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St. Louis Restaurant Guide: 2018

This is an ill-informed guide written by people who don't get out enough. You don't need to tell us that we're ill-informed and don't get out enough; we already know. The guide does have one virtue: it is written from a more or less homogeneous point of view. So you can calibrate.

The guide was originally written for a conference held on the Danforth campus of Washington University in St. Louis (WUStL) and it is maintained largely as a guide for conferences held here. Because of this, there is an organizational bias in the sense that the detailed listings are for the Delmar Loop (within walking distance of the Danforth campus), central Clayton (where conference goers typically have their hotels), and "other"; going to restaurants listed under "other" will typically require a car. But the "other" category is not otherwise shortchanged; it contains a large number of listings.

Here are some other sources for restaurant information.

- [Feast Magazine](#).
- [Riverfront Times](#).
- [Sauce magazine](#).
- [St. Louis Magazine](#).
- [St. Louis Post Dispatch](#)

And of course there's [Yelp](#). Our restaurant listings below provide links to Yelp listings. The reviewer for the Post Dispatch, Ian Froeb, has tastes similar to ours. Froeb's list of the 100 best St. Louis restaurants can be found [here](#) (the Post Dispatch website has no pay wall, but it makes readers take marketing surveys and it is heavy with obnoxious advertising).

There are undoubtedly places where we list restaurants that have closed, moved and so forth. There may be typos in some of our information (although we have tried to check for this). Some of our links may be broken or inaccurate. When in doubt, use Yelp or call the restaurant.

Upscale Restaurants.

No St. Louis restaurant aspires to compete with a top restaurant (e.g., an Eleven Madison Park). The most ambitious restaurants in the area are [Vicia](#) and [Stone Soup Cottage](#) (the latter is not really "in" St. Louis; it is in Cottleville). Some restaurants offer a tasting menu as an option — the tasting menu at Vicia is worth it and we have had pleasant experiences with the tasting menu at The Crossing — but you should set your expectations realistically. Stone Soup Cottage is tasting menu only.

That said, we have a number of good mid-range restaurants. Here are some that would make

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sense from the perspective of a pleasant, upscale meal. These are not necessarily our favorite restaurants (although there is overlap); we have a separate section for that.

- [Bar Les Freres](#). Clayton. French.
- [Citizen Kane's Steak House](#). Kirkwood.
- [The Crossing](#). Clayton. Italian/French.
- [Five Bistro](#). The Hill. New American.
- [Elaia](#). McRee Town. New American. Three James Beard nominations.
- [Farmhaus](#). Lindenwood Park. New American. (Noisy.) Six James Beard nominations.
- [I Fratellini](#). Clayton. Italian.
- [Mango](#). Downtown. Peruvian.
- [Oceano](#). Clayton. Seafood.
- [Olive + Oak](#). Webster Groves. New American.
- [Parigi](#). Clayton. Italian/French.
- [Público](#). Delmar Loop. Latin American. (Noisy.)
- [Private Kitchen](#). University City. Chinese. (Upscale by St. Louis Chinese restaurant standards.)
- [Remy's Kitchen and Wine Bar](#). Clayton. Mediterranean.
- [Scape](#). Central West End. New American.
- [Sidney Street Café](#). Soulard. New American. James Beard Best Chef: Midwest, 2017.
- [Tony's](#). Downtown. Italian.
- [Truffles Restaurant](#). Ladue. New American.
- [Vicia](#). Central West End. Creative, vegetable heavy, farm to table.

And St. Louis also has branches of expense account chain restaurants: 801 Chophouse, 801 Fish, Ruth's Chris, Morton's; all of these are in Clayton.

Favorite Restaurants.

Here is a list of our favorite places to eat. These are not necessarily the best restaurants in St. Louis (some are not even restaurants), and certainly they are not necessarily the fanciest, but these are the places we miss most when we are away. These are the places that we would take close friends to, people we're not treating with kid gloves. We tend to be biased toward relatively inexpensive places with quirky atmosphere.

Dinner

- [Cate Zone Chinese Cafe](#). University City. Dongbei (Northeastern) Chinese.
- [KC Chinese Rotisserie Restaurant](#). University City. Chao Zhou Chinese.
- [Kounter Kulture](#). Lindenwood Park. Asian-esque. Limited seating.
- [Pastaria](#). Clayton. Italian. Noisy, kid friendly.
- [Pizzeoli](#). Soulard. Pizza (vegetarian only), salad, and nothing else.
- [Private Kitchen](#). University. Shanghai Chinese.
- [Taste Bar](#). Central West End. Small plates, cocktails.

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- [Union Loafers](#). McRee Town. Pizza.
- [Vicia](#). Central West End. Creative farm to table.
- [Vista Ramen](#). Benton Park West. Eclectic, hip, cramped. Maybe our favorite restaurant.

Lunch

- [Blueberry Hill](#). Delmar Loop. Burgers.
- [Bogart's Smoke House](#). Benton Park. BBQ.
- [Byrd & Barrel](#). South St. Louis. Fried chicken + cajun.
- [Carl's Drive In](#). Brentwood. Burgers.
- [Corner 17](#). Delmar Loop. Chinese.
- [Like Home. Comme A La Maison](#). Grand Ctr. French sandwiches and pastries.
- [Lona's Lil Eats](#). Fox Park. Yunnan Chinese.
- [Mission Taco Joint](#). Delmar Loop. Mexi-Cali.
- [Peacemaker Lobster and Crab](#). Benton Park. Lobster rolls etc.
- [Pappy's Smokehouse](#). Midtown. BBQ.
- [Parker's Table](#). Hi-Point. Sandwiches
- [Roper's Ribs](#). Jennings. St. Louis style BBQ.
- [Salume Beddu](#). Lindenwood Park. Sandwiches.
- [Seoul Taco](#). Delmar Loop. LA-style Korean tacos.
- [Southern](#). Midtown, next to Pappy's. Nashville-style hot fried chicken.
- [SugarFire Smoke House](#). Olivette. BBQ.
- [Trainwreck Saloon](#). West County. Burgers. A guilty pleasure.
- [U-City Grill](#). Delmar Loop. Korean diner. Can seat maybe eight people.
- [Winslow's Home](#). University City, near the Loop. Comfort food in what looks like a gardening supply store.
- [Woofies](#). Overland. Chicago-style hot dogs. A shack in the middle of nowhere, with some outdoor seating.

Breakfast/Lunch. We aren't big breakfast people but here are some suggestions.

- [City Coffeehouse & Crêperie](#). Clayton. Sandwiches, too.
- [Half & Half](#). Clayton.
- [Pastaria](#). Clayton. Italian. Brunch on weekends.

Other

- [Ted Drewes Frozen Custard](#). St. Louis Hills. Frozen custard.

Friends and colleagues will raise well informed objections to our list. We're just saying, if it were up to us, we would go to one of the places on the above list first, sometimes for quirky or sentimental reasons. We list many other restaurants below.

Two of us (John and Suzanne) don't drink coffee. So just because we list a place with "coffee" in its name doesn't mean we are endorsing it as a coffee place. We can't speak to that. If you want a lead on good coffee, ask someone else.

The original brew pub in St. Louis is the Schlafly Taproom. At the time it was opened, in

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1991, beer in St. Louis meant exclusively Anheuser-Busch products. There are now a number of craft breweries. Unfortunately, we can't give much guidance here because we haven't been going out drinking as much as we used to.

Food by Type.

- *BBQ*. St. Louis has recently evolved into a major barbecue center. See the section on indigenous food.
- *Italian*. Italian (or Italian-American) is the type of food most closely associated with St. Louis. Upscale examples include Tony's and Dominic's. Midscale examples include I Fratellini, Lombardo's, and Bar Italia. A pleasant, scruffier alternative is Mangia Italiano. And if you want tons of Italian-American food, there is Cunnetto's House of Pasta. The traditional Italian neighborhood is "The Hill" but of the restaurants just listed, only Dominic's and Cunnetto's are actually located there.
- *French*. There are only a handful of restaurants that we would classify as French, and many of those are more "modern international" or "mediterranean" than French. Among the most classically French restaurants are Brasserie by Niche and Bar Les Freres.
- *Mediterranean*. Mediterranean is our catchall for restaurants that mix and match various Southern European, and sometimes North African and Middle Eastern, cooking styles. It is a popular style for St. Louis restaurants. Examples include Acero, The Crossing, and [Remy's Kitchen and Wine Bar](#).
- *New American*. Nearly every upscale restaurant in St. Louis is "new" (or modern) American unless it's Italian or Mediterranean. Many of these offer spins on comfort food such as fried chicken. Examples of new American restaurants include Farmhaus, Juniper, Reed's American Table and Olive + Oak. Most new American restaurants also describe themselves as farm to table, so we don't have a separate category for that.
- *Classic American (soul food, BBQ, etc)*. Shaved Duck, Pappy's, Crown Candy, Carl's Drive In, Ted Drewes.
- *Vietnamese*. St. Louis has a number of Vietnamese restaurants, many located along South Grand, including Pho Grand, Lemongrass, and Banh Mi So 1. Closer to the university is Mai Lee.
- *Chinese*. The St. Louis Chinese food scene is undergoing a renaissance of regional Chinese restaurants, including [Cate Zone Chinese Cafe](#), [Corner 17](#), [KC Chinese Rotisserie Restaurant](#), and [Private Kitchen](#). The St. Louis Chinatown was destroyed in 1964 to make room for the previous baseball stadium. The closest analog to a Chinatown is Olive east of the 170, an ugly road with a number of Chinese restaurants and food stores, mostly located in strip malls. A number of these restaurants offer dim sum. Expect MSG unless you ask otherwise, and maybe even then.
- *Korean*. Many St. Louis Chinese and Japanese restaurants are operated by Koreans and some even have mixed Korean/Chinese or Korean/Japanese menus. But for an actual Korean restaurant, try [U-City Grill](#) or [Wudon Korean BBQ](#).
- *Japanese*. People get into arguments about which St. Louis Japanese restaurant is best, which we find unfathomable. The argument is almost always over sushi. Japanese food is

not a St. Louis strength. St. Louis doesn't even have a Japanese food store. Wasabi in Clayton is pleasant, as are a number of other Japanese, or Japanese-ish, restaurants in the area.

- *Indian*. Not a St Louis speciality, but there are some Indian restaurants that we enjoy, even though we have been told by Indian grad students, sometimes forcefully, that many of the ones we like are not good. Options include, [India Rasoi](#), and [India Palace](#). Our current favorite is [Anis Hyderabad](#), but the atmosphere there is food court plus cricket on the TV.
- *Mexican*. We haven't found a Mexican place here that we really like but we have a lengthy "to try" list, including [La Tejana Taqueria](#) and [Taqueria El Branco](#). The latter is one of a number of places along Cherokee Street, a transitional neighborhood that is also home to the non-Mexican [Vista Ramen](#). There are also hybrids that we like, such as [Mission Taco](#) and [Seoul Taco](#).
- *Bulgarian*. St. Louis has a large Bulgarian population, so we probably have some terrific Bulgarian restaurants, but embarrassingly we don't have any leads on this.

Food by Area.

The easiest areas to reach from WUSTL are The Loop (north of the main campus), Clayton (west of the main campus), and the Central West End (north of medical school).

In St. Louis, as in most other US cities we know, a number of important restaurants are located in areas that are, to put it politely, transitional. We are timid people. You may scoff at our timidity. But be careful in the city and in the Delmar Loop, especially at night. On the other hand, we have never personally had any problems anywhere, and if you are in a group you will be fine. Generally speaking, areas west of the University are safe. If you want Disneyland safe, stay in Clayton.

Here are some of the main food areas.

- *Clayton*. The main restaurant area of Clayton is a handful of short, parallel streets that run north/south between Forsyth and Maryland. Central, in particular, has a very large number of restaurants crowded into a single block. We give an explicit listing for Clayton below.
- *Delmar Loop*. On Delmar about five blocks north of WUSTL. Loop restaurants tend to be funkier and more casual than restaurants in Clayton. (There used to be a trolley that had a turnaround in the Loop, hence the name. Remember *Meet Me In St. Louis*? "Clang, clang went the trolley ..." The trolley is being rebuilt but is not yet operational.) We give an explicit listing for the Loop below.
- *Maplewood*. St. Louis County. Developing into one of the top foodie spots in the area, especially along Manchester and on Sutton south of Manchester.
- *The Central West End*. St. Louis City. Immediately north of the WU medical school. It is roughly two miles east of the WU main campus. Restaurants are concentrated along Euclid at the intersections with Laclede, Maryland, McPherson, and a few other streets. The sibling restaurants Brasserie by Niche and [Taste](#) are current standouts, but there are many other restaurants in the general vicinity. The Central West End is booming, with constant construction of new apartment complexes, some expensive.
- *The Hill*. St. Louis City, roughly midtown. Maybe a foot higher than the surrounding area,

but we're not sure even about that. St. Louis's Italian district. It has a number of Italian restaurants, some old school formal (jacket and tie). In the same area are a number of other restaurants, including Five Bistro and O'Connell's Pub.

- *Tower Grove South*. South St Louis City along or near South Grand. A large number of Vietnamese restaurants, some of them very good. Choices include Banh Mi So and Pho Grand. Other restaurants of interest include the King and I, Mangia Italiano, and Black Thorn.
- *Lafayette Square*. St Louis City, south and west of downtown. [Park Avenue Coffee](#) (gooey butter cake) plus a number of other restaurants and food establishments, including Eleven Eleven, Vin de Set (nearby), Park Avenue Coffee, and Bailey's Chocolate Bar.
- *Washington Street*. The main downtown restaurant area is along Washington Street. Mango is here.
- *Soulard*. St. Louis City, south of downtown. [Bogart's](#), [McGurk's](#), [Pizzeoli](#).
- *Benton Park*. St. Louis City, southwest of downtown. One of the main restaurant areas. [Peacemaker](#), [Sidney Street Café](#), Blues City Deli, among others.
- *The Grove*. Manchester, midtown. Vibrant but transitional area. Large number of bars and clubs on the east end, near Sarah, some LGBT affiliated.
- *McRee Town*. The intersection of Tower Grove Ave and McRee Ave. A cluster of restaurants started by Ben Poremba's Elaia and Olio. It now also contains La Patisserie Chouquette, [Union Loafers](#), and Nixta. The area is hip but transitional.
- *Cherokee Street*. South St. Louis. Home to a large number of Mexican restaurants and also to [Vista Ramen](#). The area is hip but transitional.
- *Cottleville*. About 30 minutes west of WUSStL. Home to [Stone Soup Cottage](#), the top restaurant in the area according to the St. Louis Post Dispatch and a number of other foodie oriented establishments, including VB Chocolate Bar.
- *Edwardsville*. About 40 minutes east of WUSStL and home to SIUE. Home to Peel and Cleveland-Heath, both of which we recommend.
- *Washington*. About 50 minutes west of WUSStL. It has also recently turned into a foodie oasis. Especially notable is The Blue Duck (a branch of which just opened in Maplewood, but the original is superior) and an outpost of Sugarfire.

Food Indigenous to St. Louis.

The 1904 St. Louis Purchase Exposition, usually called the St. Louis World's Fair, is widely credited with popularizing hamburgers in the standard American form (brioche-based bun, ground beef, lettuce, tomato, and pickles), hot dogs on a bun, and the waffle ice cream one.

- *Barbecue*. The quintessential indigenous St. Louis barbecue is pork steak (from the shoulder), typically grilled then simmered in a sweet, tomato-based barbecue sauce (the store brand Maull's is an example of a St. Louis barbecue sauce). But pork steak can be hard to find in restaurants in the main metropolitan area. It is more of backyard barbecue kind of thing. Other typical St. Louis barbecue foods are crispy pork snoots (from the snout and cheeks; we don't like these much) and grilled salsiccia sausage. Many of the best known barbecue restaurants in St. Louis specialize in non-indigenous barbecue: dry-rubbed,

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smoked pork ribs and other dry-rubbed smoked meats (notably, brisket), vaguely Memphis is style, but sweeter. “St. Louis-style” ribs refers to a butcher’s cut of pork ribs; it is not a style of barbecue. All this said, St. Louis has become one of the most important barbecue towns in the US. In the [Daily Meal](#)’s listing of top barbecue in the US, three of the top 20 were from St. Louis, the most for any city; [Pappy's Smokehouse](#) was at the top, coming in 8th, with [Bogart's Smokehouse](#) and [Roper's Ribs](#) also on the list. In 2015, the Food Network named Pappy’s the top BBQ place in the country for pork ribs. We also like [SugarFire Smoke House](#). BBQ writer Johnny Fuggitt likes the burnt ends at [Shaved Duck](#), but we haven’t had them.

- *Concrete*. Concrete is frozen custard (ice cream with high egg yolk content) served in a cup and, typically, with mix-ins. There are many places in the area selling frozen custard in general and concretes in particular, and there are debates about which one is best, but the default is [Ted Drewes](#). Ted Drewes may have coined the term “concrete” and is certainly closely associated with it (Ted Drewes actually started in Florida but soon settled in St. Louis.) The main Ted Drewes location is on what used to be Route 66. On a warm summer night, the place is right out of a movie. There is no substitute for actually going to Ted Drewes. (Remark: you’ll find concretes on the NYC menus of Shake Shack; Shake Shack’s founder, Danny Meyer, is a St. Louis boy.)
- *Goosey butter cake*. It looks like a lemon square but tastes like super-sweet cheesecake. [Park Avenue Coffee](#) offers a crazy number of variations.
- *Slinger*. Late-night, or early morning, diner food, featuring a hamburger patty, eggs, hash browns, chili, and anything else that comes to mind. Vaguely related to the horseshoe (native to Springfield, Il), which in turn is related to poutine.
- *St. Louis pizza-style*. Immigrants to St. Louis generally dislike it. Ultra thin crust, heavy on the oregano, topped with provel (imitation provolone); a bad version can resemble rubber cement on cardboard. The best known source is the Imos chain although we recommend going to [Frank & Helens Pizzeria](#) instead.
- *Toasted ravioli*. T-ravs are ravioli that is deep fried (not, in fact, toasted) and then served with pizza sauce. It is a guilty pleasure for some. [Salt + Smoke](#) offers a good, but unconventional, version.
- *Brain Sandwiches*. Once a St. Louis standard, now hard to find. The two sandwiches that John has had were unpleasant. You don’t want to eat a brain sandwich from a place that doesn’t sell them very often.

Restaurateurs.

We’re probably missing some important people but here are a few of the noteworthy restaurateurs in the St. Louis area.

- *Gerald Craft*. The single biggest name in St. Louis restaurants, head of the Niche Food Group and founder and owner of Brasserie by Niche, [Pastaria](#), Sardella, and [Taste Bar](#). Winner of the 2015 James Beard award for Best Chef: Midwest for Niche (which no longer exists), nominated in 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010, 2009.
- *David Bailey*. Bailey’s Chocolate Bar, [Bailey's Range](#), [Bridge Tap House and Wine Bar](#), the Fifth Wheel, Small Batch, Shift.

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- *Jim Fiala*. [The Crossing](#) and *Acero*.
- *Michael Johnson*. Owns the rapidly expanding [Sugarfire Smoke House](#) empire and the recently opened Hi-Pointe Drive-In. But he has been prolific launcher of restaurants, a total of 11, most of which he then sold.
- *Kevin Nashan*. Winner of the 2017 James Beard award for Best Chef: Midwest. His main restaurant is [Sidney Street Cafe](#). Also the owner of [Peacemaker](#).
- *Ben Poremba*. One of the founders of [Salume Beddu](#) (but has sold his share). Currently owns [Elaia](#), [Olio](#), [Parigi](#), and, most recently, [Nixta](#).
- *Zoe Robinson*. [Bobo Noodle House](#) (since sold), [I Fratellini](#), and [Bar Les Freres](#), and before these, several other restaurants. Katie's Pizza & Pasta is her niece's (who got her restaurant experience working in one of Robinson's earlier restaurants).

Detailed Listings.

We've organized restaurants by location. First comes downtown Clayton. Then comes the Loop. Then comes "elsewhere." Upscale refers both to the ambition of the kitchen and to prices. For an upscale restaurant, think \$45 a person and up (possibly way up for places like Tony's), not counting wine. We list signature dishes, or favorite dishes, where relevant. For a few restaurants, the menu changes so frequently that listing dishes is pointless. We've listed a number of restaurants that we haven't been to, or haven't been to recently, but that we think are of interest for one reason or another.

Downtown Clayton.

- **Almonds**. [Yelp](#). 8127 Maryland, Clayton. (314) 725-1019. American contemporary, with a Cajun/creole bias. Upscale but informal. Good food and cheaper than some of the other Clayton area competitors. Plain room that is fun and noisy if the place is crowded but stark otherwise. Have not been recently.
- **BARcelona Tapas**. [Yelp](#). Clayton. 34 North Central Ave, 63105. (314) 863-9909 Tapas. Have not been recently. When we were last there, it was good and also noisy. Get the sausages and don't expect authenticity.
- **Bar Les Freres**. [Yelp](#). Clayton. 7637 Wydown Blvd. 63105. (314) 725-8880. French, and one of only a handful of restaurants in St. Louis that style themselves as French (Brasserie by Niche is another). It's good, and if the weather permits, eating in front of the restaurant can be pleasant. A Zoe Robinson restaurant.
- **Cafe Napoli**. [Yelp](#). Clayton. 7754 Forsyth, 63105. (314) 863-5731. Italian. Somewhat upscale; the room is dark, clubby. In nice weather, you can eat outdoors. Dinner can be expensive, depending on what you order. A polarizing restaurant. A great favorite for some; for us it is merely good (and its Yelp listing is now down to 3.5 stars). The pasta dishes are ridiculously large, twice as large as they should be.
- **City Coffeehouse and Crêperie**. [Yelp](#). Clayton. 36 N Brentwood Blvd, 63105. (314) 862-2489. The specialties are the crepes and waffles but John prefers the brie and ham sandwich. Predates the crepe fad. Can be ridiculously crowded. Counter order. A favorite.
- **The Crossing**. [Yelp](#). Clayton. 7823 Forsyth, 63105. (314) 721-7375. French/Italian; the restaurant name is intended to evoke the meeting of a number of different Mediterranean

styles. Upscale and somewhat formal. Food is well conceived and well prepared. The *prix fixe* menus are a good value, with the exception of the top end “chef’s tasting” menu, which is more courses but largely the same. Service is somewhat affected; they make a show of waiting to give menus. Booth seating is cramped. A favorite of many and a borderline favorite for us, but there are other places we enjoy more.

- **Dominic’s Trattoria.** [Yelp](#). 200 South Brentwood, 63105. (314) 863-4567. Italian. Old school Italian but well prepared and pleasant with good service. Much less formal than its sister, Dominic’s.
- **5 Star Burgers.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 8125 Maryland Ave, 63105. (314) 720-4350. Good burgers, arguably as good as any in the city. Good happy hour sliders. Now several locations but this is the original.
- **Grill at Ritz Carlton.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 100 Carondelet Plz, 63105. (314) 863-6300. Steak and other. Loved the service and the food was very good (but pricey). Downside is that when we went, there was a faint acrid cigar smell coming from next door cigar room. By the time we left, our clothes smelled of cigars. And the room is windowless. It’s a shame because otherwise this would be a nice choice for a celebration dinner.
- **Half & Half.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 8135 Maryland Ave, 63105. (314) 340-8348. Breakfast and lunch; brunch on weekends. Our top pick for breakfast and one of the best lunch options. Lemony “donuts.” Wonderful eggs with pork belly. Burger is good, but a huge cheesy mess and may be just too much; ditto for the steak sandwich. Terrific BLT but, again, a lot of food. Unfortunately, insanely crowded and the kitchen, when it gets slammed (which is all the time), bogs down. A Mike Randolph restaurant and near favorite.
- **I Fratellini.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 7624 Wydown Blvd, 63105. (314) 727-7901. Italian. Not in the main restaurant district. Italian. Highly regarded by many, but we find the food too oily for our taste. A Zoe Robinson Restaurant.
- **The Libertine.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 7927 Forsyth Blvd, 63105. (314) 862-2999. New American. Reliable upscale choice.
- **Nami Ramen.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 46 N Central Ave, 63105. (314) 762-1828. Ramen and a bit more. The lunch special is a decent value. A borderline favorite for lunch.
- **Oceano Bistro.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 44 N. Brentwood Blvd, 63105. (314) 721-9400 Seafood. One of the more reliable restaurants in the area. Many of the starters are good. The bread is served warm and with a nice dip of olive oil and a pepper coulis. Dishes sometimes come with a bit of jalapeno cream or some other Southwestern flourish. A borderline favorite.
- **Parigi.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 8025 Bonhomme Ave, 63105. (314) 899-9767. A Ben Poremba restaurant. The restaurant’s name is intended to evoke the idea of an Italian’s view of Paris. ([The Crossing](#) has a similar concept.) The best dishes (fried oysters, a fish stew, a soup) were delicious, but some other dishes have been weirdly flat. Good bread. Relatively upscale.
- **Pastaria.** [Yelp](#). 7734 Forsyth Blvd, Clayton. (314) 862-6603. Kid friendly. Excellent pasta, good pizza, but don’t ignore menu items like the chicken. Excellent chocolate gelato. It fills up early. Also good for brunch on weekends.
- **Remy’s Kitchen and Wine Bar.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 222 S. Bemiston, 63105. (314) 726-5757. Mediterranean. Upscale but informal. Crowded, lively but not oppressively so. For a light

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meal, try the cheese plate, which will take all of dinner to chew through. Remy's offers several wine flights, which are three half glasses. Keyne's quote on one wall. Borderline for the favorites list.

- **Sardella.** [Yelp](#). 7734 Forsyth, Clayton. (314) 773-7755. The restaurant formerly known as Niche and the flagship of Gerald Craft's St. Louis restaurant empire. We've found it just OK and apparently others have, too. The chef has just been replaced by the chef from Pastaria.
- **Wasabi.** [Yelp](#). 16 S. South Central, Clayton. 721-9970. Nigiri etc is brought to the table in a wooden boat, which, depending on your mood, is either whimsical or goofy.

Delmar Loop.

In terms of safety, the Delmar Loop area is good during the day but there are still occasional incidents. Lunch will be fine. Dinner should be as well, especially if you are in a group. If you are nervous, stick to Clayton. Generally speaking, things get rougher as you move either north of Delmar or east of Skinker.

- **Blueberry Hill.** [Yelp Listing](#). Delmar Loop. 6504 Delmar, 63130. (314) 727-2277. Spawling bar. Until his recent death, Chuck Berry played once a month in the Duck Room downstairs. Burgers are good, sometimes very good, with two qualifications: (1) too often, the buns have been stale and crumbly and (2) if you order a cheddar burger, the cheddar comes as a ball of soft cheese spread. The larger of the two burger sizes has been more consistently good. Fries and onion rings are good. Restaurant is smoky. Fairly extensive beer selection, some of it on tap. Some of the waiters have impressive tattoos and piercings, which we always like. A U-City institution and the owner, Joe Edwards, has been the driving force behind the rejuvenation of the Loop.
- **Bobo Noodle House.** [Yelp](#). University City. 278 N. Skinker, MO 63130. 863-7373. Pho and other Asian noodle and related dishes. Originally a Zoe Robinson restaurant, since sold. Decor is hip spartan. Not, strictly speaking, in the Loop but close to it, and to WUStL, at the corner of Skinker and Forest Park/Millbrook. Recommended even though a bit pricy.
- **Cicero's.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6691 Delmar Blvd, 63103. (314) 862-0009. American bar, somewhat like Blueberry Hill. Informal. The half pound burger on garlic bread can be good. Stark room. Fairly extensive beer selection. Have not been recently.
- **Chinese Noodle Café.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. Skinker. 6138 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 725-9889. American Chinese. About what you'd expect, but very friendly and the hot and sour soup has cilantro, which is always nice. Located in the extended Loop east of Skinker.
- **Corner 17.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6632 Delmar Blvd. 63112. (314) 727-2402. The best place in the area for Sichuan food. John's favorite dish is the Sichuan chicken wings (but be prepared to deal with a lot of tiny bones). The other speciality are the fresh noodle dishes; we prefer the shaved noodles. A favorite.
- **Fitz's.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6605 Delmar, 63130. (314) 726-9555. A brew pub, except the brew is root beer, based on a local recipe. Execution has been so wobbly for so long that we hardly ever go. But we like the root beer, which we've even spotted at Bouchon Bakery in St. Helena.

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- **Fork & Stix.** [Yelp](#). 549 Rosedale Ave, 63112. (314) 863-5572. Northern Thai. Our favorite place to go for Thai food. Main drawback is that it is somewhat remote for walking from WUSTL (it is on the far east boundary of the extended Loop, east of Skinker). A borderline favorite.
- **Mission Taco Joint.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6345 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 932-5430. Mexi-Cali. Several locations but this is the original. A favorite.
- **Pi.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6144 Delmar Blvd, 63112. (314) 314-727-6633. Pizza. Made a splash when the Obamas asked the chef/owner to cook pizzas in the White House. How is it? Good but different. The thin crust is very thin: closer to a parmesan crisp than Neapolitan. The deep dish is filled with a crushed tomato sauce; relatively light on cheese as deep dish goes. Skip the chicken and pesto (bland, dry). The garlic bread is deconstructed (you get bread, butter, and a head of oven roasted garlic). The wings are good. No reservations for small groups and can be crowded so go early. Now a chain, with a branch in DC, but this is the original. Located in the extended Loop east of Skinker.
- **Público.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6679 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 833-5780. Latin American. Get the guacamole arepa. A Mike Randolph restaurant. On a recent visit, not as good as it once was.
- **Ranoush.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6501 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 726-6874. Slightly upscale (by Loop standards) Syrian restaurant. Always happy to go here.
- **Salt + Smoke.** [Yelp](#). 6525 Delmar Blvd, 63130. The Delmar Loop. (314) 727-0200. Relatively upscale BBQ place in the Loop. Wish we could be more enthusiastic. Wins raves from some local reviewers for brisket but we're not feeling it. Toasted ravioli are the best in town, though.
- **Seoul Taco.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6665 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 863-1148. LA-style Korean tacos. Limited menu. But tasty. A favorite.
- **Tavolo V.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6118 Delmar Blvd, 63112. (314) 721-4333. Italian (-ish). In what appears to be a converted garage. If the weather is nice, the sidewalk tables are nice. Get the funghi pasta. The "Neapolitan" pizzas are skippable (and not Neapolitan): very thin, with a wide, cracker-like rim. Located in the extended Loop east of Skinker.
- **Three Kings Public House.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6307 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 721-3355. Can be good, even very good, but uneven. Avoid the mussels (bad mussel dishes seem to be a St. Louis theme).
- **U-City Grill.** [Yelp](#). Delmar Loop. 6696 Enright Ave, 63130. (314) 721-3073. (Behind Cicero's). Korean in a tiny, cramped American diner that also serves scrambled eggs and hamburgers. Very informal. Don't even think of going in a big group. A favorite.

Around St. Louis.

- **Acero.** [Yelp](#). Maplewood. 7266 Manchester Rd, 63143. (314) 644-1790. Mediterranean. More casual sister restaurant of [The Crossing](#). Get the raviolo.
- **Amighetti's Bakery & Cafe.** [Yelp](#). The Hill. 5141 Wilson Ave, 63110. (314) 776-2855. There are actually multiple locations but this is the original. The Amighetti's special (a sub) is a family favorite.
- **Anis Hyderabad.** [Yelp](#). West County. 12637 Olive, 63141. Current favorite Indian. Order at

the counter. Austere but with lots of TVs on which to watch Bollywood or cricket. Huge, overwhelming menu (something like 10 different goat dishes).

- **Bailey's Range.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 920 Olive St, 63101. Burgers. Large, complicated, menu. The burgers are ok, as are the fries, but nothing is as great as we want it to be. Given our druthers, we'd rather go to [Carl's Drive In](#), [Hi-Pointe](#), or [Trainwreck](#).
- **Banh Mi So.** [Yelp](#). Dutchtown. 4071 S Grand Blvd, 63118. (314) 353-0545. Vietnamese. Informal. Run by an older couple, with no other staff; the wife is the chef and she is fanatical about freshness, which can lead to long waits if the place is even slightly crowded. Ordering food ahead can help. Arguably the best Vietnamese restaurant in the area.
- **Bar Italia Ristorante.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 13 Maryland Plaza, 63108. (314) 361-7010. Italian by way of Ethiopia. Uneven but can be good and the outdoor area is attractive.
- **BBQ Saloon.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 4900 Laclede Ave, 63108. (314) 833-6666. BBQ obviously. The big twist here is that they offer beef ribs. We *love* BBQ beef ribs but we don't love *these* beef ribs; they are just too fatty. Still hoping that they will work out their problems; St. Louis could really use some great BBQ beef ribs.
- **Black Thorn Pub.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove South. 3735 Wyoming St. 63116. (314) 776-0534. A bar with pizza. Often winner of local polls for best pizza, and it is good hearty pizza. Deep dish with lots and lots of cheese. Some of the rooms have blackboards if you need to write down a sudden thought.
- **Blues City Deli.** [Yelp](#). Benton Park. 1438 McNair Ave, 63104. (314) 773-8225. Tiny, crowded blues themed. Sandwiches and chili dogs. Beer but also a large selection of root beer (including Fitz's of course). For 2017, #28 on Yelp's top 100 restaurants.
- **Bogart's Smokehouse.** [Yelp](#). Soulard. 1627 S 9th Street, 63104. (314) 621-3107. Run by the former pitmaster at Pappy's. The dry-rubbed ribs, blowtorched before serving, are beautiful, and they taste good, too: sweet, with pronounced black pepper. Better than Pappy's? Well Too many variables. It's in the running. Also get the burnt ends, if they have them, and the very non-vegetarian baked beans. The brisket, on the other hand, is sliced too thin for our taste.
- **Boogaloo.** [Yelp](#). 7344 Manchester, Maplewood. (314) 645-4803. Eclectic, Caribbean mix. Fun, noisy atmosphere; bar chair swings instead of bar stools. We like the concept but the execution is uneven.
- **Brasserie by Niche.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 4580 Laclede Ave, 63108. (314) 454-0600. A Gerald Craft restaurant. Very traditional basic French food. Relatively inexpensive. Fries here can be the best in town.
- **Bridge Tap House and Wine Bar.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 1004 Locust St, 63101. (314) 241-8141. Area feels a bit barren, a part of downtown that is just starting to revive. But Bridge is good. Huge beer list. Menu is small plates comfort food; everything we've had has been good.
- **Broadway Oyster Bar.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 736 S Broadway, 63102. (314) 621-8811. Bar. Cajun. The barbecued shrimp is the best version of this dish that you'll get in St. Louis (but still not up to the real thing).
- **Byrd & Barrel.** [Yelp](#). South St. Louis. 3422 S. Jefferson Ave. (314) 875-9998. Fried chicken shack. It's good fried chicken. Tasty cajun-style poutine. Unusually for a fried chicken joint,

they serve liquor, not just beer but hard liquor. Not a part of town you would normally visit. A favorite.

- **Carl's Drive In.** [Yelp](#). Brentwood. 9033 Manchester Rd, 63144. (314)-9652. A time machine. Two small counters flank the kitchen. Burgers and root beer. Burgers are small, smashed with crispy edges, and come plain unless you specifically tell them pickles, lettuce and whatever else you want. We get two singles. A favorite.
- **Cate Zone Chinese Cafe.** [Yelp](#). 8148 Olive Blvd. University City. (314) 738-9923. Dongbei (Northeastern) Chinese. Current favorite Chinese restaurant in St. Louis. Gets crowded by 6pm. Talk to the staff to order. A favorite.
- **Central Table.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 23 S Euclid Ave, 63108. (314) 932-5595. Upscale food hall by day, industrial chic restaurant by night. Only been once, at night. The night menu is mainly sushi and pizza. The pizza is good, not great. An Octopus appetizer was excellent, however, the best octopus we've had in St. Louis. Keep meaning to go back but have not been back recently.
- **Citizen Kane's Steak House.** [Yelp](#). Kirkwood. 133 W Clinton Pl., 63122. (314) 965-9005. Only been once but, because of its quirky and cozy atmosphere, perhaps our favorite steak restaurant in the area.
- **Crown Candy Kitchen.** [Yelp](#). 1401 St. Louis Ave, 63106. (314) 621-9650. A true old fashioned ice cream and soda palace. Very informal. A St. Louis institution. Even highlighted in Bon Appetit. Located in a part of town that was unsafe but is now undergoing extensive gentrification. Menu has grilled cheese, chili dogs, and Reubens, but no burgers. Shakes and sundaes are good. The milkshake challenge was one of Adam Richman's total defeats on Man vs. Food. It was not a pretty sight; he chose eggnog as one of his flavors. Borderline favorite, but we go rarely because of its location.
- **Cunetto House of Pasta.** [Yelp](#). 5453 Magnolia Ave, 63139. (314) 781-1135. Near the Hill. Italian American. Informal. Giant portions. If you are thinking of going to Magianno's, a chain, try going here instead. The food is similar and this place is old St. Louis. But expect to wait in line.
- **Demun Oyster Bar.** [Yelp](#). Clayton. 740 Demun Ave, 63105. (314) 725-0322. Small restaurant with few tables; some outdoor seating. Has a platter with a variety of menu items (oysters, mussels, shrimp, etc.). Get oysters or the mussels in cream.
- **Dewey's.** [Yelp](#). Kirkwood. 124 N Kirkwood, 63122. (314) 821-7474. Branch of a good pizza chain from Cincinnati. Restaurants are very family friendly, despite the beer and music. Of the locations, the one on Delmar in University City is much closer to WUSTL, but we prefer this one in Kirkwood.
- **Elaia.** [Yelp](#). McRee Town, 1634 Tower Grove Ave, 63110. (314) 932-1088. Upscale, and upstairs sibling of Olio. This is one of the more expensive restaurants in St. Louis. But it can be worth it. And unusually good wine pairings. Elaia and Olio are jointly one of Bon Appetit's best new restaurant nominees for 2013.
- **Element Restaurant and Lounge.** [Yelp](#). 1419 Carroll St., 63104. Near Soulard. Upscale but still reasonably priced. Portions are relatively small (a plus in our view). Attractive room in an converted factory. The restaurant has struggled but it is one of the better options of its type.

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- **Farmhaus.** [Yelp](#). Lindenwood Park. 3257 Ivanhoe Ave,(314) 647-3800. New American. Willman was one of Food & Wine's best new chefs for 2011 and is frequently nominated for a James Beard. Rustic and noisy. Get the mushroom salad.
- **Five Bistro.** [Yelp](#). The Hill. 5100 Daggett Ave,63110. (314) 773-5553. Modern American. Devoti, along with the chef at Farmhaus, was in the running for Food & Wine's 2011 list of best new chefs.
- **Fozzie's Sandwich Emporium.** [Yelp](#). Richmond Heights. 1170 S Big Bend Blvd, 63117. (314) 932-5414. Atmosphere is beach shack but located on an unlovely stretch of Big Bend just south of Clayton Rd. Specializes in sandwiches (Black & Blue and Gracey are two standouts). Hamburgers and hotdogs, too.
- **Frank & Helens Pizzeria.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8111 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 997-0666. A St. Louis institution, with St. Louis-style pizza and broasted chicken (pressure cooked fried chicken).
- **Fountain on Locust.** [Yelp](#). Midtown. 3037 Locust st, 63103. (314) 535-7800. An old-timey ice cream and soda place, with the twist that most of the concoctions involve alcohol. There is a whole page devoted to ice cream martinis. Food is mainly soups and sandwiches. Noisy and cheerful.
- **Gioia's Deli.** [Yelp](#). 1934 Macklind Ave, 63110, (314) 776-9410. Winner of a 2017 "American Classic" award from James Beard; they've been turning out hot salami sandwiches for almost a century. Oily but tasty. Read the Yelp listings for advice; the amount of choice is overwhelming.
- **Guerrilla Street Food.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove East. 3559 Arsenal St, 63130. (314) 529-1328. Area is still somewhat transitional, but becoming less so. Philippines-fusion (think a Philippines version of Seoul Taco). Friendly, funky. Order at counter. Get the flying pig on rice.
- **Gus's World Famous Fried Chicken.** [Yelp](#). Maplewood. 7434 Manchester Rd, 63143. (314) 899-9899. St. Louis outpost of the Memphis original. Very glad to have it but the one time we visited it the kitchen was totally slammed. Plus Byrd & Barrel and Southern, while a bit different, give it very stiff competition.
- **Hi-Pointe Drive-In.** [Yelp](#). Hi-Pointe. 1033 McCausland Ave, 63117. (314) 349-2720. A Michael Johnson restaurant. Retro burger joint with a noisy, hip, somewhat industrial-chic feel. Excellent shakes, worth going just for them. Smashed burgers with crispy edges and fresh veggies. We approve of the use of sandwich sliced pickles. But the burger is salty, too salty for our taste. Fries are tasty but salty and limper than we would like. Extensive menu of other items that we haven't tried. Parking can be a serious hassle. Sauce magazine's top new restaurant of 2017 for St. Louis.
- **Hodak's.** [Yelp](#). Benton Park. 2100 Gravois, 63104. (314) 776-7292. Fried Chicken. The coating for the chicken is hard and smooth. And the chicken comes with barbecue sauce, if you want. But it is nicely cooked. Listing this because it is a St. Louis institution but have not been in years.
- **House of India.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8501 Delmar Blvd, 63124. (314) 567-6850. Indian. We have been told in very strong terms that it is not authentic. And yet we keep going back.
- **India Rasoi.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 25 N. Euclid Ave, 63108. (314) 361-6911. One of the

better options for Indian food in St. Louis.

- **India Palace.** [Yelp](#). Bridgeton. 4534 N Lindbergh Blvd, floor 11, 63044. (314) 731-3333. One of the best regarded Indian restaurants in the area. In a weird location atop a somewhat dingy office tower next to a Best Western. But you can watch the airplanes come and go from Lambert-St. Louis.
- **Iron Barley Eating Establishment.** [Yelp](#). Carondelet. 5510 Virginia Ave, 63111. (314) 351-4500. The atmosphere is country bar, complete with live music, but the food is an eclectic mix of American and European comfort foods with an emphasis on barley (thus, for example, they have a barley risotto). The mussels and pork were good. Skip dessert. Listing it because it was a favorite but have not been back recently; somewhat far away for us and heavy.
- **John D. McGurk's Irish Pub.** [Yelp](#). Soulard. 1200 Russell Blvd, 63104. (314) 776-8309. OK pub food, but a very pleasant courtyard. If the weather is nice and you can get a courtyard table, this becomes a favorite.
- **Joy Luck Buffet.** [Yelp](#). Brentwood. 8030 Manchester Rd, 63144. (314) 645-9982. One of the oddest Chinese restaurants in St. Louis. As the name says, it's Chinese buffet. Except that it also has a Sichuan menu, completely different from the buffet. For food ordered from the menu, it is one of the few St. Louis restaurants that uses Sichuan peppercorns. For us, it was once a favorite but has slipped; [Corner 17](#), its sister restaurant, now dominates.
- **Juniper.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 360 N Boyle Ave, 63108. (314) 520-6750. Upscale southern/soul food. Peanut butter on the waffles in chicken and waffles was just wrong. But the fried chicken and gnocchi soup (a special that night) was wonderful, as was the Huenot Torte with buttermilk salted caramel ice cream.
- **KC Chinese Rotisserie Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). 8233 Olive Blvd. University City. (314) 567-0199 (but don't call unless you speak Cantonese or Mandarin). Chao Zhou. One of the most interesting Chinese restaurant in St. Louis but there are some quirks. They don't speak English. They do, however, now have an English menu. A few of the dishes fall into the category of acquired taste. You get your own rice and tea from carts at the front of the restaurant. The restaurant itself has on hand only frozen fish, which it can fry (good, even so). But the chef tells customers he *wants* them to bring their own fresh fish to cook. Even with all these idiosyncrasies, one of our favorite Chinese restaurant in St. Louis. Get the Chao Zhou duck and the Chao Zhou chicken (these are different dishes).
- **King and I Thai.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove South. 3157 S Grand Blvd, 63118. (314) 771-1777. Perennial poll winner for best Thai. It's fine but nothing to write home about.
- **Kounter Culture.** [Yelp](#). Lindenwood Park. 3825 Watson Rd, 63109, (314) 781-4344. Dinner only, M-F (not weekends). Mainly take out but there is some seating outside. The food is a bit like that at Vista Ramen: they make whatever they feel like making and food often has Korean or other Asian accents. A favorite.
- **La Pizza.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8137 Delmar Blvd, 63130. (314) 725-1230. New York-style pizza in a rigorously sterile setting. When we get take out pizza, it is from here.
- **Lemongrass.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove South. 3216 S. Grand Blvd, 63118. (314) 664-6702. Vietnamese. Uneven, can be good. Pho Grand is more consistent and prettier.
- **Like Home. Comme A La Maison.** [Yelp](#). 3855 Lindell Blvd, 63108. (314) 319-0099.

French pastries plus sandwiches, soups, salads. Cute place run by nice French people. Ask for suggestions. A favorite.

- **Lona's Lil Eats.** [Yelp](#). Fox Park. 2199 California Ave, 63104, (314) 899-5582. Yunnan Chinese, but eclectic. Hip and (very) casual. A favorite.
- **Lu Lu Seafood.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8224 Olive, University City. (314) 997-3108. Chinese. A large and interesting menu for dinner. Dim sum. Very variable, but our last few visits for dim sum have been OK, with good variety and adequate quality. That said, we default to Mandarin House for dim sum.
- **Mai Lee.** [Yelp](#). Brentwood. 8396 Musick Memorial Dr. 63144. (314) 645-2835. Behind Best Buy. Vietnamese. A St. Louis institution, immensely popular. Get the Goi Sen salad, the Banh Xeo crepe, and one of the dishes that you cook for yourself at your table ("Do it yourself springrolls"). Borderline favorite.
- **Mandarin House Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). Overland. 9150 Overland Plz, 63114. (314) 427-8070. This is where we typically go for dim sum. It can be good for dinner, too, but for dinner we tend to go to places like [Cate Zone](#).
- **Mango.** [Yelp](#). 1101 Lucas Ave, Downtown. (314) 621-9993. Peruvian. Upscale but informal and dominated by a bar. We tend to focus on the small plates. Get the beef heart skewers, the chocolate cake, and, of course, a pisco sour. A borderline favorite.
- **Nathaniel Reid Bakery.** [Yelp](#). 11243 Manchester Rd, 63122. Kirkwood. (314) 858-1019. In a strip mall. French bakery with sandwiches. Pastry is exceptionally beautiful. A prosciutto and gruyere on baguette sandwich was terrific, but then disappeared from the menu.
- **Nixta.** [Yelp](#). McRee Town. 1621 Tower Grove Ave, 63110. (314) 899-9000. Ben Poremba's latest restaurant. Upscale but casual Mexican. The food is pretty to look at, and tastes good, but it is on the delicate side and nothing was spicy. A Bon Appetite best new restaurant for 2017.
- **Nobu's Japanese Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8643 Olive Street, 63132. (314) 997-2303. Japanese. *The Nobu?* Depends on what you mean by "the." This is the only Nobu we know of that's located in a converted International House of Pancakes. Good St. Louis Japanese, but some people get very excited about it and we just don't get that. The most interesting dishes may be the two kama meshi, best eaten in cold weather.
- **O'Connell's Pub.** [Yelp](#). Southwest Garden. 4652 Shaw, 63110. (314) 773-6600. Irish pub. Often vies in the polls for best burger in St. Louis. It's certainly a big burger. The place to be on St Patrick's Day.
- **Olio.** [Yelp](#). McRee Town, 1634 Tower Grove Ave, 63110. (314) 932-1088. A Ben Poremba restaurant. Wine bar with tapas-like food. No reservations. If the weather permits, sitting out on the patio is wonderful. Physically connected to its upscale, upstairs sibling, Elaia.
- **Olive + Oak.** [Yelp](#). Webster Groves. 102 W Lockwood Ave, 63119. (314) 736-1370. Widely regarded as the best new restaurant (e.g. it is the 2017 Readers' Choice for Sauce Magazine). It's good, in the New American/upscale comfort food vein of restaurants such as Farmhaus, Juniper, and Reed's American Table. Have been only once; would need a revisit to decide whether to elevate to favorite.
- **Pappy's Smokehouse.** [Yelp](#). Midtown. 3106 Olive St. Louis, 63103. (314) 535-4340. First among equals in St. Louis BBQ. In 2015, Food Network named it as the top place in the

country for ribs. The ribs are dry rubbed, sweet (sweeter even than Bogart's), with pronounced smoke flavor (presumably from the applewood and cherrywood used in the smoker). Seating is communal. Can be packed but service is instantaneous once you order. A favorite.

- **Park Avenue Coffee.** [Yelp](#). Lafayette Square. 1919 Park Ave, 63104. (314) 621-4020. The place for gooey butter cake. A borderline favorite.
- **Parker's Table.** [Yelp](#). Hi-Pointe. 7118 Oakland Ave, 63117. (314) 645-2050. Wine/food shop that also serves in effect as [Salume Beddu](#) west.
- **Peacemaker Lobster and Crab.** [Yelp](#). Benton Park. 1831 Sidney St, 63104. (314) 772-8858. Modeled on an upscale New England seafood place. Of the two styles of lobster roll, the Maine-style roll (cold with some mayo for binding, on a split-top hot dog bun) is superior to, say, the roll at Red's Eats in Wiscasset, ME. Peacemaker's roll is skimpier on the lobster (but not too skimpy), the lobster is colder (probably cold), there is a lot of butter on the bun (too much) and no butter on the side, but the lobster itself is superior. On the other hand, Peacemaker's Connecticut-style roll (warm, with butter) is inferior to the roll at, say, Captain Scott's Lobster Shack in Groton, CT, because the Peacemaker roll has too much butter. The roll at Eventide in Portland, ME, is superior to any of these. (Our family eats a lot of lobster rolls.) Some of the other food, such as the Peacemaker sandwich, is also good. The fries are good. On the other hand, the "cajun" chips are greasy, as is the lobster bun. All this said, nice to have this restaurant in St. Louis. Despite some variability, a favorite.
- **Peppe's Apt 2.** [Yelp](#). Kirkwood. 800 S Geyer Rd, 63122. (314) 909-1375. Upscale Italian-American in a house in an otherwise residential area (but across the street from St. Louis Community College). It is good. A duck breast was very good. The salad of fennel and mushroom (and cheese, lots of cheese) salad tasted fine but it was made with white button mushrooms and felt 1950s.
- **Pho Grand Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove South. 3191 S. Grand Blvd, 63118. (314) 664-7435. Vietnamese. Informal but relatively nice room. The best known of several Vietnamese restaurants in this area of South Grand. You might want to just check out the area and drop into whatever restaurant appeals to you.
- **Pho Long.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8613 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 997-1218. Vietnamese. A barely decorated storefront restaurant with a limited menu: other than some Vietnamese rolls, pretty much just pho. But on a good day it's good pho, and the vegetables that come with the pho are fresh.
- **Pizzeoli.** [Yelp](#). 1928 S 12th St. Soulard. (314) 449-1111. Pizza (vegetarian only) and ... salad. A favorite.
- **Private Kitchen.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8106 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 989-0283. Shanghai Chinese, relatively upscale. You must order in advance via WeeChat or [Facebook](#). Highlights include the pig knuckle and the Beijing duck.
- **Reeds American Table.** [Yelp](#). Maplewood. 7322 Manchester Rd, 63143. (314) 899-9821. Have only been once. It is a good option for something casual but upscale. Chef originally worked at Niche.
- **Robust Wine Bar & Cafe.** [Yelp](#). Webster Groves. 227 W. Lockwood Ave, 63119, (314) 963-0033. Similar to Remi but without the Mediterranean focus. For dinner, get the scallops.

Borderline favorite. There is now a branch downtown.

- **Rooster.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 1104 Locust St, 63101. (314) 241-8118. There is second location on South Grand. A David Bailey restaurant. Breakfast and lunch favorites in a rustic but still upscale setting. In same vein as Half & Half.
- **Roper's Ribs.** [Yelp](#). Jennings. 6929 W. Florissant Ave, 63136. (314) 381-6200. One of the St. Louis BBQ places (along with Pappy's and Bogart's) with a national reputation. Wet BBQ. St. Louis style sauce, smoky, somewhat spicy. Mrs. Roper (Denise) runs the place from the order window and is fun to talk to. Not in the best part of town, however (it is near Ferguson). Much slower than most other BBQ places. A favorite.
- **Royal Chinese BBQ.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8406 Olive, 63130. 991-1888. Chinese. Roast pork and roast ducks hang in the window. Quality is variable.
- **Russell's on Macklind.** [Yelp](#). South Hampton. 5400 Murdoch Ave, 63109. (314) 553-9994. Upscale, hip, bakery and sandwich place. Similar overall to Winslow's Home. A borderline favorite for lunch.
- **Salume Beddu.** [Yelp](#). Lindenwood Park. 3467 Hampton Ave, 63139. (314) 353-3100 Ben Poremba's first place (since sold to his business partner), and still our favorite of his many ventures. Cured meats, cheese, salads. Written up in Wall Street Journal. Can seat maybe 12 people, and not very comfortably. A sandwich for lunch place. If crowded, switch to plan B. Salume Beddu products are sold at, for example, Eataly in Chicago. A favorite.
- **Scape American Bistro.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. New American, upscale but casual. On our upscale recommended list. Food has been fine but we've never fallen in love with the place. Slightly pricy by St. Louis standards.
- **The Schlafly Tap Room.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 2100 Locust St., 63103. (314) 241-2337. Mainly Northern European bar or pub food. Informal. Specialty is the fish and chips. The sticky toffy pudding is a good dessert. Some of the other dishes are less successful and the fries could be much better (but you get lots of them). Check the chalkboard for the beers of the day. Yes, it's the same Schlafly family as Phyllis, but you can't choose your relatives. The Schlaflys pioneered microbreweries in St. Louis (Schlafly is now not so micro) in the teeth of considerable resistance from local politicians. Every other microbrewery here owes a debt to them. Borderline favorite.
- **Schlafly Bottleworks.** [Yelp](#). Maplewood. 7260 Southwest, 63143. (314) 241-2337. BBQ and classic American. Very informal. Comfort food favorites. Restaurant sometimes smells strongly of beer making (mash perhaps), which can be overwhelming. Because of that, we seldom go. But the restaurant has played an important role in anchoring and perhaps catalyzing the now thriving Maplewood restaurant seen.
- **The Scottish Arms.** [Yelp](#). Central West End, 8 S Sarah St, 63108. (314) 535-0551. The atmosphere is great, but the service is a little uneven. The lamb burger is interesting.
- **Serendipity.** [Yelp](#). Webster Groves. 8130 Big Bend Blvd, 63119. (314) 962-2700. Get the Gold Coast Chocolate, which is just about as good a chocolate as you'll get anywhere (although the chocolate at Pastaria is good, too). Serendipity ice cream is served at many restaurants in the area.
- **Shake Shack.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 60 North Euclid, 63108. (314) 627-5518. Given that Shake Shack founder Danny Meyer is from St. Louis, and that Shake Shack has had a very

St. Louis vibe from the start, it is ironic that the first St. Louis Shake Shack opened only in 2017. The burgers are smashed, in the same general style as Carl's or Hi-Pointe. Currently we'd rank the Shake Shack burger above the burger at Hi-Pointe (which we find too salty) but give the nod on shakes to Hi-Pointe. Shake Shack also has a good chili dog. Weirdly, no hot drinks of any kind.

- **The Shaved Duck.** [Yelp](#). Tower Grove East. 2900 Virginia Ave, 63118. (314) 776-1407. BBQ and some other, but mainly BBQ. Bar atmosphere. Live music. Best dish may be the wings appetizer. Sides are very good to excellent. In our view, BBQ here is dominated by Bogart's, Pappy's, and SugarFire. But Shaved Duck is more upscale and is open for dinner. Ribs are Memphis style, relatively chewy, with an dry rub that is much less sweet than at Bogart's or Pappy's. That is, in of itself, fine, but the ribs are sometimes too fatty and the sauces have never sat well with us. Pulled pork and brisket can both be dry. BBQ writer Johnny Fugitt has called the burnt ends his favorite in the country, but we haven't had them.
- **Sidney Street Cafe.** [Yelp](#). Benton Park. 2000 Sidney St, 63104. (314) 771-5777. Modern American. Reliable, upscale, somewhat clubby in feel. Noisy. The schtick of having the waiter read the appetizers aloud gets old if you go frequently. Food is tasty but also a bit heavy. Chef/owner Kevin Nashan won the 2017 James Beard award for Best Chef: Midwest. This makes Nashan the second St. Louis chef with a Beard award; the other is Gerald Craft, who won in 2015.
- **Soup Dumplings STL.** [Yelp](#). 8110 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 445-4605. Spin off of Private Kitchen (which is next door). Dumplings are tasty but also loaded with MSG. Skip the crab. The others are all good. Order at the counter. Extremely spartan interior.
- **Southern.** [Yelp](#). 3108 Olive St., 63103, Midtown. (314) 531-4668. Right next to Pappy's. Extensive menu but the centerpiece is the hot fried chicken, in the style of Prince's Hot Chicken Shack of Nashville. This is one of the very few places in St. Louis where spicy food is actually spicy. Southern's hottest, the Cluckin' Hot, is a bit spicier than Prince's medium. A favorite.
- **Square One Brewery & Distillery.** [Yelp](#). Lafayette Square. 1727 Park Ave, 63104. (314) 231-2537. Good microbrewery/restaurant with a patio seating area. Borderline favorite.
- **Sugarfire Smoke House.** [Yelp](#). Olivette. 9200 Olive Blvd, 63132. (314) 997-2301. Rustic cafeteria atmosphere. Unusually diverse menu for a BBQ place. Variable, but the brisket and the pulled pork, at their best, is our favorite in town. This the original location; a number of branches have since opened. A Michael Johnson restaurant. A favorite.
- **Tai Ke.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8604 Olive Blvd. (314) 801-8894. Taiwanese. Somewhat hard to find (in a secondary strip mall, behind a small medical complex). The chili chicken may be the best dish: garlicky, sweet, crunchy and somewhat spicy (it has three chilis next to it on the menu, but this is St. Louis). Three cup chicken and three cup doufu are both OK. Ma po doufu is OK but without much if any Sichuan peppercorns. Skip the duck wing.
- **Taste Bar.** [Yelp](#). 4584 Laclede Ave. Central West End. (314) 773-7755. American comfort food in small plates. Next to Brasserie. Especially appealing when the weather is warm and you can sit outside. Another Niche spinoff. One of our favorites.
- **Ted Drewes.** [Yelp](#). St. Louis Hills. 3726 Chippewa, 63109. (314) 481-2652. Frozen custard, which in St. Louis is called a concrete. There are debates about what is the best frozen

custard in St. Louis, but this is the canonical establishment. In its original building along what used to be Route 66. John and Katherine usually share a Crater Copernicus: a hot fudge sundae with a (admittedly, somewhat dry) brownie. A favorite.

- **El Toluca Taqueria & Grocery.** [Yelp](#). Manchester. 14234 Manchester, 63011. (636) 686-5444. Homely grocery store/taqueria. Get the barbacoa taco, which is lamb.
- **Tony's.** [Yelp](#). Downtown. 410 Market Street, 63102. (314) 231-7007. Italian. Upscale and formal. For years the most famous restaurant in St. Louis. Both the menu and the service is old school. Lots of table-side prep. We're told by Italian friends that the food is authentic: this is the food your parents would make for you if (a) they were Italian, (b) they were very good, but very traditional, cooks, (c) they used only high quality ingredients, (d) they had lots of waiters, and (e) they charged a lot.
- **Trainwreck Saloon.** [Yelp](#). West County. 9243 Manchester Rd, 63144. (314) 962-8148. Sports bar with a somewhat rustic feel. Yelp has some dings for consistency but we've not had problems there. There is a second location but this is the one with a life-size plastic bison out front. A guilty pleasure favorite.
- **Trattoria Marcella.** [Yelp](#). Lindenwood Park. 3600 Watson Rd, 63109. (314) 352-7706. Italian. Long one of the better-regarded Italian restaurants in St. Louis. We like it but gravitate towards Pastaria.
- **Truffles Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). Ladue. 9202 Clayton Rd, 63124. (314) 567-9100. A generally dependable place for an upscale night out. Huge portions. Good pork chop. But there are issues. A duck was a long slog to finish. Be careful about going for a special; they may not have nailed how to cook it. And the staff sometimes seems undertrained.
- **Union Loafers Cafe and Bakery.** [Yelp](#). McRee Town. 1629 Tower Grove, 63110. (314) 833-6111. Located in the little knot of hip, upscale restaurants originally colonized by Elaia and Olio. The best bread in town. Good sandwiches but lunch is so crowded that we don't go. For dinner, it's a favorite: go when they open (5:30 Wed-Sat) and sit outside if the weather is nice. The dinner menu is pretty much salad and pizza and that's it. It's good pizza; more or less Neapolitan in style, but very large; one pizza can feed four.
- **Vicia.** [Yelp](#). Central West End. 4260 Forest Park Ave, 63108. (314) 553-9239. Creation of a husband-wife team who both worked at Blue Hill at Stone Barns. Vicia shares some of the BHSB rustic meets high end vibe, but Vicia is less formal, more playful. Sit on the patio if the weather permits; the inside is noisy. Currently the only "high end" restaurant in St. Louis proper that we would happily pay our own money for. In particular, the \$85 tasting menu was worth it. A favorite, rivaling Vista Ramen for affection.
- **Vista Ramen.** [Yelp](#). Benton Park West. 2609 Cherokee Street. (314) 797-8250. Neighborhood is transitional. Eclectic, limited menu; Asian fusion isn't quite the right term; more like, whatever they feel like making, often with Asian accents. Cute, extremely hip, but very cramped, space. Very good service. Good cocktails. Perhaps our favorite restaurant in St. Louis.
- **Wei Hong Seafood.** [Yelp](#). University City. 7740 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 726-0363. In a converted auditorium. Get the Cantonese lobster with noodles (not on the menu). Points for offering bitter melon dishes, a favorite of Suzanne's. One of the better Chinese restaurants. But service can be chaotic. The attached Wei Hong Bakery is our go to place for roast ducks

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and cha shao.

- **Winslow's Home.** [Yelp](#). University City. 7213 Delmar Blvd. (314) 725-7559. Close to, but not actually in, the Delmar Loop. Quirky gardening store atmosphere. Get the brisket sandwich. Burger is also good. A favorite for lunch.
- **Wonton King.** [Yelp](#). University City. 8116 Olive Blvd, 63130. (314) 567-9997. Good for dim sum, but service can be slow.
- **Woofies.** [Yelp](#). Overland. The go to place for Chicago-style hot dogs. A favorite.
- **Wudon Korean BBQ.** [Yelp](#). West County. 1261 Castellons Arcade Plz, 63141. (314) 628-1010. Currently the go-to place for Korean BBQ in the area.
- **Yummy 17.** [Yelp](#). 8041 Olive Blvd. (314) 993-2933. Sichuan Chinese. Menu recently changed radically. We are disappointed that they no longer have rice cake but the skewers are interesting. You can see from the Yelp listing that not everyone is a fan. Used to be a favorite of ours; we are still deliberating how to rank it in its current form.

Outside of St. Louis.

- **Cleveland-Heath.** [Yelp](#). Edwardsville, 106 N Main St, 62025. (618) 307-4830. New American/comfort food. The atmosphere is airy upscale bar with classic rock on the playlist. The restaurant has been sold to new owners.
- **Fast Eddie's Bon Air.** [Yelp](#). Alton, IL. 1530 E 4th St, 62002. (618) 462-5532. Giant biker bar with ultra cheap food. If you are going on a road trip anyway, good place to visit; the Alton bridge is nice. No one under 18 admitted. Burgers take 30 minutes, so load up on shrimp while you wait. The food is not dazzling; you are here for the atmosphere. That said, we like this place.
- **A Fine Swine BBQ.** [Yelp](#). New Baden, IL. 423 W Hanover St, 62265. (618) 588-5141. About 30 minutes east. Worth the trip. Vibe is family friendly roadhouse, somewhat upscale. Ribs are chewy yet tender; served already sauced but cooked with a dry rub. Chicken was tasty. For us, these dominated the brisket (peppery and flavorful but dry) and the pulled pork (moist and tender but somewhat bland). Interesting, and good, spin on gooey butter cake (denser and crunchier than usual). Friendly service.
- **The Loading Dock.** [Yelp](#). Grafton, IL. 401 E Front Street, 62037. (618) 786-3494. Upscale, family-friendly somewhat Caribbean-themed waterfront bar. Menu is limited and what we had (cheeseburger, catfish nuggets) was at best OK. But extremely pleasant. Often attracts a Harley crowd.
- **Peel.** [Yelp](#). Edwardsville, IL. 921 S Arbor Vitae, 62025. (618) 659-8561. Attractive upscale pizza (and more) restaurant in a somewhat woodsy setting. Everything that we have had has been good. If this were closer, it would be a favorite.
- **Stone Soup Cottage.** [Yelp](#). Cottleville, MO. 5809 Hwy N. (636) 244-2233. The top restaurant in the St. Louis Post Dispatch list and the only really tough reservation in the area. A special occasion restaurant. In a converted farmhouse and somewhat remote. The food, French-ish with a strong farm-to-table vibe, was really very good. The overall experience, while casual, is old school. At the start, the tables are completely covered with silverware and glassware. Tasting menu only and only one sitting, with every table served the same thing more or less simultaneously. On the order of four hours, start to finish. We

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got a lot of attention from the chef/owner, which was nice.

- **Wittmond Hotel Restaurant.** [Yelp](#). Brussels, IL. 108 Main Street, 62013, (618) 883-2345. About an hour away and only reachable by ferry. Building has been in the same family since it was first constructed, in 1847. Food is inexpensive (all you can eat) but uneven. A pecan cobbler was very good and the fried chicken is tasty. Some other dishes (notably the green beans, pot roast, and dumplings) were skippable. The surrounding area is beautiful, lush rolling hills, unlike anything else near St. Louis. Worth a visit.