

Enjoy Pre-Theater Dining At These 5 Chicago Hotspots

BY [LINDSEY MALKUS](#) | [DINING + DRINKING, NEWS](#) | SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

From the Loop to Lincoln Park and beyond, [Chicago](#) is very much a theater town. Second to none, the [Chicago](#) theater scene is alive and well and so is its pre-theater dining. Whether you're catching a show at Steppenwolf, Lookingglass Theatre or you managed to snag tickets to Hamilton, here are the places to fill up before the curtain goes up.

The Loop – Atwood



Photo Credit: Atwood Restaurant

Located on the ground floor of The Alise Chicago—and situated right in the heart of Chicago’s Theater District—Atwood has long been a favorite of Chicago theater crowds. The restaurant’s bright and open space is sleek and modern, but looks right at home in this 19th century building. The menu offers up more modern fare with dishes that include fresh and seasonal ingredients. Be sure to check out the bar’s extensive menu as well. With over 50 concoctions spanning 200 years of cocktail history, you may want to stop by after your show for a one-of-a-kind nightcap.

1 West Washington St, Chicago, IL 60602

South Loop – Mercat a la Planxa



Photo Credit: Jason Little

Right down the street from the Chicago Symphony, around the corner from the Auditorium Theatre, and a short walk or cab ride from Chicago's Theater District—Mercat a la Planxa makes its home at the heart of Chicago's Cultural Mile on Michigan Avenue. Catalan-influenced dishes bring a modern twist to traditional tapas. Mercat's menu hits the mark with a range that includes everything from reimagined street food to classic paellas. This shared experience and an open and electric atmosphere sets the scene for a night of inspiration and conversation.

638 South Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60605

West Loop – Blackbird



Photo Credit: Doug Fogelson

A twenty-year reputation for culinary excellence, a Michelin star, and a central location make West Loop icon, Blackbird, an absolute dream for pre-theater dining. Add in the restaurant's recently launched "Little Blackbird" menu (available Sunday-Thursday from 5pm-6pm through the holidays) and you've got the perfect gastronomic overture for your night out. This "little" menu provides theatergoers with an abbreviated version of Blackbird's dinner tasting menu, which means you can sit back, relax, sip and savor your expertly paired beverage. Enjoy the peace of mind that comes with an elevated dining experience... and knowing you won't have to rush.

[619 W Randolph St, Chicago, IL 60661](#)

Gold Coast / Streeterville – Marisol_



Photo Credit: Kendall McCaugherty Hall + Merric

Does anything go better with great theater than fine dining and fine art? Find out for yourself at Marisol. Named after sculptor Marisol Escobar, this relative newcomer is tucked into Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. The menu is a blend of the quirky—chickpea-less hummus with sunflower seeds and artichokes—and the unexpected—white tea pudding. This palate-pleasing ingenuity and a prime location (a quick walk or cab ride from Lookingglass Theatre, Broadway Playhouse, and Chicago Shakespeare) make Marisol the perfect warmup for an evening (or afternoon) of theater.

205 E Pearson St, Chicago, IL 60611

Lincoln Park – Boka



Photo Credit: Eric Kleinberg Photograph

Step into Boka, and it becomes clear that this is not your average dining establishment. Rich, warm earth tones and a vibrant green, living wall set the perfect tone for a night of fine dining and theatricality. Located on the same block as Chicago's world-renowned Steppenwolf Theatre and the Royal George Theatre, not to mention a short walk (or cab ride) to The Second City, make this Lincoln Park favorite a star when it comes to location. Add in a menu worthy of a Michelin star, and you may feel the need for a standing ovation before you make it to the theater.

1729 North Halsted St, Chicago, IL 60614

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