



# Food for Thought

For me, eating well is paramount. That's why when I'm away from home I'm so happy when I find that my hotel has a good restaurant where I can eat delicious meals and this, without even having to go out 😊!

## History<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

The very first establishments that were easily recognizable as restaurants popped up around 1100 A.D. in China, when cities like Kaifeng and Hangzhou boasted densely packed urban populations of more than 1 million inhabitants each. These restaurants were in lively entertainment districts that catered to business travelers, complete with hotels, bars and brothels. According to Chinese documents from the era, the variety of restaurant options in the 1120s resembled a downtown tourist district in a 21<sup>st</sup> century city.

Closer to us, the first French restaurant owner is believed to have been one A. Boulanger, a soup vendor who opened his business in Paris in 1765. The sign above his door advertised restoratives, or restaurants, referring to the soups and broths available within. Although inns and hostelries often served guests meals from the host's table, or table d'hôte, and beverages were sold in cafés, Boulanger's restaurant was probably the first public place where any diner might order a meal from a menu offering a choice of dishes.

The first fine-dining restaurant in America was opened in New York City in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Delmonico's opened its doors in 1837 featuring luxurious private dining suites and a 1,000-bottle wine cellar. The restaurant claims to be the first in America to use tablecloths, and its star chefs not only invented the famous Delmonico steak, but also gourmet classics like eggs Benedict, baked Alaska, Lobster Newburg and Chicken à la Keene.

The **first hotel with a restaurant inside** is widely believed to be the *Tremont House* in Boston, which opened in 1829. The hotel's restaurant quickly gained a reputation for its high-quality food and service, setting a precedent for the combination of lodging and dining that continues to be a standard feature of hotels today. The dining room was the first one in America to feature French cuisine. At the appointed times (for meals) a Chinese gong resounded through the hotel so loudly, according to Charles Dickens, that it 'shook the very window frame'.

Back then, a woman could not dine alone in the main dining room, but the Tremont opened a women's only dining room called the Ladies' Ordinary where they could dine alone or with other women while being protected from male attentions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-was-the-first-hotel-with-a-restaurant-inside>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sandrawagnerwright.com/tremont-house-americas-first-luxury-hotel/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://hne-rs.s3.amazonaws.com/filestore/1/2/7/5/5\\_3a9b896eb5818fb/12755\\_82eb41eadba2e2b.pdf](https://hne-rs.s3.amazonaws.com/filestore/1/2/7/5/5_3a9b896eb5818fb/12755_82eb41eadba2e2b.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/the-history-of-restaurant#:~:text=According%20to%20an%20often%2Drepeated,is%2C%20%22restorative%20broths.%22>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/first-restaurants-china-france>

## What are the best hotel restaurants in the US?<sup>6</sup>

Drawing from reviews that appeared in Forbes, USA Today, Condé Nast Traveler and others, *Mashed* (a publication dedicated to food) came up with the following selection:

- 1) Le Cavalier at the Green Room – the restaurant is nestled within the iconic *Hotel du Pont* in Wilmington, Delaware, which opened its doors in 1913. The restaurant's interior blends high ornate ceilings, dark wood paneling, and Victorian-era style chandeliers with abstract art reproductions.
- 2) Lemaire at *The Jefferson Hotel*, Virginia - constructed in 1892, the Hotel was once dubbed "The Belle of the '90s." Today, the establishment stands as a testament to the grandeur and opulence of late 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Renovated in 1983, today the hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 3) Superfrico at *The Cosmopolitan* of Las Vegas, Nevada – the restaurant is divided into several areas featuring artworks, vinyl DJs, and other forms of expression you probably would not normally expect to experience over dinner.
- 4) Addison at *Fairmont Grand del Mar*, California - "Grand del Mar" translates to "Grand Sea Hotel" in English. The Mediterranean-inspired structure is home to the Addison, San Diego's only restaurant with three Michelin stars.
- 5) Chez Philippe at *The Peabody*, Tennessee - opened in 1869, the hotel is famous for its daily Peabody Duck March that sees the web-footed birds make their way along a red carpet to the hotel's lobby fountain, a tradition that dates to the 1930s. Chez Philippe is the only Forbes Four-Star, AAA Four-Diamond rated restaurant in the Mid-South.

## What are Americans' favorite dishes? <sup>7</sup>

- 1) Burrito bowl (chicken, rice, beans, salsa, and guacamole scooped inside a bowl).
- 2) Cheeseburger
- 3) Hash browns (grated potatoes that are pan-fried until they're crispy on the outside and softer in the middle)
- 4) Cheese pizza
- 5) French fries - The average American eats 48 pounds of French fries per year (the people of Belgium: 165 pounds!). French fries have been around for more than 200 years, but they didn't find their soul mate, ketchup, until the mid-1940s .

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mashed.com/1502890/best-hotel-restaurants-in-america/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.rd.com/article/america-favorite-food/>

Restaurants in hotels require quite a bit of staff to operate. However, staff shortage is the NUMBER ONE issue in the hotel industry. To ease the pressure, why not adopt electronic tipping, like **Tip&Go**? Not only is it a more convenient way for guests to show their appreciation to staff but it also has the potential to increase employees' earnings by up to 30% 😊!

**Francis Léonard, CEO**

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