

Staff Edition

CHICAGO DINING RECOMMENDATIONS



Whether you're digging into a Chicago-style hot dog (seven toppings, no ketchup) or indulging in an avant-garde tasting menu, Chicago's food options are as diverse as the neighborhoods that make up the city. You'll find something for everyone, from crave-worthy cheap eats to world-renowned fine dining.

Check out your Chicago-based IADC staff's dining recommendations where, not only will you discover some of our favorite neighborhood spots and the restaurants we return to again and again, you'll get to know us a bit better too!



Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



T.C. Bastin, Membership Manager

Hometown: Toronto, ON Canada

Chicago Resident: Since 2017 – I've lived in Old Irving Park and Lincoln Square.

Neighborhood: Old Irving Park

COMMUNITY TAVERN

www.communitytavern.com

4038 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 9 miles; 20-minute drive)

773.283.6080

If you are looking for a warm spot to enjoy elevated, upscale American fare, this is the place. Ingredients are seasonal and local, and the dishes have a lot of pan-Asian influences.

Neighborhood: Old Irving Park

ERIS BREWERY AND CIDER HOUSE

www.erischicago.com

4240 W. Irving Park Rd. (Distance from Fairmont: 8.5 miles; 20-minute drive)

773.943.6200

This hip spot offers both house-brewed cider and beer which are great paired with their creative New American comfort foods. The menu here is great for everybody – they strive to be inclusive of meat lovers, vegans, vegetarians, etc.

Neighborhood: River North

GENE AND GEORGETTI'S

www.geneandgeorgetti.com

500 N. Franklin St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.527.3718

This is one of those old-school classic Chicago steakhouses you should add to your list. They've been around since 1941! They offer a curated menu of prime steaks, chops, and classic Italian fare.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Rebecca Zurcher Foltz, Director of Meetings

Hometown: Army Brat

Chicago Resident: I moved to Chicago in 2005 after living in Washington, DC for a decade. At the time both my sisters lived in Chicago and were having way too much fun without me, hence my move. I've lived in the Gold Coast and River West neighborhoods and, this June, my husband and I bought a house and moved 25 miles outside the city to Munster, Indiana. After years (and years) of urban living we're enjoying suburban life and our two dogs now have the fenced in backyard of their dreams.

Neighborhood: River West

LA SCAROLA

www.lascarola.com

721 W. Grand Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 2 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.243.1740

If you're like me and want to feel as though you're in a Martin Scorsese movie every time you dine at an Italian restaurant, make plans to eat a La Scarola! This casual restaurant is small, cozy, and never disappoints when it comes to people watching. Serving up delicious and classic Italian comfort food. Go here hungry.

Neighborhood: Bucktown

LE BOUCHON

www.lebouchonofchicago.com

1958 N. Damen Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 5 miles; 15-minute drive)

773.862.6600

I'm pretty sure I was meant to be French and own more How-To-Books on being French than I care to admit. (My favorite: *How to Be Parisian Wherever You Are: Love, Style, and Bad Habits*.) So, when the Francophile in me gets hungry and yearns for "home," I head to Le Bouchon. Thriving in Bucktown since 1993, the restaurant serves classic French Bistro food in a dining room that will transport you to Paris. Their specials are always amazing so don't decide what to order until you've heard them.

Neighborhood: Lincoln Park

PEQUOD'S

www.pequodspizza.com/chicago

2207 N. Clybourn Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 5 miles; 15-minute drive)

773.327.1512

I prefer a thin crust pizza and pretty much refuse to waste calories on Chicago's traditional deep-dish, but when it comes to Pequod's famous on-the-verge-of-being-deep-dish pizza I don't give my carb-intake a second thought! Known for their pan-style pizza with a "caramelized crust" edge, this pizza pub has developed a cult following. Mozzarella cheese is cooked along the edge of a cast-iron pan to create a crust unlike any other – *insert drooling emoji face here!*

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Ashley Hatfield, Director of Communications

Hometown: Vicksburg, MI (I can show you on my hand where this is!)

Chicago Resident: I moved to Chicago straight out of college in 2012 without much of a plan, but I'm so glad it worked out. I just celebrated my 9th Chicagoversary in June. I've lived in a few spots in the Lakeview neighborhood and now live in North Center. Fun fact: I've always lived within a 30-minute walk to Wrigley Field – easy way to describe where you live in the city!

Neighborhood: Logan Square

ANDROS TAVERNA

www.androstaverna.com

2542 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Distance from Fairmont; 20-minute drive)

773.365.1900

In the heart of Logan Square, Andros Taverna is an up-and-coming contemporary Greek restaurant serving sophisticated Mediterranean food cooked from the soul. The restaurant décor will have you feeling all the vibes, and the menu will have you wanting more. You **MUST** order crispy kataifi cheese pie. I have no idea what it is, but it is delicious. Other favorite dishes include the mezze collection (spicy whipped feta!), the octopus, and any of the spritz'. Bonus: Logan Square is a great neighborhood for a nightcap. If you are a beer lover, there are six breweries, all within walking distance. Hopewell Brewing is closest. If cocktails are more your thing, check out favorites Estereo (Latin-style cocktails) or Lost Lake (tiki bar).

Neighborhood: River West

PICCOLO SOGNO

www.piccolosognorestaurant.com

464 N. Halsted St. (Distance from Fairmont: 2 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.421.0077

One of the best hidden patios in the city. Yes, you are by a busy road, but you wouldn't know it. Nothing beats a garden setting, lots of wine, and rustic Italian fare. This truly feels like an escape. The pastas are fantastic. I've celebrated my birthday here more than once.

Neighborhood: Lincoln Park

CAFÉ BA-BA-REEBA!

www.cafebabareeba.com

2024 N. Halsted St. (Distance from Fairmont: 4.5 miles; 15-minute drive)

773.935.5000

Café Ba-Ba-Reeba! is Chicago's original tapas bar, serving authentic Spanish cuisine since 1985. The menu is designed to share (so great for groups!), featuring tapas, pintxos, and paella. No matter what you order, make sure to get a pitcher of sangria. I'm partial to the red, but they usually have a fun special available. Bonus: If you want to stick closer to the hotel, Lil' Ba-Ba-Reeba! opened up in nearby River North (441 N. Clark St.).

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition

Neighborhood: West Loop, River North, Wicker Park

PARLOR PIZZA BAR

www.parlorchicago.com

West Loop: 108 N. Green St., 312.600.6090 (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

River North: 405 N. Dearborn St., 312.392.2356 (Distance from Fairmont: 1 mile; 5-minute drive)

Wicker Park: 1824 W Division St., 872.315.3005 (Distance from Fairmont: 3.5 miles; 15-minute drive)

Approachable, comfortable, and inviting pizza place. Great for a group! Really unique pizza topping combinations and sweet waffle shell dessert tacos (à la Choco Tacos) that are all the rage. Parlor is an easy “yes!”

My favorites: I Feel Like Bacon Love (leek béchamel, Nueske’s bacon, white cheddar, shaved Yukon Gold potato, and scallions) and Burrata Be Kidding Me (fresh mozzarella, imported burrata, baby arugula, house lemon vinaigrette, and white truffle oil).

Some other general suggestions...

Neighborhood: **THE WEST LOOP/FULTON MARKET DISTRICT**

If you’re a foodie, this is THE spot. Don’t know what you want or where to go? Just get to this neighborhood and start walking around. Some of the city’s best restaurants are here and, at last count, there are eight restaurants run by former Top Chef contestants that are all operating two blocks from one another. Some of my favorites: The Publican (American), any Stephanie Izard restaurant (Girl and the Goat, Little Goat Diner, Duck Duck Goat), Momotaro (Japanese), Monteverde (Italian), Cruz Blanca (Mexican-influenced brewery and restaurant), and Aba (Mediterranean). For more information, check out this West Loop Dining Guide:

www.theinfatuation.com/chicago/guides/west-loop-restaurants

RIVERWALK

So many great spots to grab a bite or a drink with a view. Perfect for people watching. (The Northman Beer & Cider Garden is just a 5-minute walk from the hotel.)

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Mary Huang, Staff Accountant

Hometown: Hinsdale, Illinois

Chicago Resident: I was born and raised in the western suburbs of Chicago but lived on the north side of Chicago for several years while in graduate school. Although I love urban living, my heart is at peace in the northern suburbs where I live now. I appreciate being 45 minutes outside of the city where these great eateries are just a hop, skip, and a jump away!

Neighborhood: River North

CHICAGO CUT STEAKHOUSE

www.chicagocutsteakhouse.com

300 N. LaSalle St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1 mile; 5-minute drive)

312.329.1800

Chicago Cut Steakhouse is a modern twist on the traditional steakhouse setting. It has a fantastic river view with a great patio. Open for lunch and dinner.

Neighborhood: River North

FOGO DE CHAO

www.fogodechao.com/location/chicago

661 N. LaSalle Blvd. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.932.9330

While this is a chain, an “upscale Brazilian all-you-can-eat meat carved tableside plus huge salad bar” experience is pretty worth it. Great for groups of all sizes.

Neighborhood: Navy Pier

HARRY CARAY'S TAVERN

www.harrycarays.com/harry-carays-tavern-navy-pier.html

700 E. Grand Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.527.9700

Right on Navy Pier, Harry Caray's Tavern is a family-friendly, sports-themed bar and grill. Its waterfront location has a great patio which is the perfect place to enjoy Lake Michigan. You'll find outstanding burgers, house smoked barbecue, and a great selection of local craft beer.

Two Asian places that have good sushi and hot dishes for the non-sushi eater:

Neighborhood: Loop

UMAI

www.umaichicago.com

730 S. Clark St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.986.8888

Neighborhood: Streeterville

NIU JAPANESE FUSION LOUNGE

www.niusushi.com

332 E. Illinois St. (Distance from Fairmont: .5 miles walking, 1.5 miles driving; 10-minute drive)

312.527.2888

Both have great atmospheres, delicious food, and are conveniently located downtown.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Maria Juarez, Meetings Registrar

Hometown: Michoacan, Mexico

Chicago Resident: I moved to the US as a toddler and lived in Chicago ever since. I have always lived in Pilsen, and recently moved to a new part of the neighborhood when I bought my beautiful, new construction townhome in 2019.

Neighborhood: Goose Island

AZUL MARISCOS

www.azulmariscos.com

1177 N. Elston Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 3 miles; 15-minute drive)

773.770.3766

Azul Mariscos features unique Latin American seafood dishes and craft cocktails, located right on the Chicago River in the Goose Island neighborhood. I have been there several times and have tried almost everything on the menu, everything is delicious! If you're a seafood lover and feeling bold, try the Pina Rellena, a stuffed pineapple filled with lobster, jumbo shrimp, octopus, and topped with melted chihuahua cheese.

Neighborhood: River North

RPM ITALIAN

www.rpmrestaurants.com/rpm-italian-chicago

52 W. Illinois St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.222.1888

RPM Italian is located in River North, surrounded by tons of restaurants and bars. It's a must when visiting the neighborhood, and already a Chicago staple for homemade pasta, steak, and seafood. Start with Giuliana's Italian salad, a delicious and unique take on a house salad with olives, roasted red pepper, and the lightest and most delicious vinaigrette that makes me want to bottle it up and take it home. Every pasta dish on their menu is worth trying, especially the shrimp scampi and Mama DiPandi's Bucatini. The portions are small, yet tasty, so definitely get two or more pasta dishes to sample. RPM is also blocks away from the Chicago River, so after dining and enjoying some of the best pasta in the city, head to the Riverwalk to take in the beautiful skyline and get drinks at the nearby City Winery.

Neighborhood: Pilsen

EL MILAGRO TORTILLA

www.el-milagro.com

1927 S. Blue Island Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 4.5 miles; 20-minute drive)

312.421.7443

No reservations – walk-ins only

El Milagro is a local favorite in the Pilsen neighborhood. It has been in the area for decades and has remained the same with its casual atmosphere and straightforward menu. One of my favorite dishes is the chicken mole with a side of rice and beans. El Milagro has been a go-to spot in my family for years. It is the perfect place if you're looking for homemade, Mexican comfort food.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition

Neighborhood: Armour Square

RICOBENE'S

www.ricobenespizza.com

252 W. 26th St. (Distance from Fairmont: 3.5 miles; 15-minute drive)

312.225.5555

No reservations – walk-ins only

Ricobene's is another favorite serving up pizza, pasta, and Chicago-style hot dogs. Located in a quiet and unassuming street, the restaurant is fast-casual and delicious. It's a hidden gem that isn't so hidden with the neighborhood locals. It's a true Chicago landmark and it has been in the area since 1946. One of their most popular items is the breaded steak sandwich, which is also one of my favorite sandwiches ever.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Mary Beth Kurzak, Executive Director

Hometown: Omaha, Nebraska

Chicago Resident: I moved to Chicago in 2002 just a few months before starting at the IADC. I had a small apartment in Wrigleyville and lived on a street with a giant metal giraffe sculpture. I loved hearing the cheers from the Cubs games through my open windows during the summer. Then I bought a condo in the North Center neighborhood where I lived for 10 years. I hosted many a party there and my downstairs neighbors became some of my closest friends. Then I moved in with my now fiancé Steve in an apartment in Andersonville for three years before we bought our house just a bit further north in the Edgewater neighborhood in 2019. Many of you have seen the stained glass built-ins behind me on our Zoom calls. Our 115+ year Craftsman Four Square house is very Chicago. We were so thankful to have it, our backyard, and our dog Maggie during this pandemic.

My favorite restaurant is my own kitchen, since Steve is such a great cook, but we do enjoy going out. Here are a few of my favorites.

Neighborhood: Andersonville

BIG JONES

www.bigjoneschicago.com

5347 N. Clark St. (Distance from Fairmont: 8.5 miles; 20-minute drive)

773.275.5725

A fantastic restaurant in the Andersonville neighborhood, which is near our house. It has phenomenal coastal Southern cuisine and cocktails.

Neighborhood: West Loop

GREEN STREET SMOKED MEATS

www.greenstreetmeats.com

112 N. Green St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.754.0431

No reservations – walk-ins only

The West Loop has a ton of great restaurants, but we recently spent a great Saturday afternoon relaxing at Green Street Smoked Meats. Super casual barbeque with seating outside in a charming cobblestone alley.

Neighborhood: Edgewater

SIMPLY PASTEUR

www.pasteurvietnamese.com

5525 N. Broadway (Distance from Fairmont: 8.5 miles; 20-minute drive)

773.728.4800

We are big fans of Vietnamese, and it is fortunate we live close to the Argyle Street historic district in Uptown, which has a ton of Vietnamese restaurants as well as a fantastic Vietnamese grocery store. There are lots of great places for pho in that area, or just a half mile north of there is Simply Pasteur, which has fantastic food and a lovely back patio.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Diana Leon, Administrative Assistant

Hometown: Chicago (Brighton Park)

Chicago Resident: Born and raised in the southwest of Chicago. Currently living in the West Lawn neighborhood with my husband and our 3 kids. Fun fact: One small business in the neighborhood, the Midwest Eye clinic at 63rd and Pulaski, features a tall Native American statue as the landmark of West Lawn. The statue is most notable for being seen in the movie Wayne's World.

Neighborhood: Streeterville

THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY

www.thecheesecakefactory.com

875 N. Michigan Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.337.1101

This Cheesecake Factory is located at the bottom of the John Hancock Center right on Michigan Avenue. This would be a great lunch or dinner spot after you've done some shopping or sightseeing. The menu is HUGE – I always order the Louisiana Chicken and Tiramisu cheesecake.

Neighborhood: River North

PORTILLO'S HOT DOGS

www.portillos.com/locations/chicago

100 W. Ontario St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.587.8910

This Chicago-born chain serves up classic hot dogs, Italian beef sandwiches, and more. I highly recommend this for an affordable, quick lunch or casual dinner. Don't miss out on the chocolate cake shake!

Neighborhood: The Loop

GIORDANO'S

www.giordanos.com/locations/prudential-plaza-millennium-park

130 E. Randolph St. (Distance from Fairmont: .5 miles – A quick walk around the corner!)

312.616.1200

Chicago has the best pizza! Giordano's is one of my favorites, and this location is very close to the Fairmont. Open for lunch and dinner.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Amy O'Maley McGuire, Assistant Director of Legal Programming

Hometown: Fort Wayne, Indiana

Chicago Resident: I've lived in Chicago since 2000 and have always lived in the Old Town neighborhood.

Neighborhood: Little Italy

CHEZ JOEL BISTRO FRANCAIS

www.chezjoelbistro.com

1119 W. Taylor St. (Distance from Fairmont: 3 miles; 15-minute drive)

312.226.6479

Great French bistro in the Little Italy neighborhood! It's quaint, upscale, and family-owned. If the weather is nice, their garden tables are one of the best al fresco dining settings in the city.

Neighborhood: Old Town

ORSO'S

www.orsosrestaurant.com

1401 N. Wells St. (Distance from Fairmont: 2.5 miles; 15-minute drive)

312.787.6604

Orso's is an Italian longtime favorite of the pedestrian-friendly Old Town neighborhood. They serve up some fantastic old-school pastas and other family recipes and have a great outdoor back patio/wine garden.

Neighborhood: Old Town/Lincoln Park

BOKA

www.bokachicago.com

1729 N. Halsted St. (Distance from Fairmont: 4.5 miles; 15-minute drive)

312.337.6070

Beautiful environment. Seasonal American fare. Michelin-starred. If you are looking for any of those things, this is your place.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Melissa Maisel Vanis, Director of Professional Development and Assistant Director of Meetings

Hometown: Wheaton (Chicago Suburb)

Chicago Resident: Since 2011 - I moved to the city as soon as I could after growing up in the Chicago suburbs. Ever since then it has been the city life for me! I've lived in Wicker Park, Ukrainian Village, and now River West, where my husband and I bought a condo in the summer of 2020.

Neighborhood: Wicker Park

PIECE BREWERY AND PIZZERIA

www.piezechicago.com

1927 W. North Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 4 miles; 15-minute drive)

773.772.4422

Come enjoy this award-winning brewpub full of handcrafted lagers and ales with New England style pizza (yes, *Chicago isn't only for deep dish - locals actually don't eat it very often!*) Comes complete with TVs and a generous bar area.

My favorite: White Pizza with Clam and Bacon; On Tap – The Weight or Golden Arm, but you can't go wrong! This is where my husband and I went on our first date and where we celebrated the night of our engagement.

Neighborhood: River West

THE DAWSON

www.the-dawson.com

730 W. Grand Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 2 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.243.8955

The enchanted outdoor dining patio has a wonderful almost garden-like atmosphere. This is an eclectic menu with delicious, handcrafted cocktails. Many brunches and dinners with friends have been had at this local spot.

Neighborhood: Bucktown, Old Town

SMALL CHEVAL

www.smallcheval.com

1732 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Distance from Fairmont: 4 miles; 15-minute drive)

1345 N. Wells (Distance from Fairmont: 2.4 miles; 15-minute drive)

No reservations – walk-ins only

If you are looking for a very casual, no fuss meal, look no further than Small Cheval. The menu only has 3 items – Hamburger, Cheeseburger, and Golden Fries. Ask anyone around, this burger is a favorite of city dwellers. This is a quick meal, but one not to miss. This small gem was born out of parent restaurant, Au Cheval. However, the wait for a table at Au Cheval can be sooo long, that they decided to take the most popular item on their menu and give it its own restaurant!

Neighborhood: West Loop/Fulton Market

CARNIVALE

www.carnivalechicago.com

702 W. Fulton Market (Distance from Fairmont: 1.5 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.850.5005

This is one of the most colorful and unique restaurants in Chicago – and it really feels like you've entered a celebration! It offers delicious Latin fusion cuisine and is great for larger groups.

Chicago Dining Recommendations - Staff Edition



Donna Villa, Meetings Coordinator

Hometown: Born in Cleveland, Ohio (raised in Seven Hills)

Chicago Resident: Moved to Chicago in 1982, a Visual Communications graduate with a passion for photography. My move to Chicago was to fulfill my dream of becoming a Commercial Photographer - that was chapter one. First apartment here was in Uptown. I adored it, the diversity that greeted me in all aspects of life. It was amazing and not something I experienced in Ohio. Moved to Oak Park, IL in 1987 after marrying the love of my life. The restaurants below are tasty treats, if you have the chance – enjoy!

Neighborhood: Uptown

DEMERA RESTAURANT

www.demerachicago.com

4801 N. Broadway St. (Distance from Fairmont: 8 miles; 20-minute drive)

773.334.8787

A casual Ethiopian eatery with shared plates that are served family-style. It is very good and is located across the street from The Green Mill.

Neighborhood: Fulton Market

BOQUERIA FULTON MARKET

www.boqueriarestaurant.com

807 W. Fulton Market (Distance from Fairmont: 2 miles; 10-minute drive)

312.257.3177

This is one of my favorite tapas places. Boqueria brings a taste of Spain and the energy of Barcelona's renowned tapas bars to Chicago's West Loop Fulton Market neighborhood. They serve lunch, happy hour, and dinner.

Neighborhood: River North

FRIENDS SUSHI

www.friendssushi.com/rush/home

710 N. Rush St. (Distance from Fairmont: 1 mile; 10-minute drive)

312.787.8998

This is a hip Japanese lounge with sushi, cocktails, and sake.