Chicago Restaurant Guide (Loop, West Loop, South Loop, River North)

American

Blackbird (West Loop)
619 W. Randolph, Chicago
Tel: (312) 715-0708
Located along the booming Randolph Street restaurant corridor, Gourmet magazine named Blackbird one of the 50 best restaurants in the country in 2001, and Chef Paul Kahan also won the James Beard Foundation's award for Best Chef-Midwest in 2004.

160 Blue (West Loop)
1400 W. Randolph, Chicago
Tel: (312) 850-0303
Noguier’s French-influenced, contemporary American menu eschews heavy, creamy sauces in favor of vegetable reductions, some of which feature curry, coconut and other very un-French flavors.

Rhapsody (Loop)
65 E. Adams, Chicago
Tel: (312) 786-9911
Rhapsody is Symphony Center’s contemporary American elegant eatery offering sumptuous food, including pan-seared Maine skate wing with mashed Yukon gold potatoes in a plancha sauce, and grilled farm-raised elk with pumpkin gnocchi, glazed cranberries and juniper jus.

Chinese

Opera (South Loop)
1301 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago
Tel: (312) 461-0161
Opera features classical Chinese dishes prepared in a contemporary fashion. Executive Chefs Paul Wildermuth (Red Light) and Arun Sampanthavivat (Arun’s) have created a menu that takes regional Chinese cuisine to higher levels. Entrees include a whole steamed red snapper, and a triple presentation of Peking duck.

Ben Pao (River North)
52 W. Illinois, Chicago
Tel: (312) 222-1888
Ben Pao blends authentic Chinese cuisine with an upbeat urban feel. Whether dining in their gorgeous dining room (complete with cascading waterfalls) or ordering takeout, you can expect one of the best Chinese food experiences in the city.

French

Everest (Loop)
440 S. La Salle, 40th Floor, Chicago
Tel: (312) 663-8920
Top-notch French-Alsatian food and a magnificent (800 bottle) wine list (300 from Alsace alone). Jean Joho, winner of the James Beard Foundation Award for best Midwestern chef, creates
masterpieces from the simplest ingredients.

**Avec (West Loop)**
615 W. Randolph, Chicago
Tel: (312) 377-2002
Conceived as a casual, rustic, looser turn for Blackbird’s impeccably trained chefs, it turns out that the food at Avec is (arguably) better. A dazzling wine list presents 120 bottles of traditional, often unknown varietals from France, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

**La Sardine (West Loop)**
111 N. Carpenter St, Chicago
Tel: (312) 421-2800
The sister restaurant of Bucktown’s popular Le Bouchon serves up classic French bistro fare—like cassoulet and salade Lyonnaise—in a loft-like space.

**Greek**

**Parthenon (West Loop)**
314 S. Halsted, Chicago
Tel: (312) 726-2407
There are more than 140 dishes offered, including sea bass, red snapper, calamari, moussaka and vegetarian preparations. Portions are huge.

**Costa’s (West Loop)**
340 S. Halsted St., Chicago
Tel: (312) 263-9700
For those craving some intimacy tucked away from the family-style gatherings, Costa’s terra-cotta tile floors, wood paneling and textured walls create the necessary rustic feel, and live piano provides the soundtrack.

**Italian**

**Osteria Via Stato (Loop)**
620 N. State, Chicago
Tel: (312) 642-8450
With the awards (Best New Restaurant 2005 in Chicago magazine) piling up and the rave reviews pouring in, the variety of food coming your way is incredible and one of the best deals in town for the price.

**Gioco (South Loop)**
1312 S. Wabash, Chicago
Tel: (312) 939-3870
The menu mixes the exotic (confit of rabbit) with standard favorites like pizze al forno, pastas, and various filets. The braised pork, lamb chops, and gnocchi come highly recommended.

**Trattoria No. 10 (Loop)**
10 N. Dearborn St, Chicago
Tel: (312) 984-1718
Located one floor below street level, Trattoria No. 10 offers contemporary Italian cuisine in an
elegant atmosphere.

Japanese

Meiji (West Loop)  
623 W. Randolph, Chicago  
Tel: (312) 887-9999

Meiji, standing shoulder to shoulder with Chicago’s elitist Randolph Street foodie hubs Blackbird and Avec, is the newest-of-new sushi restaurants answering the "more, please" call.

Starfish (West Loop)  
804 W. Randolph, Chicago  
Tel: (312) 997-2433

Specialties include soft shell crab served in a tortilla cup with ponzu sauce and blood orange reduction, and grilled salmon and tofu-spinach wrapped in phyllo and served with smoked molasses reduction.

Latin

Cafe Iberico (River North)  
739 N. LaSalle St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 573-1510

When it comes to tapas bars, Cafe Iberico is one of the best. The restaurant is in full swing on weekend nights with its lively atmosphere as colorful as the tapas are tasty.

Rumba (River North)  
351 W. Hubbard St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 222-1226

Rumba’s Latin-fusion menu shows influences from Puerto Rico, Cuba and South America. Appetizers include crispy empanadas and red snapper and coconut ceviche. Entrees include grilled tuna with tostones and asparagus, and mofongo, a plantain stuffed with a Caribbean seafood fricasse.

Middle-Eastern/Indian

Tizi Melloul (River North)  
531 N. Wells St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 670-4338

Named for a mountain in Morocco, this lavishly decorated restaurant serves up sophisticated Mediterranean cuisine. Diners looking for a lighter meal can order dishes like duck confit salad off the tapas menu, served in the restaurant’s lounge.

Klay Oven (River North)  
414 N. Orleans St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 527-3999

Sample Indian cuisine prepared in the tandoor, or clay oven, style. The tandoors reach temperatures of up to 800 degrees, the better to bake Klay Oven’s eight varieties of fresh bread. The menu offers various vegetarian and curried, non-vegetarian selections.
**Pizza**

**Pizzeria Uno (River North)**
29 E. Ohio St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 321-1000
Located in a converted home, the restaurant has a unique ambiance that can’t quite be found anywhere else.

**Gino's East (Original) (River North)**
633 N. Wells, Chicago  
Tel: (312) 943-1124
Gino's East, which claims to be the original maker of the beloved Chicago deep-dish pizza, has a flair all its own. The crust is made from a maddeningly delectable combination of polenta and butter, among other things.

**Russian**

**Russian Tea Time (Loop)**
77 E. Adams St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 360-0000
Great caviars, vodka, borscht and apple strudel just around the corner from Orchestra Hall, the Art Institute and the Loop's theaters. Don’t expect a light meal (though a vegetarian can do well for herself), but do expect a delicious one.

**Seafood**

**Shaw's Crab House (Loop)**
21 E. Hubbard St., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 527-2722
Seasonal seafood is flown in daily from the Atlantic, the Gulf and the Pacific Coast to this popular spot. Many of the restaurant's fish and seafood suppliers are pictured on the walls of Shaw's Oyster Bar.

**Nick's Fishmarket (Loop)**
51 S. Clark St., (lower level), Chicago  
Tel: (312) 621-0200
Corporate chef Jose Bernal has tweaked the menu with Asian accents and fruit flavors at this luxurious Loop seafood restaurant. Pre-theater diners will enjoy its close proximity to the LaSalle Bank Theatre (formerly the Shubert Theatre).

**Steak**

**Morton's of Chicago (Loop)**
65 E. Wacker Pl., Chicago  
Tel: (312) 201-0410
Inducted into the "Fine Dining Hall of Fame" by Nation's Restaurant News, and voted "Best
Steak House” by New York Magazine.

Chicago Chop House (River North)
60 W. Ontario St., Chicago
Tel: (312) 787-7100
Chicago Chop House, ranked one of the top ten steakhouses in the United States in numerous surveys (and #2 4 years consecutively by Fork & Knife), is located in a restored Victorian brownstone with long curving bars.

Wildfire (River North)
159 W. Erie, Chicago
Tel: (312) 787-9000
Signature dishes include horseradish-crusted filet mignon, barbecue baby back ribs, wood-roasted mussels and macadamia nut crusted halibut. Wildfire serves a gluten-free menu as well.

Thai

Vong’s Thai Kitchen (River North)
6 W. Hubbard, Chicago
Tel: (312) 644-8664
Given the crowd, liveliness just reverberates at VTK, from the red paint brightening an entire wall to the floor-to-ceiling windows an equally vibrant sidewalk scene.

Amarit (River North)
1 E. Delaware Pl., Chicago
Tel: (312) 649-0500
Curry, coconut and peanuts are used freely at Amarit. Outdoor seating is available when the climate is agreeable, but the tables and chairs inside are much more comfortable

Exotic/Fusion

Sushi Samba Rio (River North)
504 N. Wells St., Chicago
Tel: (312) 595-2300
Japanese-Brazilian-Peruvian fare. Three cuisines means triple the taste (and makes Sushi Samba a wise choice for parties whose preferences run from "raw" to "no thank you").

Japonais (River North)
600 W. Chicago, Chicago
Tel: (312) 822-9600
The menu is extensive, and offers mainly Japanese dishes with a French accent. Sushi and seafood dominate, but the chef’s imaginative offerings also include some heavy-hitting beef entrees and innovative combinations.