

Go for the Art, Stay for the Food: The 7 Best Museum Restaurants Around the World

MARCH 28, 2016 8:12 PM

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This summer, Thomas Carter and Ignacio Mattos, the pair behind New York City's heralded downtown restaurant Estela, will take up residence at the Met Breuer, a recently opened space which features the Metropolitan Museum of Art's contemporary and modern art collections in the former Whitney building. Simply titled Estela Breuer, the upcoming eatery is one of several notables that have opened inside museums in the United States and abroad in the past few years, like the Otium at L.A.'s Broad museum, Bar Luce at the Fondazione Prada in Milan, and Untitled at the new Whitney museum in New York's Meatpacking District.

As more chefs and restaurateurs continue to look toward these cultural establishments as new opportunities for their culinary endeavors, below are the current top spots around the world for eating well while at the museum.



Otium

Photo: Courtesy of Teddy Worcester/ @theodore0



Otium at the Broad

French Laundry alum chef Timothy Hollingsworth opened the Broad museum-adjacent Otium in November of last year. The space features a sleek, modern design, with natural materials utilized almost everywhere and 100-year-old olive trees planted throughout the dining room. Hollingsworth's lunch and dinner menu includes Thai snapper with tamarind, duck with pear and chocolate, sea urchin with brioche and pistachio, and much more.



M. Wells Dinette

Photo: Courtesy of Signy Roland / @signyr



M. Wells Dinette at MoMa PS1

M. Wells Dinette made its debut at MoMA PS1 back in 2012 as a spinoff to Hugue Dufour and Sarah Obratis's popular M. Wells Diner in Long Island City, which has since closed (they also have M. Wells Steakhouse in the city). School cafeteria-style communal tables and classic green chalkboards punctuate the minimal decor of the restaurant space and they offer inventive spins on classic casual fare like chicken liver mousse, squash Bolognese, and a spaghetti sandwich.



RIJKS

Photo: Courtesy of Rijks



RIJKS at Rijksmuseum

Amsterdam's beautiful art- and history-focused Rijksmuseum went through a ten year refurbishment that was finally completed in 2013. In 2014, the 140-seat, open-kitchen RIJKS restaurant opened in the Philips Wing. They serve a lunch and dinner menu that incorporates mainly local, Slow Food–friendly ingredients for dishes like potato with Dutch Messeklever cheese, North Sea gurnard, and a Swede cabbage steak.



Le Frank

Photo: Courtesy of Le Frank
Fondation Louis Vuitton



Le Frank at the Fondation Louis Vuitton

Le Frank is a fine dining establishment inside the Fondation Louis Vuitton art space that opened in late 2014 and displays the works of modern and contemporary masters like Gerhard Richter and Ellsworth Kelly. Frank Gehry, the architect behind the design of the building also conceptualized the dining room itself (it's named after him), while the menu is overseen by the Michelin-starred chef Jean-Louis Nomicos. The contemporary French cuisine includes dishes like a beef filet with Pont Neuf potatoes and a chocolate grand cru with caramel fondant and salted butter.



Untitled

Photo: Courtesy of Untitled at the Whitney / @untitlednyc



Untitled at the Whitney

Restaurateur Danny Meyer and Chef Michael Anthony of New York's famous Gramercy Tavern started stirring up impressive high-end food at Untitled last spring. The light and airy restaurant located at the base of the Whitney Museum in the Meatpacking District, offers smartly composed, sophisticated dishes for brunch, lunch, and dinner like smoked arctic char mousse on rye toast, pulled-pork lettuce wraps with fried oyster, and a flatbread with butternut squash mole and a fried egg.

Nerua at the Guggenheim Bilbao

Named for the Nervión river that runs through Bilbao, this museum restaurant has a seasonal menu from chef Josean Alija who once worked at the famed El Bulli. The dining room is designed to be stark and minimal so the focus is really on the food: There are plates like cod tripe

with red onion and squid broth; stewed spinach with almond milk and olive oil; and an orange sponge cake with apple cream, mint, and pumpkin-seed ice cream.



Bar Luce

Photo: Courtesy of @noblessekorea



Bar Luce at the Fondazione Prada

Designed by the colorful filmmaker Wes Anderson, Bar Luce at Milan's Fondazione Prada is the most cheerful and dreamy of all the newer museum eateries. Among the whimsical decor, formica chairs, old pinball machines, and jukebox, diners are offered a more casual menu of Italian style sandwiches and paninis, fresh pastries, ice creams, and tiramisu. Bar Luce also features a great cocktail and wine selection.