, as harpists or other musicians entertain.)

Atwood Cafe, 312/368-1900; Fax: 312/357-2875;
Hotel Burnham, 1 W. Washington St.
Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. 7 days
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa
Breakfast, 7-10 a.m. M-F; 8-10:30 a.m. Sa
Brunch, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Su
Tea, 3-5 p.m. 7 days
Outdoor seating. Res. recommended. [\$\$\$\$] (The petite dining room of a new hotel in the recently restored Reliance Building, a National Historic Landmark built in 1894 and designed by Daniel Burnham. Chef Heather Terhune offers contemporary takes on American comfort food, with such specialties as duck and manchego cheese quesadilla with ancho-chili sauce; pot pies; ahi tuna salad; grilled pork chop with sweet potato, apple gratin and sautéed spinach; roasted-banana and white-chocolate bread pudding. A la carte brunch items include malted waffle with pecan butter, poached eggs over sweet-potato chicken hash, three-cheese omelet and sandwiches. The small dining room offers loveseats as well as chairs for cozy dining, especially nice for afternoon tea. The Americanized afternoon tea, \$15, features tiny finger sandwiches such as a mini bagel with lox, egg salad and BLT, plus tiny scones with lemon curd and preserves, brownies and other sweets. Fancifully named teas are listed in a storybook menu full of quotations and oddities. Get the right seat along the north windows and you can look out at the alien mural across the street.)

*The secret of staying young is to live honestly,
eat slowly, and lie about your age.*

— Lucille Ball

The culinary art depends on the psychological state of society ... wherever life is easy and comfortable, where the future is assured, it always experiences considerable development. On the contrary, wherever life and its cares preoccupy the mind of man he cannot give to good cheer more than a limited place. Oftener than not, the necessity of nourishing themselves appears to person swept up in the hurly-burly of business not as a pleasure but as a chore. They consider lost the time spent at table and demand only one thing: to be served quickly.

— *Auguste Escoffier*

Joy of Ireland, 312/664-7290;

Chicago Place, 700 N. Michigan Ave., Third Floor
Lunch, Tea, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. M-F; -5 p.m. Sa;

10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Su [\$\$] (This cozy tea room attached to Irish-goods shop, seating about 20, offers pots of tea, pastries, fresh breads and scones, and light lunch items such as cucumber- and-cream-cheese sandwiches with mixed green salad and Scottish smoked salmon with *crème fraîche*, all served on elegant Wedgwood and Belleek china.)

♥♥♥**Villa Kula American Tearoom**, 773/728-3114;

Fax: 773/728-3290; www.villakula.com;

4518 N. Lincoln Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, Tea, Dessert,

11 a.m.-11 p.m. Su-M, W-Th; -midnight F-Sa

Live music — jazz, F-Su evenings. Res. 10+ only.

Parking in pay lot across the street. Outdoor seating.

[\$\$] (Named after fictional heroine Pippi

Longstocking's home, this charming Prairie-style tearoom serves "afternoon" tea — with scones, tea sandwiches and pastries — all day, as well as salads, quiches and full-size sandwiches, in addition to a wide variety of black, green, oolong and white teas and tisanes. The "tea party" price is \$10 from 2 to 5 p.m. weekdays, and \$15 at other times. Bulk teas and accouterments also for sale. It's a schlep to get there, but it's so lovely I couldn't resist including it.)

*A complete lack of caution
is perhaps one of the true signs
of a real gourmet....*

— M.F.K. Fisher

In the night kitchen

If Chicago has a drawback as a restaurant city, it's that it isn't a late-night town. The City That Works goes to bed early. Below are a few reliable late-night restaurants. See the index under "late-night" for more places that stay open till midnight or later. Also, the hotels offer 24-hour room service.

❖❖❖**Pasha**, 312/397-0100; Fax: 312/397-0164;

642 N. Clark St.

*Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-3 a.m. Su-F; 5 p.m.-4 a.m. Sa
Live music, Tu; DJ, dancing F-Sa. Outdoor seating.*

[\$\$\$\$\$] (Hype touting this as a nightspot scared me off at first, but besides the splashy lounge, there's actually quite a nice little dining room and a great, if costly, place for dressy late-night dining. The contemporary, Continental fare includes such items as chilled seafood salad, nice steamed mussels, venison with raspberry sauce and an unusual risotto studded with shrimp and fresh strawberries. Don't miss the "Black Passion" dessert, a chocolate cup filled with fresh fruit macerated in pepper vodka.)

Tempo Café, 312/943-4373; 6 E. Chestnut St.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late, 24 hours, 7 days
No cc. Outdoor seating. No parking. [\$\$] (A very pleasant and attractive dining room, a dressed-up Grecian diner, offers sandwiches, salads, breakfast all day, Greek-style chicken.)*

Smith & Wollensky and Wollensky's Grill,

Fax: 312/670-0997; Marina City, 318 N. State St.

Restaurant: 312/670-9900

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days

Outdoor seating. View. [\$\$\$\$\$]

Grill: 312/670-9596

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 a.m. 7 days

No res. View. [\$\$\$\$\$]

(The steaks are just OK at this New York import just outside the futuristic Marina City Towers (see page 106) but the lobster-cocktail appetizer — a whole chilled lobster — is a great bargain. Other specialties include crab cakes and a pork shank. The Grill, open late, offers a lighter, more limited menu, but also has the lobster.)

☛☛☛ **Mrs. Park's Tavern**, 312/280-8882;

DoubleTree Guest Suites, 198 E. Delaware Place
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 a.m. 7 days
Breakfast, 7-10:30 a.m. 7 days

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (A sister to Park Avenue Cafe, this is one of the better options for late-night dining in town. The dining room is pleasant and the menu offers American standards such as pork chops and meatloaf, with contemporary twists. Nice wine list, too.)

Miller's Pub Restaurant, 312/645-5377;

www.millerspub.com; 134 S. Wabash Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11 a.m.-1 a.m. 7 days

No parking. Largest table: 25. Outdoor seating.

Discount parking with validation at 55 E. Monroe St.

after 4 p.m. [\$\$\$] (The food, American and Greek, isn't that great, but they're open late. Best bets are steaks, prime rib, baby back ribs, sandwiches, omelets. Smoky saloon atmosphere with lots of autographed photos of celebs who've visited since the place opened in 1950.)

Bar Louie West Loop, 312/207-0500; Fax: 312/207-5447;

www.barlouieamerican.com; 123 N. Halsted St.

Chicon discount: Free cocktail with meal.

Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Su-F;
-2:30 a.m. Sa

No parking. [\$\$] (Late-night food in a bar, one of a chain, with salads, pizza and oversized Italian-style sandwiches such as muffalettas and the "Vesuvio melt.")

Rock n' Roll McDonald's, 312/664-7940;

Fax: 312/573-1171; 600 N. Clark St.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, late, 24 hours 7 days

Free parking. [\$] (The busiest McDonald's location in the 48 contiguous United States. Its collection of memorabilia from the 1950s and '60s includes Elvis Presley on the cover of Time magazine, a plaster cast of the Beatles and an authentic 1958 Corvette. But the menu's the same as at every other McDonald's.)

It takes a certain kind of mind to see beauty in a hamburger bun. Yet is it any more unusual to find grace in the texture and softly carved silhouette of a bun than to reflect on the hackles of a fishing fly? Or the arrangements and textures on a butterfly's wing? Not if you are a McDonald's man.

— Ray Kroc

Whatever

California Pizza Kitchen, 312/787-6075; 52 E. Ohio St.,
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa
[\$\$] (A branch of the nationwide chain of so-called gourmet pizzerias. It's fine stuff as long as you don't think it's really pizza. I think of it as flatbread. My ruder half calls it "crap on a cracker." Peking duck is my favorite — ask for extra *hoisin* sauce — but 26 other options include Thai chicken, vegetarian with Japanese eggplant, goat cheese with roasted, sweet and spicy Italian sausage and *tandoori* chicken. There are pastas, too. On the other hand, wouldn't you be embarrassed to admit that you came to one of the pizza meccas of America and ordered ersatz pizza?)

Marciello's Down and Under Deli and Pizzeria,
312/787-6236; 308 W. Erie St.
Closed Labor Day. Dinner, 5 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th;
-10 p.m. F; 3-10 p.m. Sa
Lunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F. Breakfast, 8-10 a.m. M-F
No parking. Beer and wine only. Delivery. [\$\$]
(Specialties: Thin-crust pizza, such as barbecue chicken pizza with a sweet sauce and caramelized onions; Italian sandwiches; and pasta. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Rock Bottom Brewery and Restaurant, 312/755-9339;
Fax: 312/755-1678; www.rockbottom.com;
1 W. Grand Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-midnight 7 days
Outdoor seating. View. [\$\$] (The eclectic fare at this brewpub runs to steaks, burgers, pasta, and Tex-Mex items such as quesadillas and enchiladas.)

Narcisse: Champagne Salon & Caviar Bar,
312/787-2675; Fax: 312/787-0128; 710 N. Clark St.
Closed Labor Day. Dinner, late,
5 p.m.-1 a.m. Su-F; -2 a.m. Sa
Limited res. Largest table: 10. Private room.
Dress code: No denim or shorts. [\$\$\$\$] (This night spot serves "European tapas," oysters, caviar and champagne.)

Spago, 312/527-3700; Fax: 312/822-0369;
www.wolfgangpuck.com; 520 N. Dearborn Parkway
Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa
Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F
Res. req. [\$\$\$\$] (A noisy outpost of the L.A.-based chain serving Wolfgang Puck's signature fusion fare. Specialties: Shanghai lobster; peppered tuna; smoked pork chop.)

*Now to the fanquet we slog; now for the
crottles and greeps! Now for the blushing red
blog! Now for the marshmallow Peeps!*

Taza, 312/425-9988; Fax: 312/425-9995;
39 S. Wabash Ave.

*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days
No cc. No res. No parking. [\$] (Counter-service
restaurant, the first U.S. branch of a Saudi-based chain,
offers great charcoal-grilled Amish chicken with an
eclectic choice of dipping sauces, and sides such as
East Indian rice; Southern-style coleslaw; and Belgian
fried potatoes. They also offer fresh-squeezed fruit and
vegetable juices; salads; and breakfast items such as
espresso drinks, bagels and muffins. The name means
“fresh” in Arabic.)*

Mashed Potato Club, 312/255-8579; 316 W. Erie St.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. M-F;
5:30 p.m.-1 a.m. Sa; 4-10:30 p.m. Su
Limited res. [\$\$\$] (Specialties: 104 mashed-potato
dishes with various toppings; steaks; chops; meatloaf;
seafood.)*

West Egg Cafe and Rotisserie, 312/280-8366;

Fax: 312/280-1855; 620 N. Fairbanks Court,
*Breakfast, Lunch, 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 days [\$] (Branch
of a chain of breakfast parlors offers good but oddly
named specialties such as “bluegerm” pancakes and
“hogged fowl” sandwiches.)*

foodlife, 312/335-3663; Fax: 312/335-3664;

*www.lettuceentertainyou.com;
Water Tower Place, 875 N. Michigan Ave.
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days
Breakfast, 7:30-9:30 a.m. 7 days
Carryout market, 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. 7 days
Res. 10+ only. Largest table: 20. Private room.
Discount parking after 5 p.m. with validation in Water
Tower Place garage. [\$\$] (An upscale food court. They
issue a “credit card” at the entrance, and you use it to
pay for your various selections at the food stations,
settling up on the way out. The eclectic fare ranges
from Asian to Italian to barbecue — all very good and
freshly prepared. Vegetarian dishes available.)*

Zoop, 312/957-1000; Fax: 312/957-1001;

*www.eatzoop.com; 212 W. Van Buren St.
Lunch, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. M-F
Delivery. No smoking. [\$] (Soup bar offers a daily
changing menu including four chilled soups, salads and
desserts. Vegetarian soups available.)*

Riverwalk Cafés, Lower Wacker Drive

Look for canopied stairway entrances on Upper Wacker. Handicapped access is problematical but possible via Lower Wacker. Only Porta-johns, though.

(These open-air cafes on Lower Wacker Drive along the riverfront from Wabash Avenue to Wells Street are each outposts of city restaurants. It can be fun to sit here and watch the boats and gondolas go past on the river. Don't expect San Antonio, however. "Riverwalk" is something of a misnomer, since you can't actually walk between them along the river, but have to either climb stairs at the bridges or cut through to the grungy and somewhat dangerous lower street.)

O'Brien's Restaurant and Bar,

Wabash Avenue to State Street

Lunch, Dinner, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days

(American pub food: Shrimp, half-pound burgers, steak sandwiches, New York strip steaks, salads, smoothies.)

Cyrano's Bistrot & Wine Bar,

State Street to Dearborn Street

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. 7 days

(Light, French-influenced bistro fare: Pâté, salads, ratatouille, *crème brûlée* and other French fare. French wines by the glass.)

Lalo's, Dearborn Street to Clark Street

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days

(Mexican: Enchiladas, tortitas, flautas, tamales and other Mexican fare. Sangria and Mexican beers.)

Cubby Bear, LaSalle Street to Wells Street

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. 7 days

(American bar food: Salads, sandwiches, pizza.)

In the lexicon of lip-smacking, an epicure is fastidious in his choice and enjoyment of food, just a soupçon more expert than a gastronome; a gourmet is a connoisseur of the exotic, taste buds attuned to the calibrations of deliciousness, who savors the masterly techniques of great chefs; a gourmand is a hearty bon vivant who enjoys food without truffles and flourishes; a glutton overindulges greedily, the word rooted in the Latin for 'one who devours.'

— *William Safire*

Food-plus

These places are more than mere restaurants.

Skiffy interest

Hudson Club, 312/467-1947; Fax: 312/467-9301,
504 N. Wells St.

Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Outdoor seating. Private room. [\$\$\$\$] (The designer thought he was modeling the décor after this restaurant's namesake automobile, but we think it resembles a scene from "Metropolis." Good, if not earth-shattering, contemporary fare features cheese and caviar flights; lobster "martini"; poached salmon; striped bass; poppyseed-coated grouper; vegetable strudel; lamb loin; wood-roasted chicken. Drink, rather than food, is perhaps the best reason to come here — Hudson Club offers 100-plus wines by the glass, and a variety of tasting flights. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Eerie World Cafe, 312/644-9900; Fax: 312/644-9931;
www.eerie.com; 51 E. Ohio St.

Chicon discount: Gift from the Eerie World Shoppe.

*Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Su-Th; -midnight F-Sa
Res. 15+ only, recommended 1 day ahead.*

Largest table: 20. Discount parking with validation at 10 E. Ontario St. [\$\$\$] (Mad-scientist, horror-movie theme complete with TV sets screening trailers from classic monster flicks, character actors, animatronic figures, souvenir shop and "The Attraction," a 15-minute "Experiment in Terror." It's aimed at 12-year-olds — a kind of Rainforest Cafe for the junior goth set — but it can be fun, and the food is better-than-average fern-bar-quality fare. Specialties: Shrimp and crab cake; burgers; barbecue brisket sandwich; ribs pastas; tuna steak; frozen cheesecake mousse sundae; ice-cream drinks. Vegetarian dishes available. And, of course, a gift shop.)

Star Voyager, 847/688-0499, *starvoyager.com*;

Villager Lodge, 2311 Green Bay Road, North Chicago
Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. 7 days

(This science-fiction theme restaurant, attached to a motel, offers a gift shop, computer game room, "Star Bar" and three dining rooms with views of the galaxy. The décor is supposed to be terrific, but I have no idea what the food is like. It's opened and then closed at least a couple of times, so call to see if it's currently in business before you schlep up there — it's at least a 40-minute drive.)

Mars 2112, 847/885-1427, Woodfield Mall, Schaumburg
(The second location of a New York-based science-fiction theme restaurant, scheduled to open in the northwest suburbs, about a 40-minute drive away, on Aug. 30. Diners board a 32-seat “spacecraft” for a virtual-reality ride to Mars. The food, however, is earthly, American fern-bar fare with cutesy names like “Martian Mama’s chicken breast,” “terraforming seared tuna salad,” “quasar quesadilla” and “cosmic chaos cheesecake.” Call to be sure they actually opened on time and watch for possible promotions at Chicon. At press time, they were considering chartering a bus. If not, your best bet, if you can’t drive out there, is to take the L to O’Hare and a cab or a shuttle bus to Woodfield from there.)

Lovells of Lake Forest, 847/234-8013;

Fax: 847/234-5451; www.lovellsoflakeforest.com

915 S. Waukegan Road, Lake Forest

Dinner, 5-9 p.m. Su-Th; -10 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 7 days

Brunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Su

*Res. req. Free parking. View. [\$\$\$\$] (Yes, space fans, it’s **that** Lovell. What do you do when you’re a famous astronaut and your son wants to be a chef? You open a restaurant. Apollo XIII astronaut James Lovell Jr. and his son, Chef James Lovell III, opened this place last year. The décor is said to be tasteful, with the abounding NASA memorabilia, including model rockets, nicely integrated into what’s otherwise a stately French Colonial mansion. The fare is American, a bit updated, with an emphasis on red meat. “The food is outstanding,” says Steven Silver, a self-described “plain food” fan, adding that he thought it overpriced. Specialties include cold peeky-toe crab cake; shrimp Creole; roast duck with bosc pear; rack of lamb with dijon herb crust; and beef fillet with raisins and cognac. The temptation to kitsch seems to have been resisted in the menu, except in the bar, which offers potables with names like Full Moon, Space Cadet, Andromeda, Sea of Tranquility and the Tangarita, made with real you-know-what. No word on how much time the great man actually spends there. This is at least 40 minutes’ drive north.)*

*Eat slowly; only men in rags
and gluttons old in sin
Mistake themselves for carpet-bags
And tumble victuals in.*

— Sir Walter Raleigh

Starship Subs, 708/771-3016; Fax: 708/771-3529;
 Soup-of-the-Stardate hot line: 708-366-SOUP;
starshiprestaurant.com;

7618 W. Madison St., Forest Park

Chicon discount: 10 percent off.

Closed Labor Day. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner,

8 a.m.-7 p.m. M-Sa; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Su

No res. BYOB. [\$] (“Full space theme restaurant” offers hanging models and pictures. Sub shop’s “Star Trek” theme extends to such items as the DeForest pork sub and the “cheezy star” sandwich. Many house-made soups daily. Call the hotline to hear the soup of the stardate. Vegetarian dishes available. They’ll deliver a large order to the Hyatt for a \$20 fee. The catering menu includes “The Satellite,” a large, round Sputnik of a sandwich, layered with deli meats and cheese and studded with olives, which serves 10. Of course, if you order in, you don’t get to see the décor. Take the Blue Line L to Forest Park.)

Marina City Towers

Marina City is one of Chicago’s most modernistic buildings, although it was built in 1967. When the two round apartment towers were built, the complex was touted as a “city within a city,” incorporating stores, a health center, a skating rink, a bowling alley, a theater, boat slips and offices. Marina City is probably most familiar to fans of the “Blues Brothers,” but we think it looks like the place where George Jetson lives.

The complex chouses several restaurants, including **Smith & Wollensky** (*page 99*).

Bin 36, 312/755-WINE; Fax: 312/755-9410;
www.bin36.com

Marina City Towers, 339 N. Dearborn St.

Private room (75-100).

Cellar dining room: *Dinner, 5-10 p.m. M-Th;*

-11 p.m. F-Sa; -9 p.m. Su; Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F

Res. req. Dress code: “Business casual” — no denim.

Tavern: *Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-midnight M-W;*

-1:30 a.m. Th-Sa; -11 p.m. Su. No res.

Coffee bar: *Breakfast, 6:30-10 a.m. M-F;*

7 a.m.-noon Sa-Su. No res.

(A huge wine list, offered in tastings and flights as well as by the glass, is the reason to come here, but the food’s good too. Chef Bernard Laskowski’s fare runs toward comfort food with a twist with items such as gnocchi with mushroom ragout and spicy Southwestern “*osso bucco*.” Lighter fare is served in the tavern, and a retail store lets you take home your favorite bottlings. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available.)

The House of Blues,

312/527-2583; Fax: 312/527-3072; www.hob.com
Marina City Towers, 329 N. Dearborn Parkway
Lunch, Dinner, late, 11:30 a.m.-midnight M-Sa
Gospel brunch, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Su;
brunch res. req. with advance payment
Restaurant: *Res. recommended. [\$\$\$]*
Foundation Room: *Res. req. [\$\$\$\$\$]*

(Largest of the national chain of music clubs. The restaurant is separate from the concert hall and serves a variety of Southern-influenced specialties: "Blues Burger"; smoked smothered pork chops in Dijon mustard gravy; jambalaya; crawfish and shrimp etouffée; Cajun meatloaf; cedar-plank salmon with Dijon glaze. Brunch offers a Southern-style buffet with house-smoked barbecued chicken, biscuits and gravy, cheese grits, jambalaya, catfish bites and fresh-baked cornbread, as well as traditional items including bacon, eggs and waffles, while local gospel choirs perform. The upstairs Foundation Room offers extravagantly rococo décor and elegant New American cuisine. A private club, it was temporarily opened to the public after the arrival of a new chef. However, she left after a short stay, and it's anyone's guess what will happen now. Specialties of the interim chef include cowboy steak, monkfish, and Ibarra chocolate cake.)

Theme restaurants

Rainforest Cafe, 312/787-1501; Fax: 312/787-1504;
www.rainforestcafe.com; 605 N. Clark St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. M-Th; -11 p.m. F;
10:30 a.m.-midnight Sa; -10 p.m. Su [\$\$] (Just look for the giant frog. This restaurant, part of a national chain, will make your hair frizz — literally. A two-story waterfall and misters designed to enhance the rainforest effect make it extremely humid inside. The scary thing is that this place won the Chicago Visitor's Choice Award for Best Restaurant in 2000. But kids love it. There are talking, moving animatronic animals, huge tropical fish tanks and, naturally, a large gift shop. Eclectic, tropics-influenced fern-bar fare includes pastas, sandwiches and salads.)

Hard Rock Cafe, 312/943-2252; Fax: 312/943-8174;
www.hardrock.com; 63 W. Ontario St.

Lunch, Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. M-Th;
-11:30 p.m. F; -midnight Sa; -10 p.m. Su [\$\$\$] (Part of the national chain of tourist traps. Burgers, barbecue chicken; ribs amid rock 'n' roll memorabilia.)

A restaurant is a fantasy — a kind of living fantasy in which diners are the most important members of the cast.

— *Warner LeRoy*

Art

Art Institute of Chicago, 312/443-3543;

111 S. Michigan Ave.

Garden Restaurant/Court cafeteria:

Lunch, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. M, W-Sa;

-7 p.m. Tu; noon-3:30 p.m. Su

No res. Outdoor seating only. [\$\$] (A casual, outdoor café serving things like chicken salad, grilled fish, sushi and ice cream, good for a light lunch. Enter from the east entrance, go downstairs and left to the white doors.)

Restaurant on the Park:

Lunch, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-Sa

View. No smoking. [\$\$\$\$] (An elegant, intimate dining room serving Continental fare.)

Puck's at the MCA, 312/397-4034;

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave.

Lunch, Dinner, 10-7:30 p.m. Tu; -5 p.m. W-Su

Outdoor seating. [\$\$\$] (An outpost of Spago, serving light fare like three-bean salad with marinated shrimp, lime and cilantro; smoked shrimp pizza with sun-dried tomatoes, leeks and cilantro; grilled salmon paillard with braised autumn vegetables provençal. Carry-out counter has sandwiches, salads and snacks.)

Music

See the index for more places with music.

Andy's Jazz Club and Restaurant,

312/642-6805; 11 E. Hubbard St.

Largest table: 10.

Dinner, 4:30-11:45 p.m. M-F; -12:30 a.m. Sa;

6 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Su

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F

Res. recommended 1 week ahead for prime dinner hours. Live music — jazz — at lunch and dinner

[\$\$\$ — plus a cover charge at night; it varies but \$10 is typical on the weekend; no cover at lunch.]

(One of Chicago's better jazz clubs, which also serves a full menu. The food is pretty regular American — sandwiches, steaks, seafood, pasta, pizza — but it's not what you come here for. The gritty bar atmosphere is adorned with photos of jazzmen and banners from Chicago's Jazz Festival. It's pretty smoky — there's a nonsmoking section but it doesn't matter.)

Buddy Guy's Legends, 312/427-0333;

Fax: 312/427-1192; www.buddyguys.com;
754 S. Wabash Ave.

Dinner, late, 5 p.m.-midnight M-Th, Sa;

4 p.m.-midnight F; 6 p.m.-midnight Su

No res. No parking. Live music — blues 7 days. [\$\$\$]

(One of Chicago's top blues clubs, owned by the famed guitarist. The kitchen serves up bar food and Cajun and Creole fare: catfish bites, spicy frogs' legs, crawfish etouffée, chicken and sausage jambalaya, ribs, burgers, peanut Buddy pie. Vegetarian dishes available.)

Shopping

Marshall Field's, 312/781-1000; 111 N. State St.

Restaurants in Marshall Field's department store are:

The Walnut Room: *Lunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 7 days [\$\$]*

(An elegant, white-tablecloth lunchroom serving classic American food that's been a tradition for Chicagoans since 1907. Specialties: Meatloaf, pot pies, smoked salmon penne; pork loin with pear sauce; petite filet.)

7 on State: *Lunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Sa [\$]*

(A kind of gourmet food court featuring an eclectic mix of soups, noodles, skewers, grills, etc.)

Frango Cafe: *Lunch, dessert, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. 7 days [\$]*

(Light fare such as soups, sandwiches and ice cream.)

Hinky Dink Kenna's: *Lunch, 11 a.m.-5:45 p.m. M-Sa*

[\$\$] (Tavern named for the notorious Chicago publican and politician serves soups, salads, and entrees like meatloaf and pastas.)

Cafeteria: *Lunch, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. M-Sa; -5 p.m. Su [\$]*

(Classic American cafeteria fare: Meat and two veg., plus salads, soups, hamburgers and pastas.)

RL, 312/475-1100; Fax: 312/266-9953;

115 E. Chicago Ave.

Dinner, 5-10 p.m. Su-Th; -11 p.m. F-Sa

Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. M-Sa

Brunch, 1-8 p.m. Su

No parking. [\$\$\$\$] (A pricey Italian spot owned by designer Ralph Lauren, adjoining his store. Specialties: Grilled scallops and artichokes; mushroom risotto; pastas; chocolate mousse. A la carte brunch includes lobster omelet, risotto carbonara, Tuscan sandwich with serrano ham and buffalo mozzarella.)

Torpedo Joe's, 312/551-1515; Fax: 312/551-0537,

Old Navy, 35 N. State St., Second Floor

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Sa;

11 a.m.-6 p.m. Su

No smoking. No res. No parking. [\$] (This cafeteria-style eatery inside a clothing store serves chili, submarine sandwiches, smoothies, soups, coffee and some desserts, plus fruit and pastries at breakfast.)

American Girl Place Café, 312/943-9400;
www.americangirl.com; 111 E. Chicago Ave.
Closed for dinner on Labor Day.
Dinner, 5:30-7:30 p.m. 7 days;
Lunch, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 7 days;
Tea, 2:30 and 4 p.m. 7 days
Res. recommended 1-2 weeks ahead. Wine only. No parking. [\$\$\$] (This restaurant in the huge American Girl Place doll store offers special seating for one's doll. If you have a young daughter or granddaughter, you probably know all about American Girl. If not, you probably don't want to go there.)

More fast food

Asian Express, 312/201-8618; 65 E. Wacker Place
Au Bon Pain, 312/419-1629, 180 N. Michigan Ave.
Boston Market, 312/726-7900, 55 E. Wacker Place
Boudin Sourdough Bakery & Cafe,
 312/565-2323, Illinois Center
Burger King, 312/861-1305, Illinois Center
Burrito Beach, 312/372-6272, 27 E. Lake St.
Corner Bakery,
 ? 312/201-0805, Chicago Cultural Center,
 78 E. Washington St.;
 ? 312/431-7600, 224 S. Michigan Ave.;
 ? 312/644-8100. 516 N. Clark St.
Dunkin Donuts, 312/938-0400, Illinois Center;
 312/372-5659, 67 E. Randolph St. *24 hours.*
Jaffa Bagel, 312/263-9541, 20 N. Michigan Ave.
McDonald's, 312/236-1529, 220 N. Michigan Ave.
Mr. Submarine, 312/332-2229, 52 E. Lake St.
Sbarro Italian Eatery,
 ? 312/263-3334, 195 N. Dearborn St.;
 ? 312/856-9508, Illinois Center
Subway Sandwiches & Salads, 312/558-9765,
 59 E. Randolph St.
Taco Bell, 312/558-9168, 6 E. Lake St.
Wendy's, 312/263-7419, 203 N. LaSalle St.

*When I get a little money, I buy books.
 And if there is any left over, I buy food.
 — Deciderius Erasmus*

Let your fingers do the walking

Below are some services that offer food delivery to this area. Delivery options change rapidly, so I have not troubled to list which service delivers what — call and ask. The hotel concierges and the Chicon information desk also have delivery menus. See the index for references to individual restaurants that deliver.

If you're ordering food delivered, it's helpful to know these addresses: **Hyatt Regency Chicago**, 151 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago IL 60601, 312/565-1234; **Fairmont Hotel**, 200 N. Columbus Drive, Chicago IL 60601, 312/565-8000; **Swissôtel Chicago**, 323 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601, 312/565-0565.

Don't forget to tip the delivery driver — 10 percent will do.

EZ to Get, 312/664-1600; *www.ez2get.com*

(This service, which recently bought up several others, delivers for more than 100 restaurants. \$5.95 delivery charge and 3.9 percent extra for noncash orders.)

Food.com; *www.food.com*

Online service for restaurant delivery.

Hypermeals, 312/751-1000; Fax: 312/751-1003;

www.hypermeals.com;

Delivery service for a variety of restaurants.

Local delicacies

Alas, after decades of manufacture on the 12th floor of Marshall Field's flagship State Street store, Frango Mints, which you may be familiar with from the Chicago in 2000 bid parties, are no longer a Chicago delicacy. The out-of-town owners of the department stores, Dayton-Hudson, turned over production to a Pennsylvania company last year.

I haven't bought Frangos since. You might as well wait and buy them in Philadelphia next year.

Chicago remains the Candy Capital of America, though, with M&M Mars, Brach's, Archibald Candy Corp., World's Finest Chocolate and many others headquartered here.

Fannie May, manufactured here since the 1920s, is now my Chicago boxed chocolate of choice, if you want something to take home as a sweet souvenir.

Fannie May Candies, 312/726-8409;

343 N. Michigan Ave.

(Best known for Pixies, Trinidads and Mint Meltaways.)

Blommer Chocolate Co. Outlet Store, 312/226-7700;
600 W. Kinzie St.;

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F (One of the few American companies that makes its own chocolate starting with cacao beans — they'll sell you bags of hulls for garden mulch — Blommer isn't a familiar name because they sell their product to candy manufacturers. But they have an outlet store, with chunks of chocolate, chocolate chips and other goodies. The aromas in the neighborhood are wonderful.)

Vosges Haut Chocolate, 773/772-5349;

Fax: 773/772-7917; www.vosgeschocolate.com;
2105 W. Armitage Ave.

(One of Chicagoland's many small chocolatiers, this one specializes in exotic chocolate truffles — with names like Absinthe, Mint Julep, Black Pearl, Wink of the Rabbit, Naga, Gianduja, Woolloomooloo, Budapest, Viola and Ambrosia — that feature infusions of spices and flowers.)

Garrett Popcorn Shops, www.garrettpopcorn.com;

312/630-0127; 26 E. Randolph St.;
312/944-2630; 670 N Michigan Ave. (A Chicago tradition since 1949, featuring caramel and cheese corn.)

"CULTURE SHOCK"



©brad w. foster. 2000

EATING YOGURT THAT'S BEEN
IN THE BACK OF THE
REFRIGERATOR TOO LONG.

Groceries and party supplies

Supermarkets and some of the smaller markets offer sandwiches, salad bars and other ready-to-eat fare, as well as party supplies, beer, wine and liquors.

Supermarkets

Jewel, 312/944-6950; 1210 N. Clark St. *24 hours, 7 days.*

Dominick's, 312/850-3915; 1340 S. Canal St.
24 hours, 7 days.

Treasure Island, 312/664-0400; 680 N. Lake Shore Drive;
7 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F; -8 p.m. Sa; 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Su
(European and gourmet supermarket.)

Whole Foods Market, 312/932-9600; 50 W. Huron St.
8 a.m.-10 p.m. 7 days (Natural foods/health foods.)

Smaller markets

Faycurr's Fine Food & Deli, 312/819-1361;

Illinois Center

7 a.m.-8 p.m. M-F; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Sa; -3 p.m. Su

Delivery. (The nearest food store. Small, full-service gourmet grocery with an extensive salad bar, soups, hot food items, sandwiches, bakery, fruit and vegetable trays, juice bar, coffee drinks, spirits.)

Gourmet Pantry, 312/297-1200;

Doral Building, 155 N. Michigan Ave.

9 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F; -7 p.m. Sa; -6 p.m. Su

(Small, full-service grocery also offers wine and spirits and a salad bar. Expensive.)

L'Appetito Imported Italian Foods, 312/787-9881;

30 E. Huron St. *10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. M-Sa*

(Italian grocery and delicatessen carries *gelato*, *tostinos*, wines, cheeses, olive oil, fruit, pastries, decorated cakes, *pannettone*, mozzarella, sausages, and imported pastas.)

Market Place Food Store, 312/321-9400;

393 E. Illinois St.

(Upscale, expensive grocery)

7 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days; Delivery, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. M-Sa

Potash Brothers Supermarket, 312/266-4200;

875 N. State St.

7 a.m.-11 p.m. M-F; -6 p.m. Sa; 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Su

(Small, but full-service, upscale supermarket.)

Tutta Pronto, 312/587-7700; 401 E. Ontario St.

10 a.m.-8 p.m. M-F; -7 p.m. Sa (Italian delicatessen and import store carries imported and house-made pastas, olive oils, seasonings, wines and sweets. Pastas, sides, sandwiches and entrees made fresh daily.)

Liquor stores

Binny's Beverage Depot, 312/332-0012;

213 W. Grand Ave.

8 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Sa; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Su

Delivery. (Wine-oriented store with a good selection of cheeses, too.)

Sam's Wines & Spirits, 312/664-4394;

Fax: 312/664-7037; www.sams-wine.com;

sams@sams-wine.com; 1720 N. Marcey St.

8 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Sa; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Su

(Huge wines and spirits store carries 18,000 varieties. If Sam's doesn't have it, you probably can't get it here.

Also features a coffee bar, bakery, delicatessen/gourmet shop and cigar shop.)

Convenience stores and drugstores

White Hen Pantry,

• 312/759-1501, 35 E. Wacker Drive. *24 hours, 7 days*

• 312/222-0321, 451 N. State St. *24 hours, 7 days*

Walgreens Drug Store,

• 312/558-1951, 300 N. Michigan Ave.

7 a.m.-9 p.m. M-F; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sa-Su

• 312/664-8686, 757 N. Michigan Ave.

24 hours, 7 days

Acknowledgments

This guide is dedicated to my favorite dining companion, my husband, Dick Smith, who, as always, provided critical support of all kinds, including driving tirelessly in circles while I scribbled down restaurant addresses and details.

Many thanks also go to Reina Hardy, who made follow-up calls to several dozen restaurants; to George Flynn, fandom's premier proofreader; and to Brad Foster, fan artist extraordinaire. I owe you all some pizza!

But any mistakes, of course, are my fault.

*Foodie fen unite! We have nothing
to lose but our waistlines!*

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Down in the bar!

Dining notes



Chicon 2000 Dining Guide

The Chicon 2000 pocket program is actually divided into three ringbound booklets for your convenience. With this ring I thee . . . No No NO! With the ring binding, you can clip it to your belt or belt loop or bag strap, you can carry one booklet, two booklets, or all three. You can slip them off the ring and pop one in your pocket. And, we hope, you can actually read the information in them without squinting too much and without our having to package a magnifying glass with your registration packet. The cover colors were selected to match the website colors.

The *Pocket Program Grid* contains program dates, times and locations. These are cross referenced with a descrip-

tion of the program items and an alphabetical list of program participants keyed with their program items.

The *Events, Exhibits, and Everything Guide* even contains the answer to the question, "What is the meaning of life, the universe and everything?" after all, it certainly does have a page 42. Here you will find information on opening and closing ceremonies, the Hugo Awards ceremony, hours for the dealers room and artshow and other useful information.

Last, but not least, the *Dining Guide* will inform you of restaurant hours of operation, types of food served, price range, dress codes and even if they are offering discounts to members of the convention.

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