

Amanda Clossen, Carrie Donovan, Peter Egler, Ethan Pullman, Lindsay Schriftman, and Dennis Smith

Restaurants of the 'Burgh

Popular spots and hidden gems in Downtown Pittsburgh



For anyone familiar with local Pittsburgh food, you have probably heard about our love for featuring french fries on salads or fried eggs on sandwiches. In addition to these famous traditions, we also enjoy one of the most creative and varied local food scenes in the country. Pittsburgh is widely becoming known as a welcoming and refreshing spot for inventive chefs with a can-do spirit. Whether you are looking for a restaurant to gather for a memorable meal with ACRL colleagues or hoping to find a place to grab a bite quickly between conference sessions, this guide presents a variety of dining options around Downtown Pittsburgh. Price key (food only; per person): \$ = less than \$10, \$\$ = \$10–\$20, \$\$\$ = \$20–\$30, \$\$\$\$ = \$30+. For those exploring outside of Downtown’s “Golden Triangle,” there are many more restaurants just a quick bus or car service trip away in the Strip District, Lawrenceville, and beyond. Please see <https://www.discovertheburgh.com/best-restaurants-in-pittsburgh> for a more comprehensive list.

Alihan’s Mediterranean Cuisine, 124 6th St. (412) 888-0630

If you are looking for classic Turkish food in a white tablecloth setting, Alihan’s is the place for you. One of the staples of Downtown Pittsburgh for ten years running, Alihan’s boasts generous portions and some of the best falafel in the city. If you come uncertain what to order, the sea bass is highly recommended. Reservations are encouraged by the restaurant staff. \$\$

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City Works, 2 PPG Pl. (412) 448-2900

Whether you are seated in the large indoor space or the spacious patio, City Works offers a wonderful dining experience for the solo diner or large groups. In addition to their excellent hospitality, this restaurant prides itself on offering a vast menu featuring American classics and more than 90 craft beers on tap. Please do not mistake City Works for a beer-drinker's paradise, however, as the food is really the main attraction. The lunch, dinner, and brunch menus offer creative twists on traditional dishes with several vegetarian options available. \$\$

Bae Bae's Kitchen, 951 Liberty Ave. (412) 391-1890

This Korean-inspired eatery creates fast and healthy meals in a cozy restaurant setting. You can choose from the specials or create your own combinations from the protein and side dishes, which offer plenty of gluten-free and vegan options. From the dumplings to the bibimbap, each meal is ready in minutes and prepared within a single box that you are welcome to carry out or eat in. Seating is available for pairs or small groups in the front dining room, with additional seating in the bar at the back of the restaurant. You will find the same friendly service two doors down at Bae Bae's Cafe, where sweet treats and coffee drinks are served in a whimsical and relaxed atmosphere. \$\$

Bridges & Bourbon, 930 Penn Ave. (412) 586-4287

This modern restaurant and bar is a feast for all your senses. The expert bartenders serve from an impressive list of whiskeys and bourbons, in addition to a unique cocktail and mocktail menu that prioritizes presentation as well as taste. Bring your appetite because Bridges will not disappoint. Whether you are sharing one of their charcuterie boards or enjoying an entree, the food is delicious and the portions are generous. Small plates are prepared during happy hour and brunch is served on both Saturday and Sunday. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available. Reservations are recommended. \$\$

Con Alma, 613 Penn Ave. (412) 932-2387

Enter the doorway off busy Penn Avenue into Con Alma and you'll have the sense of passing into another world where prohibition-style cocktails and live jazz music set the mood. The same attention to detail that went into creating Con Alma's speakeasy atmosphere is applied to its well-curated menu. Vegan and gluten-free options can be found among the menu of soul-inspired dishes available in the evenings as well as during Sunday brunch. Please note that a \$10 surcharge (per person) is applied to the bill during live music. Reservations are recommended. Information about hours, reservations, and a schedule of jazz sessions can be found at www.conalmapgh.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Condado, 971 Liberty Ave. (412) 281-9111

With daily fresh ingredients, Condado boasts build-your-own tacos, including vegetarian options. With generous portions and to-die-for margaritas, this is an excellent spot for both lunch and dinner. The Downtown Pittsburgh location itself is a riot of art and graffiti, an explosion of color from local artists. While you're there, if you don't feel like creating your own, try the Bad Habit taco and the Pear Margarita. Condado is a fun and tasty place to spend an evening. \$\$

Touring Pittsburgh

Gateway Clipper, 350 West Station Square Dr. (412) 355-7980

The ultimate way to tour Pittsburgh is from its rivers. Seeing the city from the water gives you a new perspective on the unique topography and beautiful architecture of Pittsburgh. The sightseeing tours feature historical sites and little-known facts from the experienced guides onboard. The Gateway Clipper fleet offers both inside and outside seating for a comfortable experience year-round. Visit www.gatewayclipper.com to see the variety of tours, the schedule, or to make a reservation. Boat tours depart from Station Square and last approximately one hour.

Rivers of Steel, The Bost Building, 623 East Eighth Ave., Homestead, PA (412) 464-4020

Celebrating the artistry and innovation of the region's industrial heritage, Rivers of Steel is a grassroots organization offering tours, workshops, and exhibitions across five separate locations. Whether you are interested in exploring the remnants of a steel mill by touring the National Historic Landmark of Carrie Blast Furnace, or you want to board the riverboat Explorer for the "Uniquely Pittsburgh" sightseeing tour, you will find the expertise of the tour guides second to none. Visit riversofsteel.com to learn more about the various tours available through Rivers of Steel or to make a reservation.



Carrie Blast Furnace

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 100 West Station Square Dr. (412) 471-5808

For the more intrepid ACRL attendee, self-guided walking tours of Pittsburgh are available through the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. Each tour is presented as a two-page PDF with a map outlining sights of interest for a particular neighborhood or set of landmarks. Visit phlf.org/education-department/self-guided-walking-tours to view or download a self-guided tour.

Eddie Merlot's, 444 Liberty Ave. (412) 235-7676

Eddie Merlot's is a steakhouse near Pittsburgh's Market Square offering beef, seafood, and poultry dishes with a variety of sides, including potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and vegetables. In typical steakhouse fashion, the entrees are served à la carte and the sides are ordered separately. A selection of "Chef's Favorites" entrees are offered at a fixed price and come with a salad. The lunch menu is smaller and offers several meals (an appetizer, an entrée, and a side dish) at a fixed price, along with options for hamburgers and sandwiches. With a nod to the restaurant's name, there is an impressively large selection of wines available. Eddie Merlot's is a classic steakhouse with an elegant atmosphere and prices to match. Reservations are recommended. \$\$\$\$

Hyde Park Prime Steakhouse, 247 North Shore Dr. (412) 222-4014

Located in Pittsburgh's North Shore neighborhood, this is a high-end steakhouse experience where lucky diners will be situated with views of PNC Park, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates. No matter where you sit, the food is what will stay in your memory. Their steak selection, of course, is the pièce de résistance, but there are plenty of seafood and vegetarian options on the menu as well. Don't forget to complement your dinner with one of their specialty drinks. From the top-notch service to the elegant interiors, this steakhouse creates a very memorable experience for those who are prepared to pay for it. Reservations are required, the sooner the better. \$\$\$\$

Meat & Potatoes, 649 Penn Ave. (412) 325-7007

While their website boasts Chef DeShantz's desire to create a space for traditional American cuisine with Meat & Potatoes, don't let this fool you. On one of the restaurant's walls, diners will read "Every part of the animal can, and should be, served," and this cozy place does just that. The menu features delicacies such as ox tail, rabbit, and duck. Not to be outdone, their drink list is just as exotic. The prices aren't too bad as far as fine dining experiences go, but the bill will depend on what you order. Still, don't let this experience pass you by! Please remember to reserve your table far in advance, unless you manage to sign up for the Dinner with Colleagues at this location on Thursday evening of the conference. \$\$\$\$

Morton's Steakhouse, 625 Liberty Ave. (412) 261-7141

This is an upscale chain steakhouse at its best. Morton's knows how to deliver a traditional steak dining experience, from the ambience to the menu. Diners can choose from a wide selection of steaks cooked to your specification, as well as options from the Raw Bar. The menu is complemented by a variety of libations and wines to enjoy. Morton's is a fine dining experience for those seeking an unforgettable night out. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$

Nicky's Thai Kitchen, 903 Penn Ave. (412) 471-8424

Voted Best Thai 2022 by *Pittsburgh City Paper* readers, Nicky's is a fantastic choice for lunch or dinner. Known for friendly service and an extensive menu including vegan and gluten-free options, Nicky's is sure to please everyone in your dining party. The menu offers a lot of variety and spice levels can be adjusted to fit your taste. In addition to their great table service, Nicky's provides online ordering and takeout for your convenience. This restaurant will be an option for those interested in signing up for the Dinner with Colleagues on Thursday evening of the conference. \$\$-\$\$\$

Primanti Bros. Restaurant and Bar, 5491 Penn Ave. (412) 404-8480

If you are looking for the quintessential Pittsburgh food, you have found it! Primanti Bros. restaurants serve unique "Pittsburgh style" sandwiches. They consist of your choice of protein, coleslaw, french fries, and tomato slices served between two pieces of Italian bread. If you are feeling really ambitious (and hungry), you can try a Tall Boy, which includes several different proteins on one sandwich along with all the toppings. Hamburgers, pizza, salads, and appetizers are also on the menu, but the true highlight is the traditional sandwiches. The Primanti Bros. in Pittsburgh's Strip District is the original location, established in 1933,

although conference-goers may find their restaurant in Market Square more convenient. Both locations can get crowded at times, so consider adding your name to the online waiting list at www.primantibros.com/locations. \$\$

Scarpino, 960 Penn Ave. (412) 904-2213

A modern Italian restaurant in both menu and decor, conveniently located downtown in a space full of windows facing the street, Scarpino boasts a full-flavored menu, with such classics as pasquale parmigiana, cacio el pepe, as well as a variety of thin crust pizzas. Pasta is made fresh on location. Limoncello is made in house, alongside many other tasty drinks. Reservations are recommended by the restaurant staff. \$\$

Social House Seven, 123 7th St. (412) 586-4130

Located in the heart of Downtown's Cultural District, Social House Seven is an Asian fusion restaurant featuring Japanese, Korean, and Thai dishes. With dramatic lighting and decor in the bar and dining area, the atmosphere creates a true oasis within the bustling city. On weekends, the vibe is somewhere between a lounge and a dance club. Perfect for a memorable lunch, dinner, or happy hour with ACRL colleagues, Social House Seven has something for everyone! Several vegetarian options are on the menu and a separate vegan menu is available upon request. \$\$-\$\$\$

The Standard: Market & Pint House, 947 Penn Ave. (412) 224-2462

Just steps away from the Convention Center, The Standard welcomes you with an airy and casual interior. Step up to the counter to place your order for specials that accommodate a variety of flavor profiles and dietary preferences at all times of the day. Starting with breakfast and cafe options at 6:00 a.m. through to late night, when the restaurant and bar service is open, The Standard is a reliable staple to keep you fed and energized during a rigorous conference schedule. Stop by for a quiet moment over a pint or come with a large group to enjoy the expansive food and drinks menu of The Standard, where everyone is sure to find a satisfying option for their taste and budget. \$-\$\$

TÄKÖ, 214 6th St. (412) 471-8256

Looking for something a little different? TÄKÖ is definitely a place to check out. An Asian/Mexican fusion experience that includes vegetarian options, this restaurant is unique among downtown dining options. Their menu specializes in a variety of tacos, from traditional to mushroom, and all are out of the ordinary. Music, energy, and fun decor abound, so do not plan for a quiet dining experience. TÄKÖ is a perfect choice for dinner or drinks with appetizers, especially their chips, dips, and guacamole. Reservations are recommended. Online ordering and takeout available. \$\$-\$\$\$

The Warren: Bar & Burrow, 245 7th St. (412) 201-5888

The Warren feels like your favorite dive bar back home, but a recent renovation combined with an impressive food selection elevates the ambience without relinquishing any charm. Come for the handcrafted cocktails and stay for the sandwiches or sushi at this unassuming and dependable restaurant/bar located in the heart of downtown. If the extensive and inventive drink menu does not satisfy your needs, a fully stocked bottle shop is located next to

the restaurant for wine and beer takeaway. This casual local spot is popular for theatergoers as well as the after-work crowd. \$-\$\$

The Yard, 100 Fifth Ave. (412) 291-8182

Up just one flight of steps from Market Square, this cozy gastropub is a haven for sports fans and anyone who enjoys comfort food. Known for their broad menu of gourmet grilled cheese (and yes, there are a lot of varieties), the Yard is a friendly and welcoming dining spot that features great service in a casual atmosphere. Diners feel so at home, the restaurant even has a two-hour time limit on tables. But you'll find this is plenty of time to peruse the menu, select your grilled cheese (or burger, flatbread, or salad) of choice, and enjoy a beer from one of the many on tap as you await your food. \$\$ *zz*