

More dining out tips in New York City



At TAO Uptown, reservations are a must



Brazilian-trained gaúcho chefs carve your meat tableside at Fogo de Chão

Travel Talk

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NEW YORK – I get a lot of feedback from this travel column in *The Montrealer*. Wherever I go, readers always ask me to provide them with dining tips. I am pleased to do so from my most recent trip to New York City.

TAO Uptown

We were elated to get a reservation at TAO Uptown (www.taogroup.com), an upscale Pan-Asian brand, located at 42 East 58th Street. There is also a TAO Downtown, as well as locations in Las Vegas, Chicago and Los Angeles. They will open at Mohegan Sun Casino and Entertainment Resort in Connecticut this year.

Tao has three levels of dining including the prized “Skybox,” which offers views of this former movie theatre unparalleled in New York. In addition to its 300 seats, Tao includes a sushi bar, lounge and two bars at which to enjoy the food and the show. We started off with some drinks: a signature Tao-tini (Belvedere Mango Passion, Malibu Run, Cranberry and Fresh Lime), a glass of prosecco and a Bubbles and Berries (True Premium Vodka, Chandon Brut, St. Germain and Fresh Strawberries). We then moved on to some appetizers: The Peking duck spring rolls with hoisin sauce, the spicy tuna tartare on crispy rice and the salmon sashimi followed by miso glazed Chilean sea bass, grilled 12 ounce imperial waygu ribeye (served with crispy fried onions and wow this was beyond amazing!) and lobster and kimchee fried rice.

For dessert we shared a giant fortune cookie (with white and dark chocolate mousse), flourless mochi cake, sugar dusted donuts, molten chocolate cake and vanilla ice cream with chocolate syrup. For reservations call 212-888-2288 or do so via Open Table.

Black Tap

What fun it was for me to experience a Black Tap (www.blacktap.com) restaurant for the first time and no less their new flagship 35th Street location (known as Black Tap 35th). There are two others in NYC as well as locales at Downtown Disney in California and at the Venetian in Las Vegas. Internationally you can find them in Bahrain, Kuwait, Singapore, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

I started off with the Queso & Chips appetizer – zesty cheese served with warm tortilla chips and a house salad. The Old Fashioned Prime Burger was my main choice, topped with crimini mushrooms, melted Swiss cheese, caramelized onions and horse radish with some crispy fries.

I did my best to conserve some appetite for a crazy shake and opted for the Cake Shake. This is a cake batter milkshake with a vanilla frosted rim and rainbow sprinkles, topped with Funfetti cake, whipped cream and a cherry. Black Tap 35th is located at 45 West 35th Street and open from 11 am to midnight daily. You can call 646-943-5135.

A Brazilian Dining Experience

Fogo de Chão (fogo-dee-shown) is a leading Brazilian steakhouse, or churrascaria, specializing in the centuries-old Southern Brazilian cooking technique of churrasco – the art of roasting high-quality cuts of meats over open flame, all of which are carved tableside by Brazilian-trained gaúcho chefs. There is Picanha (signature sirloin), Filet Mignon, Ribeye, Fraldinha (Brazilian sirloin) Cordeiro (lamb) and more. In addition to the main dishes, they boast a gourmet market table, authentic Brazilian side dishes, and an award-winning wine list.

Founded in Southern Brazil in 1979, there are currently 56 locations throughout Brazil, the United States, Mexico and the Middle East. I had a chance to experience this restaurant for the very first time at the beautiful West 53rd Street location in midtown Manhattan. I opted in favor of the Full Churrasco Experience, which for \$69.95 includes the trained chefs coming to your table. The beyond impressive market table and feijoada bar is included, featuring seasonal salads, soups, fresh vegetables, imported charcuterie, hearts of palm, giant asparagus, fresh buffalo mozzarella cheese, sun dried tomatoes, fresh cut and steamed broccoli, marinated artichoke bottoms, tabbouleh, smoked salmon, an assortment of fine cheeses and much more.

From the dessert menu I chose the Tres Leches Cake – a rich cake soaked in three types of milk then topped with vanilla mousse and salted caramel de leite. I enjoyed this with a cup of decaf cappuccino. For more information about Fogo de Chão, the new culinary additions or to make dining reservations, visit www.fogo.com. You can reach the West 53rd location at 212-969-9980.

A Fine Irish Pub

Located just up the block from my hotel, The Algonquin, is O’Donoghue’s Restaurant and Pub



The Black Tap Cake Shake is an extraordinary dessert experience.

(www.odpubnyc.com) at 156 West 44th Street. They are right in the middle of the Theatre District, so this is the perfect place to stop by for pre/post-theatre meal and drinks, or if you’re just shopping around town.

There is a regular menu as well as those for kids, late night, weekend brunch and another just for the bar. They also have daily specials. I started off with some piping hot beef and barley soup, a delicious order of garlic cheesy bread, with marinara sauce, and a glass of prosecco wine. For the main course I was debating between their signature burger, one of the sandwiches and the special chicken and mashed potatoes. I opted for the latter. The chicken was cut in neat thin slices, moist and extremely tasty. I’d made the right choice. Did I have room for dessert? The homemade apple pie with vanilla ice cream sounded like the perfect way to conclude dinner. Along with a fresh cup of decaf coffee I finished every morsel, leaving over just a bit of the ice cream. There is a great atmosphere in this place. You can call (212) 997-2262.

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