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Cured hiramasa at the Modern. | The Modern

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The Best Museum Restaurants in New York City

Many are so great they warrant a visit unto themselves

by [Robert Sietsema](#) | Aug 12, 2024, 11:27am EDT

A new age of New York City museum dining is upon us, with options for where to eat better than ever. Our city's art, history, science, natural history museums and even the botanical gardens now pride themselves on full-service restaurants, some with white tablecloths, where the viewing public can sit for an hour or two and choose from a full-fledged menu that can include fine wines, cocktails, and fancy desserts. For many, diners can even visit restaurants without a trip through the museum — and since the food is often great, many New Yorkers do. Here are the city's six best museum restaurants.

The Bar Room at **The Modern** at the **Museum of Modern Art**

With its two Michelin stars, the Modern, run by executive chef Tom Allan, is the most ambitious of the museum restaurants in the city, and likely, the most expensive, with its \$275 tasting menu for dinner or \$115 prix-fixe menu for lunch. You can get by for substantially less at the adjacent Bar Room, where prix fixe is two courses for \$45 or three courses for \$60, and a la carte is available. Open since 2005, having been the perch for chefs like Gabriel Kreuther, the understated dining room reinforces the menu where it's housed. Bar Room dishes include cured Arctic char with apricots and smoked eggplant; or the lobster and artichoke ravioli. No reservations are required, so you can stroll in on a Sunday around noon, when the place is half filled, eat in an hour, and still have plenty of time for the museum. *9 W. 53rd Street, near Fifth Avenue, Midtown*



Left, dining room on the right, at The Modern. | The Modern



Oysters at the Modern. | The Modern

Robert at the **Museum of Arts & Design**

On the top floor of this wonderful museum, Robert provides stunning views of Central Park akin to those of nearby Per Se, with entrees that run from \$25 to \$41 from chef Armando Cortes. His menu includes a watermelon Napoleon and Scottish salmon with dill mustard sauce. It's open for lunch and dinner — and if you eat your lunch there first, you can visit the museum for free. *2 Columbus Circle at Broadway, Midtown*



Robert offers views of Central Park. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY

Frenchette Bakery at the Whitney Museum of American Art

From renowned chefs Riad Nasr and Lee Hanson, **Frenchette Bakery at the Whitney** is an offshoot of the Tribeca restaurant and its nearby bakery, an informal space with great views of the Meatpacking District separated from the lobby of the museum by a dramatic wall of plants. In the morning, an assortment of pastries are the order of the day, while lunchtime and afternoon bring a compact menu of soups, pizzettes, sandwiches, and pastas, all at what can be regarded as bargain prices given the **high quality** and interest level of the food. Expect a gloppy salade Nicoise sandwich, a roasted vegetable soup, a pumpkin agnolotti, and classic croque madame with a runny egg on top, along with a selection of wines and coffee beverages. Cafe prices range from \$12 to \$32. *99 Gansevoort Street, at Washington Street, West Village*



Looking District from Frenchette Bakery at the Whitney. | Robert



Garlic and anchovy pizzette. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY

The Restaurant at Gilder at the American Museum of Natural History

After strolling through the museum's dioramas, past the cresting blue whale, gem collections, and insectarium, one arrives in the new wing at the eponymous **Restaurant at Gilder**, a second-floor space that feels like a glassed-in exhibit of a modern restaurant, a strange and marvelous feeling. Families with well-disciplined kids sit eating food that verges on the healthy, including an heirloom tomato panzanella, though there's also a very nice steak frites with chimichurri, and playful desserts like a root beer float. The bloody mary is big and strong, on a menu with lots of liquor options. Prices range from \$16 to \$34. The restaurant serves lunch only, and dining in the restaurant requires museum admission. *200 Central Park West, between 77th and 81st Street, Upper West Side*



restaurant is just up the stairs. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY



The Restaurant at the Gilder has a beehive ceiling. | Robert Sietsema/Eater

Café Sabarsky at Neue Galerie

If German Expressionism is your thing, hit up the Neue Galerie, where the collection of Klimt and Grosz is unsurpassed. Its renowned eatery is called Café Sabarsky with chef Christopher Engel (formerly at Wallis and Aureole) at the helm. It channels a fin-de-siecle konditorei, with a luscious collection of cakes, torts, and strudels. The veal schnitzel, beef goulash, and sausage platters are standouts, and salads and sandwiches available for lighter snacks. Dining in the café doesn't require museum admission, and here's a hack: When the more elegant upstairs dining room is mobbed, you can nearly always get a seat in the downstairs dining room, where the food is identical but the setting more modest. Prices are \$14 to \$34 per dish. *1048 Fifth Avenue, at 86th Street, Upper East Side*



Pastries at Cafe Sabarsky. | Daniela Galarza/Eater NY



Upstairs at Cafe Sabarsky. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY

Yellow Magnolia Cafe at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden

The dining room is stunning: A retired greenhouse with flower beds and lily ponds radiating all around. [Yellow Magnolia Cafe](#), accessible with garden admission and only open during the day, provides memorable meals with a farm-to-market aesthetic and a historic twist here and there, including a splendid buttermilk fried chicken sandwich, seared tuna nicoise salad, series of grilled flatbreads, and — weekends only — eggs Benedict and frittatas. Prices are \$14 to \$30. *990 Washington Avenue, at President Street, Crown Heights* ■



ow Magnolia Café. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY



The dining room at Yellow Magnolia. | Robert Sietsema/Eater NY



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