

HSS-PSA RESTAURANT GUIDE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Montreal is a great dining city, surely among the best in North America. The city's restaurant scene has attracted a lot of attention in the US press in recent years, so you will find several articles in places like *Gourmet* magazine and the *New York Times*. Online restaurant reviews are also plentiful, as are discussion boards like Chowhound and its imitators. There are a great many restaurants in the middle price range which offer exceptionally good value for money, and it is mostly those kind of places that we have listed here.

ORIENTATION AND GETTING AROUND

Montreal is very much a city of distinct neighbourhoods. The ethnic and linguistic mix varies as you move around the city. The list below is organized by areas, starting with those immediately near the Hyatt. You could see a lot of Montreal just by walking for half a mile or so from the hotel, but we would urge you to roam further afield, and take advantage of the city's excellent public transportation--there's a metro station just across the street. Certain areas of Montreal have so many restaurants that, in some cases, we have simply indicated a stretch of a street: in those strips, you could choose a place at random and be fairly confident of having a good experience. But at the same time, we have tried to list our favourite spots in each area.

Taxis are plentiful, reliable and can be hailed on the street. For most of the restaurants on this list, it will rarely be more than a \$10-15 trip each way (including tip). The metro and bus services are very good and run until about 12:40am. The city's famous bike rental scheme, the Bixi, has just extended its service to the end of November, and so will be available for guests: see www.bixi.ca for more information.

Like many North American cities, Montreal is built on a grid system, with the blocks numbered consistently (so you can tell roughly where a restaurant is on the grid from the number), but we have tried to make things even easier by including cross-streets below. If you are using Google maps, or a similar system, bear in mind that the street grid is tilted on an angle, so that "Montreal north" is really a little west of north-west. In what follows, all directions are given in terms of the city grid, so "west" means "Montreal west". For east-west streets, the numbering divides at Blvd St-Laurent (so 200 Sherbrooke East is two blocks east of St-Laurent).

LANGUAGE, BILLS AND TIPPING

Locals debate whether the local tipping code is the same as the US or not, but if in doubt, just go with the rate you would use in the US. However, you should know that service in restaurants is often more “European” in pace than it may be in American cities. One useful thing to know is that Montreal restaurants will have no problem giving you multiple bills. Sometimes, as you sit down in a group, the wait staff will ask whether you want multiple bills, but you can also usually ask for split bills at the end as well, and paying with multiple cards should be no problem.

Almost all service staff will be able to serve you in English (and all should in French), but the further you get from downtown the more likely it is that the wait staff will be more comfortable in French. If you don’t speak French, don’t worry, the staff will probably be bilingual; and if you are trying to practise your French, don’t be insulted if the waiter switches to English. Many waiters are so used to switching languages that they may not even realize they’ve done it.

BYO / APPORTEZ VOTRE VIN (sometimes)

Those on a budget should look out for BYO restaurants. In certain areas, it is common for restaurants to have a Bring Your Own liquor license (look for “Apportez Votre Vin” signs). These restaurants can offer excellent value for money (since bringing your own wine keeps the bill down). You will have to buy the wine from the official liquor stores, the SAQ (Société d’alcools du Québec, branch locator at <http://www.saq.com/>). There are many BYO restaurants on rue Duluth, in the Plateau neighbourhood, and one of the busiest SAQ branches is on the corner of Duluth and St-Denis. Convenience stores (*dépanneurs*) also sell wine, but we would advise you to buy your wine from the SAQ.

Two Notes: in most cases, the BYO license applies only to wine, and not to beer or spirits. Do not show up with a six-pack of beer or a mickey of vodka. There might also be a nominal fee for opening your bottles of wine. It’s still worth it.

LINKS

Université de Montréal historian François Furstenberg has this guide online:
<http://www.mapageweb.umontreal.ca/furstenf/perso/ffmontrealfoodguide.htm>

An online guide to poutine, Québec’s most famous dish, run by a McGill astrophysics professor:

<http://www.montrealpoutine.com/?index>

Local newspaper Voir’s restaurant guide (in French)

<http://www.guidereostos.com/>

2. RESTAURANTS, BY NEIGHBORHOOD

We have not attempted to write something that would replace a full-scale guide to Montreal's restaurants. We have also been thinking mostly of dinner, rather than lunch. What follows is not authoritative gastronomic science, but rather an attempt to pass on a certain amount of local knowledge.

AROUND THE HOTEL: THE QUARTIER DES SPECTACLES

The area around the hotel is currently being redeveloped as the "Quartier des spectacles" (theatre district), and there are some new restaurants just across the street, two of which are mid-range sister houses of some of the more famous restaurants in the city. They are so new that we have not yet been able to try them. There are also some cheaper chain restaurants (Eggspectations for breakfast, St Hubert for chicken, Baton Rouge for vaguely American food) on the south side of Ste-Catherine (in the same building as the hotel, the Complexe Desjardins). There are various coffee chains (Second Cup, etc.) nearby.

Le Balmoral

305 Ste-Catherine West (at Bleury)
514 288 5992

<http://www.montrealjazzfest.com/maison-du-festival-online/Balmoral-menu.aspx>

(Large-ish restaurant owned by the company that runs the Montreal Jazz Fest; a discount should be available to group bookings for HSS members)

F-Bar 1485 Jeanne-Mance (next to the Musée d'Art contemporain)

514 289 4558

<http://www.fbar.ca/>

(Mid-price sister restaurant of Café Ferreira, a high-end Portuguese restaurant on Peel)

Brasserie T!

1425 Jeanne-Mance (next to the Musée d'Art contemporain)

514 282 0808

<http://brasserie-t.com/>

(Mid-price sister restaurant of Toqué)

Bistrot Le Contemporain

185 Ste-Catherine West (in the Musée d'Art contemporain, 2nd floor)

514 847 6900

<http://www.macm.org/fr/informations/restaurant.html>

Le Café du Nouveau Monde (in the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde)

84 Ste-Catherine West (at St Urbain)

514 866 8669

<http://www.tnm.qc.ca/cafe-du-nouveau-monde/cafe-du-nouveau-monde.html>

Nyk's Bistro Pub

1250 Bleury
514 866 1787

<http://www.nyks.ca/>

(a pub that also does food, sometimes has live music)

CHINATOWN

Montreal has a small and lively Chinatown which is just a short walk from the hotel. Just walk "south", down St Urbain, crossing René-Levesque, then down a block to rue de La Gauchetière. There are too many restaurants to list them all here, with a wide range of styles and prices, most of them very affordable.

OLD MONTREAL (THE OLD PORT)

Keep walking down St Urbain, and a little further south after Chinatown (crossing Viger and St-Antoine) is Vieux-Montréal, the Old City (also called the Old Port), which is well worth exploring. From the hotel (corner of Ste Catherine and St Urbain) down to rue St Paul is 1 kilometer (0.6) miles. There are a great many restaurants here, mostly along St-Paul: some are frankly tourist traps, some are very high-end indeed, and there are many things in between. Locals are often dismissive of the restaurants down here, and it is true that choosing a mid-range place at random in the Old Port can be a risky business. The places that are noteworthy tend to be quite high-end, pricewise. But the architecture and the atmosphere make the old port well worth a visit.

Chez l'Épicier

311, rue Saint-Paul Est
(514) 878-2232

reservations@chezlepicier.com

<http://www.chezlepicier.com/>

(higher-end, famous chef style place)

Gandhi

230 rue Saint-Paul Ouest
(514) 845-5866

(reliable, comfortable, Indian cuisine)

Holder

407 McGill St
(514) 849-0333

(brash, noisy, American-French food, lots of space)

Boris Bistrot

465 McGill St

(514) 848-9575
(more mid-range, lively)

QUARTIER LATIN

Going east from the hotel is the area near to UQAM, known as the Quartier Latin. Walking from the hotel, go north a little (across the Place des Arts) and then right on Ontario, and a half-mile walk brings you to a strip of pubs and restaurants that stretches along rue St Denis from Maisonneuve up to Sherbrooke and along Ontario on both sides. This area has lots of cheap restaurants, bars and pubs, including a famous burger joint, La Paryse (on Ontario at Sanguinet), which almost always has a line-up outside.

La Paryse (burgers)
302 Rue Ontario Est (near corner of Sanguinet)
(514) 842-2040

Le Cheval Blanc (bar)
809 rue Ontario Est (corner of St-Hubert)
(514) 522-0211

LE VILLAGE

Going further east from the Quartier Latin is Montreal's "village gai". The strip of Ste Catherine running east from the "Berri-UQAM" metro (or rue St Hubert) as far as Papineau has dozens of bars, clubs, and restaurants mostly serving the LGB community. There is also a newer strip of restaurants along Ontario from around Amherst to Papineau.

Au Petit Extra (Ontario, corner of Papineau)
1690 Rue Ontario Est
514 527 5552
(great value French bistrot style food, between the Plateau and the village)

THE PLATEAU (LE PLATEAU MONT-ROYAL)

The Plateau is the neighbourhood with by far the longest list of restaurants and bars. There are restaurants all over the Plateau, but the main strips of restaurants are: along St Denis from Sherbrooke to Duluth; along Duluth from St Laurent to St Hubert (many of these are BYO wine); along ave Mont-Royal from about Drolet as far east as Papineau. Get the metro to either the Sherbrooke or Mont-Royal stations, and explore. This is a list of places arranged roughly from north to south.

Café Cherrier

3635 rue St Denis (corner Cherrier)
metro Sherbrooke
514 843 4308
(classic, basic French bistro style)

Laloux

250 Avenue des Pins Est (corner of Laval)
metro Sherbrooke
(514) 287-9127
(traditional French style)

Pintxo

256 rue Roy est (at Laval)
metro Sherbrooke
514 844-0222
(modern, Basque-inspired, somewhat pricey, fun)

L'Express

3927 St Denis (between Roy and Duluth, east side of street)
metro Sherbrooke
514 845 5333
(a famous and popular French bistrot, very good value, open late)

Le Continental

4007 St Denis (below Duluth)
514 845 6842
<http://www.lecontinental.ca/>
(French style)

Chu-Chai

4088 St Denis
514 843 4194
(vegetarian Thai food)

Au Petit Plateau

(Drolet and Marie-Anne)
514 282 6342

Au Pied de Cochon

Duluth (at St Hubert)
514 281 1114
(Montreal's most reported-on restaurant, beloved of Anthony Bourdain and the like)

La Colombe

554 ave Duluth East (corner St Hubert)
514 849 8844

(high quality French BYO)

Reservoir

9 Duluth East (at St Laurent)

(good micro-brewery pub that also does good bar food)

Au Cinquième Pêché

Mont-Royal (corner of Drolet)

514 286 0123

info@aucinquiemepeche.com

<http://www.aucinquiemepeche.com/>

(one of our personal favourites)

La Montée de Lait (recently moved to St Laurent)

5171 Bd St Laurent

514 289 9921

(NOTE: now at their third address; no longer on Villeneuve or on Bishop)

Ouzeri

4690 rue St-Denis (at Gilford)

514 845 1336

(modernized Greek style; often loud)

Les Trois Petits Bouchons

4669 St-Denis

514 285 4444

<http://www.lestroispetitsbouchons.com/>

(wine bar with very good food-wine pairings)

MILE END / OUTREMONT

Currently the coolest corner of the Plateau, Mile End is area bordered by Hutchison to the west (just west of Parc avenue), the railway tracks to the north, and then (more vaguely) St Denis and Villeneuve to the east and south. There are numerous restaurants, bars and cafés along Laurier (west of Park especially, and east of Mentana), Fairmount and St Viateur, Park (or Parc) Avenue, and Bernard. St Viateur and Fairmount both have Montreal's famous bagel bakeries. (St Laurent north of Laurier has a mixture of cool bars and restaurants, but they are less concentrated here.)

Rumi

5198 Hutchison (corner of Fairmount, one block west of Parc)

514 490-1999

(excellent Persian style food)

Leméac

1045 Laurier West
514 270 0999

<http://www.restaurantlemeac.com/>

(special \$22 menu after 10pm, representing excellent value; lots of other options nearby)

Mythos

5318 avenue du Parc (near Fairmount)

(514) 270-0235

(one of several Greek restaurants on this part of Parc)

Les Enfants Terribles

1257 avenue Bernard (at Champagneur)

(514) 759-9918

(one of many good places on this strip of Bernard)

WEST OF DOWNTOWN / NEAR CONCORDIA / CCA

The western end of Downtown is the area from Concordia to the CCA (where the Friday night reception will be). If you are looking to eat in the neighbourhood, there are a great many smaller and cheaper eateries along Ste Catherine and Maisonneuve; this area has recently become a “second Chinatown” with some excellent Chinese restaurants, as well as several Korean places.

Maison Bulgogi

2127 Sainte-Catherine West

(514) 935-9820

LITTLE BURGUNDY / SAINT-HENRI

In the south-west of the city, in the “up-and-coming” area between Little Burgundy and St Henri, there are a couple of stand-out places, including the restaurant Joe Beef (once warmly reviewed in the *New York Times*), and its sister establishment, a pub called Liverpool House. They are accessible by foot from metro Lionel-Groulx.

Joe Beef

2491 Notre-Dame West

(514) 935-6504

<http://www.joebef.ca/>

(modern American/French, meat-based)

FURTHER AFIELD

If you are keen to go further afield, one area worth exploring is the rue Jean-Talon, which has a wide variety of cuisines represented, from the middle east to South Asia, to Italy, Greece, and beyond.

Alep and Le Petit Alep

191 Rue Jean-Talon Est

(514) 270-9361

(very good middle eastern food, next door to L'Alep, more pricey)

786 Halal Restaurant

768 rue Jean-Talon Ouest

(514) 270-0786

(not a misprint, the restaurant name is 786 but the address is 768. Said by some to be the best place in the city for South Asian cuisine; no alcohol; deliveries possible)

CHEAP EATS

Various franchises can be found around the city, but one worth mentioning is

Le Commensal

1204 ave McGill-College (at Ste-Catherine)

1720 St Denis (south of Ontario)

(cheap but adequate vegetarian cafeteria franchise, various locations)