

USER'S GUIDE

Restaurants

✳ With nearly 20,000 eateries in the city, picking the best is no easy task. Our selections will help you match the right occasion to the right location. —*Sylvie Bigar*



Daniel Boulud

CELEBRATE A DEAL Daniel

60 E. 65th St., 212-288-0033
With red velvet and glittering chandeliers, Daniel remains the Grande Dame of the classic French restaurants. As Daniel Boulud expands his realm into charcuterie on the West Side (Bar Boulud) and trendiness on the Bowery, his Rolls Royce still runs perfectly. Chances are, though, the lights won't be the only things dazzling you. Under the sure hand of executive chef Jean-Francois Bruel, the seasonal menu consistently delivers top marks. danielnyc.com



Le Bernardin

▲ LAUNCH NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS Le Bernardin

155 W. 51st St., 212-554-1515
With all the current talk of grass-fed or beer-massaged, eating fish is still the healthiest way to go and under the magic wand of gorgeous star chef Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin rules as the temple to the undersea. Creatures come out, one after the other — from nearly raw to barely touched and lightly cooked — each more pleasurable than the last. Warm wood paneling and the best service in New York City rounds up an unforgettable experience. le-bernardin.com

START SPENDING THAT BONUS Per Se

10 Columbus Circle, 212-823-9335
Push the heavy doors and let Thomas Keller take the lead. With a nine-course tasting menu and a two-month wait, dinner at Per Se is a journey through the mind of one of the most creative chefs of our time. Since the menu changes every day, there is no way to know what awaits you, but whether it's caviar pearls or life-changing foie gras, you can't really go wrong so, for once, just relax. perseynyc.com

CELEBRATE A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY Jean Georges

1 Central Park West, 212-299-3900
The pioneer of Columbus Circle has created quite a following. From his sedate gray room, he launched the fabulous specialties foodies now cannot live without: young garlic soup, foie gras brulee, venison and seasonal dessert plates. Jean-Georges Vongerichten can often be found manning his flagship, as brilliantly as ever. jean-georges.com

RELIVE A MEDITERRANEAN VACATION Anthos

36 W. 52nd St., 212-582-6900
There is Greek food before Michael Psilakis and after Michael Psilakis. The chef has launched his own crusade to get his native cuisine as much recognition as, say, Italian or French. It is reasonable to say that he is succeeding, reinventing classics and serving them lighter and dressed with new spices and herbs. Choose the whole roasted loup de mer or the macaronia for a serving of comfort. anthosnyc.com

IMPRESS YOUR FOODIE DATE L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon

57 E. 57th St., 212-350-6658
With more Ateliers sprouting daily around the globe, it's a treat to find the menu as fresh and inventive as it was the day the restaurant opened. The small plates dazzle both the palate and the eye. Here's the secret to the most civilized treat in the city: Grab a seat at the counter, and order a succession of Robuchon sparklers — you won't be disappointed. joel-robuchon.com

ASK FOR HER HAND Café Gray

10 Columbus Circle, 212-823-6338
The very serious Gray Kunz has conceptualized every item on the menu to his precise and intense specifications and the result is an array of intellectual mixes that please and keep diners thinking. For those obsessed with what happens in the kitchen, this is the place to be, in front of the smoothest and cleanest one in Manhattan. Beyond, there's Central Park in all its winter glitter. cafegray.com

FINALLY DINE WITH YOUR GASTRONOMICALLY CHALLENGED SISTER-IN-LAW Craft

43 E. 19th St., 212-780-0880
Tom Colicchio's original Craft made waves among foodies for the way the menu was deconstructed, letting us loose and free to choose, everything! For the best short rib and the tastiest hen of the woods, Craft feels like a refuge from the hustle and bustle of Union Square. Bonus? The room hasn't aged one bit. Craft is the perfect winter respite for a fussy crowd. craftrestaurant.com