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Types of restaurants

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There are various **types of restaurants**. Restaurants fall into several industry classification based upon menu style, preparation methods and pricing. Additionally, how the food is served to the customer helps to determine the classification.

Historically, *restaurant* referred only to places that provided tables where one sat down to eat the meal, typically served by wait-staff. Following the rise of fast food and take-out restaurants, a retronym for the older "standard" restaurant was created, **sit-down restaurant**. Most commonly, "sit-down restaurant" refers to a casual dining restaurant with table service rather than a fast-food restaurant where one orders food at a counter. Sit-down restaurants are often further categorized as "family-style" or "formal".

In British English, the term *restaurant* almost always means an eating establishment with table service, so the "sit-down" qualification is not usually necessary. Fast food and takeaway (takeout) outlets with counter service are not normally referred to as restaurants.

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Major categories

Fast-food restaurants

Fast-food restaurants emphasize speed of service and low cost over other considerations. A common feature of newer fast-food restaurants that distinguishes them from traditional cafeteria is a lack of cutlery or crockery; the customer is expected to eat the food directly from the disposable container it was served in. One popular variation in North America is the deli or delicatessen, offering made-to-order sandwiches and/or salads from behind a counter.

Fast casual-dining restaurants

A **fast casual restaurant** is similar to a fast-food restaurant in that it does not offer full table service, but promises a somewhat higher quality of food and atmosphere. Average prices charged are higher than fast-food but everood prices and non-disposable plates and cutlery are sometimes offered. This category is a growing concept that fills the space between fast food and casual dining.

Family style

Family style restaurants are restaurants that have a fixed menu and fixed price, usually with diners seated at a communal table such as on bench seats. More common in the 19th and early 20th century, they can still be found in rural communities, or as theme restaurants, or in vacation lodges.

Casual dining

See also: List of casual dining restaurant chains

A **casual dining restaurant** is a restaurant that serves moderately-priced food in a casual atmosphere. Except for buffet-style restaurants, casual dining restaurants typically provide table service. Casual dining comprises a market segment between fast food establishments and fine dining restaurants (see also Fast casual restaurant).

Casual dining restaurants usually have a full bar with separate bar staff, a larger beer menu and a limited wine menu.

Fine dining

Fine dining restaurants are full service restaurants with specific dedicated meal courses. Décor of such restaurants feature higher quality materials with an eye towards the "atmosphere" desired by the restaurateur. The wait staff is usually highly trained and often wears more formal attire.

Others

Most of these establishments can be considered subtypes of fast casual-dining restaurants or casual-dining restaurants.

Cafe

Cafés and coffee shops are informal restaurants offering a range of hot meals and made-to-order sandwiches. Cafés offer table service. Many cafés are open for breakfast and serve full hot breakfasts. In some areas cafés offer outdoor seating.

Cafeterias

A cafeteria is a restaurant serving mostly ready-cooked food arranged behind a food-serving counter. There is little or no table service. Typically, a patron takes a tray and pushes it along a track in front of the counter. Depending on the establishment, servings may be ordered from attendants, selected as ready-made portions already on plates, or self-serve their own portions.

Coffeehouse

Coffeehouses are casual restaurants without table service that emphasize coffee and other beverages; typically a limited selection of cold foods such as pastries and perhaps sandwiches are offered as well. Their distinguishing feature is that they allow patrons to relax and socialize on their premises for long periods of time without pressure to leave promptly after eating.

Pub

Mainly in the UK and other countries influenced by British culture, a pub (short for public house) is a bar that serves simple food fare. Traditionally, pubs were primarily drinking establishments with food in a decidedly secondary position, whereas the modern pub business relies on food as well, to the point where gastropubs are known for their high-quality pub food. A typical pub has a large selection of beers and ales on tap.

Bistros and brasserie

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In France, a *brasserie* is a *café* doubling as a restaurant and serving single dishes and other meals in a relaxed setting. A *bistro* is a familiar name for a *café* serving moderately priced simple meals in an unpretentious setting, especially in Paris; bistros have become increasingly popular with tourists. When used in English, the term *bistro* usually indicates either a fast casual-dining restaurant with a European-influenced menu or a *café* with a larger menu of food.

All-you-can-eat buffet and smorgasbord

This form of restaurant offers patrons a selection of food at a fixed price. Food is served trays around bars, from which costumers with plates serve themselves. The selection can be modest or very extensive, with the more elaborate menus divided into categories such as salad, soup, appetizers, hot entrées, cold entrées, and dessert and fruit. Often the range of cuisine can be eclectic, while other restaurants focus on a specific type, such as home-cooking, Chinese, Indian, or Swedish. The role of the waiter or waitress in this case is relegated to removal of finished plates, and sometimes the ordering and refill of drinks.

Hibachi-style

In North America, many restaurants specializing in Japanese cuisine offer the hibachi grill, which is more accurately based on a type of charcoal stove that is called *shichirin* in Japan. Diners, often in multiple, unrelated parties, sit around the grill while a chef prepares their food orders in front of them. Often the chef is trained in entertaining the guests with special techniques, including cracking a spinning egg in the air, forming a volcano out of differently-sized onion slices, and flipping grilled shrimp pieces into patrons' mouths, in addition to various props.

Mongolian barbecue

Despite the name, this form of restaurant is not Mongolian, actually derived from Taiwan and inspired by Japanese *teppanyaki*. Costumers create a bowl from an assortment of ingredients displayed in a buffet fashion. The bowl is then handed to the cook, who stir-fries the food on a large griddle and returns it on a plate or in a bowl to the consumer.

Destination restaurants

A **destination restaurant** is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw customers from beyond its community.^[1]

Expensive restaurants

See Michelin guide, Gault Millau and restaurant rating

See also

- Automat
- Café
- Cafeteria
- Chain restaurants
- Drive-thru
- Diner
- Dining car
- fast casual restaurant
- fast food restaurant
- Greasy spoon
- Private kitchen
- Smoke-free restaurants
- Take-out
- Truck stop

References

The Way To Fine Dining

- ↑ What Makes A Destination Restaurant?

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