



NACUA 2006 Annual Conference Chicago, IL

Chicago Work Group on Local Arrangements Restaurant Guide

The following restaurants have been recommended by members of NACUA's Chicago [Work Group on Local Arrangements](#). If you have additional suggestions for this list, please contact Miriam Miller at msm@nacula.org

Amarit Thai 1 East Delaware 312-649-0500

Whether you're lunching or shopping, Amarit offers a relaxing environment where you can take a break from buying or a breather from the downtown grind. Sizable dishes are priced just right, from pot stickers to crazy noodles and pad dra proa (spicy basil chicken). If curries are your thing, Amarit is definitely a can't-miss spot.



Cuisine: Thai
Price: Average entrée \$8

Website: <http://www.amaritthai.com/main.html>

Angelica's Restaurant
3244 North Milwaukee
(773) 736-1186

At this authentic Polish outpost, European tavern-meets-American coffee shop, with tapestry-backed booths with turquoise-vinyl seats and swirly floral carpeting. Native-speaking regulars load up on handmade pierogi, which bulge with fillings like cabbage or cheese, and snack from the iceberg-lettuce salad bar. Entrees include smoked pork chops and beef roll loaf in brown gravy, augmented by sides of coleslaw, sauerkraut and cucumber.

Cuisine: Polish & Czech
Price: Under \$20 per person

Website: http://chicago.citysearch.com/profile/11551743/chicago_il/angelica_s_restaurant.html

Ben Pao
52 West Illinois Street
(312) 222-1888

Ben Pao offers an extensive menu of contemporary Chinese cuisine encompassing the four regions of China, as well as many other Asian influenced dishes. Specialties at Ben Pao include black peppered sea scallops, 7-flavor beef, crispy garlic tofu, sesame chicken, freshly grilled satays and pan-fried string beans.

Cuisine: Asian
Price: Under \$30 per person

Website: <http://www.benpao.com/>



Bin 36
339 North Dearborn
(312) 755-9463



Bin 36 is a casual, friendly and affordable spot where wine novices can enjoy over 50 wines by the glass. Learning about wine does not have to be complicated! Bin 36's staff is enthusiastically prepared to offer people a great environment to learn and enjoy wine.

Cuisine: Small Plates/Tapas
Price: Under \$30 per person

Website: <http://www.bin36.com/index.php>

Blackbird
619 West Randolph
312-715-0708

Blackbird doesn't just inhabit its neighborhood—an edgy, urban area just west of central Chicago. As a foodservice pioneer in the then-bleak stretch, it helped define the district, creating a crackle of energy that has heated up considerably in the years since. Menu items are created around the season's available ingredients, whether they are found at a farmers market or the chef's personal garden. Blackbird's menu reflects this ideal with items such as a green-garlic soup with olive-oil-poached rock shrimp and pumpernickel croutons that take the stage in winter while items featuring apples, tomatoes and melons are showcased in the months they're harvested.



Cuisine: Contemporary American
Price: Average entrée over \$30

Website: <http://www.blackbirdrestaurant.com/>

Francesca's
[Multiple Locations](#)



The atmosphere at this Chicago favorite is frenetic and loud with chatter, laughter, clinking glasses and cheers. The contemporary Italian menu offers tasty plates like sirloin carpaccio and asparagus risotto, plus four-cheese or seafood pizzas, pastas, and entrees like veal medallions with porcini mushrooms and roasted chicken with rosemary, lemon and caramelized shallots. For dessert, the gelati (Italian ice creams)--pistachio, cinnamon, raspberry, banana-fudge and vanilla--is a crowd favorite.

Cuisine: Italian
Price: Average entrée \$12-\$20

Website: <http://www.miafrancesca.com/>

Gibson's Steakhouse
1028 North Rush
(312) 266-8999

Gibsons Steakhouse has been the pinnacle of Gold Coast dining for nearly 2 decades. Housed in the space made famous by Mr. Kelley's, where Streisand and Sinatra performed, and later occupied by 70's and 80's hot spot Sweetwater, Gibsons continues the star studded tradition with a nightly procession of the famous and powerful. You can trace our history pictorially throughout the restaurant where autographed photographs of athletes, politicians, movie stars, rock stars, entertainers of all kinds, and of course the diehard Gibsons "locals" appear.



Cuisine: Steak, American
Price: More than \$51 per person

Website: <http://www.gibsonssteakhouse.com/restaurant/homepage/>

Greek Islands
200 South Halsted Street
312-782-9855



This popular, established restaurant features fresh seafood, lamb and chicken; a cooler displays what's available that day. Half-orders and combination entrees are available. The open kitchen allows customers to watch the chefs and choose what they would like to eat. With about 400 seats, this is the biggest restaurant in Greektown, with several dining rooms.

Cuisine: Greek
Price: Entrees \$8-\$15

Website: <http://www.greekislands.net/>

Heaven on Seven

[Multiple Locations](#)

The wall of hot sauces, arranged floor to ceiling, should alert any diner that a meal full of soul is in store. A soft Zydeco soundtrack plays under this room's clatter, which comes from a crowd eating New Orleans-style food almost elbow to elbow. The counter is the best bet for those looking for a quick meal, but those with more time will want to savor their Po' boy sandwiches, andouille sausage, soft-shell crab and down-home sides like collard greens, cheese grits and corn muffins. Adventurous diners douse their meals with hot sauces that push the third-degree zone. Heaven on Seven's food, high-energy atmosphere and friendly staff make it a hot Loop lunch stop for those who need a dose of spice and soul.



Cuisine: Cajun/Creole

Price: Entrees average \$8-\$15

Website: <http://www.heavenonseven.com/>

Hot Doug's

3324 North California

(773) 279-9550



Chicago's "sausage superstore" offers traditional hot dogs, bratwurst, and Polish sausage, along with unique Chicago creations.

Cuisine: Hot Dogs and Sausages

Price: \$1.50 - \$3.50 per hot dog/sausage

Website: <http://www.hotdougs.com/>

Le Colonial
937 Rush Street
(312) 255-0088



Le Colonial transports guests to another time and place, vividly recapturing the beauty, romance and spirit of 1920's French-Colonial Southeast Asia. Le Colonial invigorates the senses with exquisite décor and savory authentic Vietnamese cuisine. The first floor dining room is adorned with louvered shutters, woven rattan chairs, potted palms, slow-moving ceiling fans and nostalgic black and white photos of turn-of-the century life in Saigon. The upstairs

lounge includes a spacious, fully stocked mahogany bar, plush couches for enjoying light fare, and a veranda, for keeping warm in winter and cool in summer. Complete with unique, delicately prepared Vietnamese cuisine, Le Colonial is the perfect setting for an after-work social or a romantic evening for two.

Cuisine: Vietnamese

Price: \$31-\$51 per person

Website: <http://www.lecolonialchicago.com/>

NoMi
Park Hyatt Chicago
800 North Michigan Avenue
(312) 239-4030

Described by *Wine Spectator* as "leading a streamlining of American cuisine." NoMi features contemporary French-inspired cuisine in which the intrinsic flavors of each ingredient are emphasized, letting dishes emerge as their own masterpieces.



Cuisine: Contemporary French

Price: More than \$51 per person

Website: <http://www.nomirestaurant.com/gallery/nomi/home.html>

onesixty blue
160 North Loomis
(1400 W. Randolph)
(312) 850-0303



one sixtyblue, a modern French restaurant located on the edge of Chicago's trendy Market District has maintained a reputation as one of Chicago's premier dining destinations since first opening its doors in late 1998. Granted three-stars from the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times, one sixtyblue is known for its fine cuisine, elegant surroundings and thoughtful service. Executive Chef Martial Noguier, a native Frenchman, creates a menu of comfortable, classic cuisine that has roots in France

but puts a modern face on French style and execution.

Cuisine: Contemporary French
Price: \$31 to \$51 per person

Website: www.onesixtyblue.com

Opera
1301 South Wabash Avenue
(312) 461-0161

Opera features classical Chinese dishes prepared in a contemporary fashion. Executive Chef Paul Wildermuth (Red Light) and Arun Sampanthavivat (Arun's) have created a menu that takes regional Chinese cuisine to higher levels. You will not find any typical Chinese "carry out" here, but rather upscale presentations of familiar dishes. Entrees include a whole steamed red snapper, and a triple presentation of Peking duck. Starters are also twists of the familiar, with such offerings as a five-spice ribs and a pork and ginger dumpling. Desserts feature treats like the steamed banana and date pudding (with date and cognac ice cream and a caramelized banana cream sauce).



Cuisine: Asian
Price: Dinner Entrees \$15-\$25

Website: <http://www.opera-chicago.com/>

Original Gino's East of Chicago
1590 E Main St
St Charles, IL



Food and atmosphere are the focus at Gino's. Every wall is covered with customer-scribed graffiti that details young romances or testifies to who ate there before you. The stuffed spinach pizza is so thick with rich, creamy mozzarella, spinach and zesty tomato sauce that it's difficult to stretch your mouth around; the polenta crust is divine. Don't limit yourself to the pizza, though. Gino's also serves excellent, generously portioned pastas.

Cuisine: Pizza
Price: Under \$20

Website: <http://chicago.citysearch.com/profile/3535353/>

Osteria Via Stato
620 North State Street
(312) 642-8450

Osteria Via Stato embraces the lifestyle of Italian dining in Chicago's River North. Osteria Via Stato celebrates simplicity & quality of authentic Italian food & wine with humor & hospitality. Osteria Via Stato offers a 3 course, set-price journey through Italy featuring the freshest ingredients. Osteria Via Stato follows the traditional Italian dining format, starting with an abundant assortment of antipasti, dinner then features primi courses of moderately sized fresh pastas & risottos before moving to selection of lighter vegetable, fish & meat main courses. Dolce completes the meal with house-made offerings, including Italian pastries & scoops of gelato, or cheese. With a 300-bottle wine list, more than 40 are available by the quartino or mezzeliter (1/3 & 2/3-bottles). The "Just bring me wine" program offers "special", "very special" or "unlimited (sommelier's choice)" tasting of three 4oz pours of wine.



Cuisine: Italian
Price: \$31-\$50 per person

Website: http://www.leye.com/restaurants/rest_home.jsp?id=36

Parthenon
314 S. Halsted St.
312-726-2407



The owners make several claims: 1) Their restaurant is the oldest in the neighborhood. 2) They invented flaming saganaki in 1968, and it has since been exported to Greece, and 3) Parthenon was the place that brought gyros to Chicago. What we know for sure: There are more than 140 dishes offered, including sea bass, red snapper, calamari, moussaka and vegetarian preparations. Portions are huge. You can even order a whole roasted suckling pig (feeds 12; call ahead) and lamb's head.

Cuisine: Greek

Price: Entrees \$8-\$15

Website: http://metromix.chicagotribune.com/dining/30407,0,6787203.location?coll=mmx-ng_westloop_heds

Puck's at the Museum of Contemporary Art
220 East Chicago Avenue
312.280.2660

The MCA and chef Wolfgang Puck have teamed up to create Puck's at the MCA, an exciting dining destination in the heart of Chicago's Magnificent Mile. Featuring a full-service restaurant and an express counter, Puck's at the MCA presents diners with an [seasonal lunch menu](#) that draws on Mediterranean and Asian influences along with a daily [express counter menu](#). And don't forget to stop by on Sundays to enjoy Puck's special Sunday [brunch menu](#).

Cuisine: Mediterranean and Asian

Price: Lunch entrees \$9-\$16, Express Counter entrees \$6-\$8

Website: <http://www.mcachicago.org/MCA/About/index-pucks.html>



Rancho Luna Cuban Restaurant
3357 W. Peterson Ave.
(773) 509-9332

This casual Latin eatery features a rotating lunch menu with a different selection of entrees daily. Each entree is served with white rice, black beans or a bean and rice combination for less than most fast food spots. Dinner specialties include the pollo Rancho Luna (grilled chicken marinated in lime juice, garlic and spices), and the lechon asado (roasted pork with rice, beans and garlic yuca). The guava and cream cheese pastry, and Cuban-style flan are a few of the dessert choices. Sangria, mojitos and pina coladas are customer favorites, and a variety of non-alcoholic Cuban beverages like guarapo, a refreshing drink made with sugar cane juice, are also available.

Cuisine: Cuban

Price: Entrees average \$8-\$15

Website: http://metromix.chicagotribune.com/dining/30698,0,425622.location?coll=mmx-movies_leftutility

Red Light
820 West Randolph
312-733-8880

A unique blend of Chinese and Southeast Asian cuisines; selections include Maine lobster spring rolls with eggplant and mushroom dumplings; try the duck with plum sauce. Recommended are the 'Arun' collaborations, which include rice baked sea scallops and traditional Pad Thai.

Cuisine: Pan Asian

Price: Entrees average \$13-\$29

Website: <http://www.redlight-chicago.com/home.htm>



RL

**115 East Chicago Avenue
(312) 475-1100**

A warm, rich interior featuring Mahogany paneling & Persian rugs, RL Restaurant houses an art collection that reflects & represents a lifestyle vision of quality, integrity & timelessness - the design & cultural aesthetic of Polo Ralph Lauren. The menu is written daily with core items, some prepared tableside, which reflect the Ralph Lauren "aspirational lifestyle." The food is not based on how exotic the chef can appear with his creativity, but on how finely tuned & balanced are his compositions -- renditions of ideas that have a history on the American Table.

Cuisine: American

Price: \$31-\$51 per person

Website: www.rlrestaurant.com

**The Saloon Steakhouse
200 East Chestnut Street
(312) 280-5454**

The Saloon Steakhouse specializes in American fare including the finest steaks, chops and seafood. One of Chicago's best kept secrets, The Saloon has been dazzling locals and tourists for over 10 years.

Cuisine: Steak, American

Price: \$31 to \$50 Per Person

Website:

http://www.saloonsteakhouse.com/index_n.html



**Shaw's Crab House
21 East Hubbard Street
(312) 527-2722**



Big and bustling, Shaw's Crabhouse stands as a monument to fish and seafood. Besides the usual popular dishes, Shaw's management team is passionate about presenting treats such as Pacific salmon, fresh king crab, and smelt during their short seasons. The Oyster Bar features regional oysters on the half shell, clams, lobster and crab dishes in a casual setting.

Cuisine: Seafood

Price: \$31 to \$50 Per Person

Website: <http://www.shawscrabhouse.com/>

Star of Siam
11 East Illinois Street
(312) 670-0100

Not your usual place to go for Thai food, "Star of Siam" serves a standard Thai menu in an urban warehouse setting rather than in a storefront dive. This has led one reviewer to call it "yuppie-Thai," which is, perhaps, not so far off the mark given the young, urban, professional crowd often found dining here.



Cuisine: Thai

Price: Average entrée \$8

Website: <http://www.starofsiamchicago.com/index.html>

Toppolobampo
445 North Clark Street
(312) 661-1434



From Sonora to Yucatán, authentic plates graced by brilliant sauces showcase the country's remarkably diverse range of styles. And sensational desserts celebrate Mexico's sweet tooth in creations such as Oaxacan chocolate cake layered with homemade strawberry ice cream. Superb margaritas, rare tequilas and mescals.

Cuisine: Mexican

Price: \$31-\$50 per person

Website: <http://www.fronterakitchens.com/restaurants/>

Trattoria No. 10
10 North Dearborn
312-984-1718

A delightful setting for contemporary Italian cuisine, the menu offers an artful selection of raviolis (the house specialty) and intriguing pastas. The braised veal shank and the herb encrusted rack of lamb both merit notice. Daily specials include fresh fish, risottos and quality wines by the glass. Upstairs, the urban market Sopraffina offers a quicker option for those with a limited lunch-hour. Best known for Ravioli, this is an upscale café. The restaurant brings patrons an authentic Italian fare where people frequently get pasta.



Cuisine: Italian

Price: Dinner Entrees \$15-\$25, Weekday Buffet \$12 per person

Website: <http://www.trattoriaten.com/>

Vong's Thai Kitchen
6 West Hubbard
(312) 644-8664

The menu here is casual and affordable, divided among rolls (such as five-spice Peking duck roll), appetizers (like the Black Plate assortment) and noodle, fish and meat dishes. The dining room features vibrant red walls and chocolate-colored banquettes. Large floor-to-ceiling windows flood the space with light and street energy. The restaurant is a collaboration between renowned chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten (who has similar restaurants in London, New York and Hong Kong) and Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises.



Cuisine: Thai French

Price: Under \$30 per person

Website: <http://www.vongsthaikitchen.com/>