

# EATING

## top picks

- Dahlia Lounge (p127)
- Steelhead Diner (p126)
- Coastal Kitchen (p130)
- Tilth (p133)
- Salumi (p123)
- Cicchetti (p129)
- Pho Bac (p125)

# EATING

It's easy to become food obsessed in Seattle. The city's focus on locally produced, fresh, organic ingredients, whether from nearby farms or the bounteous sea, means dinner is never just dinner – it's a sociopolitical act. Guilt-free indulgence is the rule: upscale restaurants that *don't* emphasize sustainable fishing and farming are the exception. The biggest boast a Seattle restaurant can make these days is that the chef helped reel in the day's catch, or that they're lifelong pals with the farmer who grew your salad, or that they can name the chicken who laid the egg that's now beside your toast.

'Northwest cuisine' is a fairly inclusive term in the sense that it can mean anything from surf-and-turf and pasta to sushi and pad Thai; what defines it is an insistence on showing off the best of what the region produces: seafood so fresh it squirms, fat berries freshly plucked, mushrooms dug out of the rich soil and cornucopias of fruits and vegetables.

Going hand in hand with the regional emphasis on sustainable, organic, unfussy food is the prevalence of vegan and vegetarian restaurants here. This is the kind of city where it's automatically understood that vegan cupcakes are sexier than the regular kind. The city has won attention and praise in the national press for its combination of healthy gourmet restaurant options, sustainable farming and cooking practices, inventive use of ingredients and overall quality of life. Of course, Seattle also loves a good steak – especially one that's led a happy, grass-fed life on a farm just outside of town.

The restaurant world is an ever-shifting one, and the metaphorical kitchen-of-the-moment award is definitely a traveling trophy. Check the dining sections of the local papers for new developments, and ask around – practically everyone in town is a food expert and most will be quite happy to recommend their favorite spot.

Food-related internet forums such as [eGullet](http://www.egullet.org) (www.egullet.org, click on the Pacific Northwest Dining division) or [Chowhound](http://www.chowhound.com/boards/4) (www.chowhound.com/boards/4) can be helpful in tracking down the latest news about which restaurants are hot, which have fallen off their game, and which places local foodies are hoping to keep all to themselves.

## PRACTICALITIES

### Opening Hours

Specific opening hours are listed in reviews if they differ from the norm; otherwise we simply note which meals each restaurant serves. Breakfast is typically served from 7am to 11am; brunch from 7am to 3pm; lunch from 11:30am to 2:30pm; and dinner from 5:30pm to 10pm.

### How Much?

The range of eateries in Seattle means it's possible to find dining options that suit most

budgets, whether that's a \$2 taco from a parking-lot stand, a \$5 bowl of noodles in the U District or a \$30 wedge of hazelnut-encrusted line-caught wild salmon with organic field greens served in a chic converted warehouse. Typically, breakfast and lunch fall in the \$8 to \$10 range per person, and dinner can be anywhere from \$16 to \$60 or more.

### Booking Tables

Most Seattle restaurants don't require advance bookings, but the hot new places fill up quickly, so it's best to call ahead if you want to be sure to avoid disappointment. Many restaurants also have a bar section where you can wait for a table to open up if you don't have reservations. In the listings below, where reservations are recommended or mandatory it's noted in the review.

### Tipping

Tips are not figured into the check at a restaurant. In general, 15% is the baseline tip, but

#### PRICE GUIDE

\$\$\$ over \$30

\$\$ \$15-30

\$ under \$15

These guides reflect the cost of an average meal, whether that's a main dish or a number of small plates, per person, not including drinks or a tip.