

OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE

CHICAGO

WINTER/SPRING 2009/2010 choosechicago.com

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ON CHICAGO'S
FAMOUS RESTAURANTS

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THE CITY'S IMPRESSIVE
ARCHITECTURE

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WHICH ATTRACTIONS
ARE MUST-SEES

CULINARY CHICAGO

You know Chicago is one of the country's premier cities for delicious, diverse dining. What you may not know, though, is that the city offers options for all sorts of diners, from eateries open 24 hours to restaurants with open kitchens. Find a restaurant to suit your style, whether you're a family man, locavore, pet owner, or romantic.

Family-Friendly Favorites

Experience a longtime local breakfast favorite, **Lou Mitchell's**, near Union Station in the Loop. Moderate prices make it appealing, and women and children get a mini box of Milk Duds when they enter, allegedly because the restaurant's founder "adored children and had an eye for the women." (One caveat: It's cash only.)

At **John's Place** in Lincoln Park, choose between what locals call the "children's room" and the "grown-ups' room." The former offers high chairs and a kids' menu that includes dinosaur-shaped chicken nuggets. For the other-room folks, try the delicious curry chicken salad.

Watch an assortment of sports at **ESPN Zone** off the Magnificent Mile. The kids' menu includes peanut butter and jelly, and adult selections range from grilled salmon to burgers, while one of the desserts – referring to a football game, naturally – is named Sudden Death Brownie.

Near Wrigley Field in Lakeview, drop in at **Goose Island's Clybourn Brewpub**, Chicago's original brewpub. Home of the famed local Goose Island beer, the place serves one of the best hamburgers in town, along with fish 'n' chips, salads, and hearty soups. Goose



Island also offers naturally flavored Chicago-style root beer and orange cream soda.

The Way to Your Date's Heart

Let **Santorini's** large stone fireplace warm and welcome you. What distinguishes this from other restaurants in Greektown is its focus on seafood, from Greek-style whole red snapper and black sea bass to pan-fried squid. If you aren't partial to finny fare, taste traditional Greek dishes like dolmades and vegetarian moussaka.

Le Colonial in the Near North Side features louvered shutters and ceiling fans designed to recall French-colonial Southeast Asia from the 1920s. Experience Vietnamese fare, including such signature dishes as Vietnamese bouillabaisse in lemongrass saffron broth and sautéed jumbo shrimp with eggplant in a curried coconut sauce.

Tango Sur, an Argentinean steakhouse in Lakeview, serves up boneless strip steak and short ribs, along with other offerings such as fettuccini and, seasonally, baked salmon. Make eyes at your mate over lit taper candles on the

tables, which add to the attractive ambiance. There's another attractive feature, price-wise: Tango Sur is BYOB.

Locavores Are in Luck

See lovely views of Lincoln Park from **North Pond**, a onetime ice skaters' warming shelter. Emphasizing regional and seasonal Midwest dishes, Chef Bruce Sherman's menu presents products raised or grown in their native environment. Try grass-fed beef or the signature dish, Farm Egg, for dinner. The extensive wine list draws upon vintages from such states as Illinois and Wisconsin.

In the Omni Chicago Hotel, **676 Restaurant** uses herbs and vegetables from its rooftop garden, and Executive Chef Daven Wardynski uses Midwest food whenever possible. Try the restaurant's 100-percent-organic breakfast buffet, which includes cage-free eggs and nitrates-free bacon and sausage, or have sweet corn ravioli and Great Lakes bouillabaisse for dinner.

Be dazzled at one of prize-winning Chef Rick Bayless' adjacent Near North places, one of which is **Frontera Grill** (the other is



the pricier Topolobampo), which highlights contemporary regional Mexican cooking. Entrées change monthly and might include grilled-seared pork with Yucatecan garnishes or jalapeno-marinated day-boat catch with classic Veracruzana sauce.

In Lakeview, sample the American bistro **erwin café's** "Urban Heartland cuisine." Chef Erwin Drechsler regularly shops farmers' markets for high-quality fruits and vegetables. Seasonal entrées might include wood-grilled lamb chops and homemade basil sausage with chickpea ragout, ratatouille, and feta cheese.

The New 'Doggy Bags'

A city ordinance forbids indoor canine chewing, but you can dine with Fido – and take advantage of spring weather – on the sidewalk café of **Four Farthings**, which offers everything from broiled Lake Superior whitefish and grilled New York strip to pasta, hamburgers, and chowders.

With seasonal outdoor seating, **Brasserie Jo** in River North focuses on selections inspired by France's Alsace region. Feel the large, unpretentious dining room's European vibe, and check for daily specials, which range from veal wiener schnitzel to Moroccan-style couscous.

And at **South Water Kitchen** in the Loop, you and your pooch can soak up the sun on the patio during the warmer months. 🐾

For more ideas about exploring culinary Chicago, flip to the listings beginning on p. 44, where you can find contact information for some of the businesses in this story.

Need more ideas? Call (it's free!) ☎ 1.877.CHICAGO