

FOOD



Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer

Chef Danny Grant co-owns Monarch, where both the food and the 49th-floor view are spectacular. Its sibling restaurant, Kessaku, is one floor up.

HOT LIST

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Worth the SPLURGE

30 restaurants for a big night out

Eating in restaurants has never been more expensive, and it's no surprise that Texans are being mindful about where they spend their money. The National Restaurant Association reports that 42% of adults say they are not going out to restaurants as often as they would like.

But if you're celebrating something big and you've saved up some time and money, where should you spend it? We compiled a list of expensive restaurants in Dallas-Fort Worth that are worth the

splurge.

Michelin announced recently that it will release its guide of Texas' best restaurants on Nov. 11. You've got about a month to hit up some of Dallas-Fort

Worth's fanciest restaurants before some of them get international acclaim — and booked up.

Just take this tip: Make a reservation. It's the only way to ensure you'll get a seat, even before Michelin makes some of these spots even more famous.

Restaurants are listed in alphabetical order.

Al Biernat's

Namesake Al Biernat is no longer at his restaurants on Oak Lawn Avenue and Spring Valley Road, as he is battling ALS. But Biernat's name and spirit live on at both of his restaurants, and they seem more popular than ever. (Just a few weeks ago, Tom Brady dined there — a delightful surprise.) Service is exceptional here.

■ Al Biernat's is at 4217 Oak Lawn Ave. and 5251 Spring Valley Road, both in Dallas.

The Blue Room

Join us on a journey: Go inside the new Crescent Hotel in Fort Worth, then enter the restaurant Emilia's. The Blue Room is a restaurant within a restaurant — and one of the nicest places to eat in Fort Worth. Chef Preston Paine, who appeared on Food Network show *Ciao House*, presides over the small, focused Mediterranean menu.

■ The Blue Room is at 3300 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth.

Crown Block

Take the elevator in Reunion Tower up to the royal restaurant near the top of "The Ball," Crown Block. Those looking to spend a little less can go for Sunday brunch, which offers a beautiful display of sushi, carved meats, breakfast bites and over-the-top desserts for \$80 per person. The Bloody Mary bar is extra, but it's a popular add-on. At dinnertime, Crown Block is one of the most iconic places to watch the sun set. Festive options like a large seafood tower or a round of caviar make this high-in-the-sky spot feel ultra exclusive.

■ Crown Block is at 300 Reunion Blvd. E., Dallas.

Dee Lincoln Prime

If you know, you know: Restaurateur Dee Lincoln is one of the most powerful business owners north of Dallas. Her Rolodex of regulars at Frisco restaurant



Shafkat Anowar/Staff Photographer

Buffalo tenderloin is one of the dishes that sets Fearing's apart. Chef Dean Fearing helped influence fancy food in Dallas.



Smiley N. Pool/Staff Photographer

RJ Yoakum puts his touch on oysters at Georgie. The chef, who worked at a 3-star Michelin restaurant, is known for shaking up his menu regularly.

Dee Lincoln Prime is long and impressive. Anyone feeling extra spendy can reserve a seat inside the wine cellar, where women are draped with Fendi shawls and everyone dines on Versace plates.

■ Dee Lincoln Prime is at 6670 Winning Drive, Frisco.

Don Artemio

Contemporary Mexican restaurant

Artemio.

■ Don Artemio is at 3268 W. Seventh St., Fort Worth.

El Carlos Elegante

El Carlos Elegante is the Mexican brother to similarly named restaurants the Charles in the Design District and Mister Charles on Dallas' Knox Street. All three of the Charleses are fancy and fun. El Carlos stands out as a great place to enjoy Mexico City-inspired food without the two-hour flight. We especially love starting with the "one hitters," or one-bite appetizers like Wagyu beef tartare topped with caviar (\$7) or brisket with avocado and queso fresco (\$7).

■ El Carlos Elegante is at 1400 N. Riverfront Blvd., Dallas.

Fearing's

Chef Dean Fearing has been making Southwestern cuisine in Dallas for 45 years, famously at the Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek and for the past 17 years at his eponymous restaurant at the Ritz-Carlton in Uptown. Fearing helped define fancy food in Dallas. His menu of tortilla soup, buffalo tenderloin, antelope and Wagyu chili mac and cheese is a delightful departure from the typical French fare that once defined Dallas' best restaurants.

■ Fearing's is at 2121 McKinney Ave., Dallas.

Georgie

Chef RJ Yoakum, who formerly worked at 3-star Michelin restaurant the French Laundry, has turned Georgie into a must-visit spot for Dallasites who love a high-end dinner. Just don't fall in love with too many of Yoakum's dishes; he changes the menu regularly.

■ Georgie is at 4514 Travis St., Dallas.

Grange Hall

This lunch-only spot makes our list because it's one of the best restaurants in Dallas to have a proper business meal. Service is attentive and the menu is small — just the right size for your lunch companion to pick a favorite, then continue the conversation. It's easy to spend here, like on the Thai Lobster Salad, \$45.

■ Grange Hall is at 4445 Travis St., Dallas.

Knife Italian

Knife Italian in the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Irving/Las Colinas is an all-day spot from Dallas chef John Tesar. He was once called Dallas' "most hated chef" by *D Magazine* more than a decade ago, but these days, he's cooled off. Knife Italian's menu is a greatest hits of Tesar's best pastas and steaks.

■ Knife Italian is at 4150 N. MacArthur Blvd., Irving.

Lucia

Long considered one of Dallas' best restaurants, family-owned Lucia continues to delight nearly 15 years after it opened in Oak Cliff. Chef David Uygur's menu changes regularly but often includes house-cured meat boards, house-made pastas, and mains like Wagyu bavette or Berkshire pork chop. Service is warm and attentive.

■ Lucia is at 287 N. Bishop Ave., Dallas.

Mar y Sol Cocina Latina

It's just a fact: Mar y Sol is full of beautiful people. On a recent Friday night, the restaurant was buzzing with live fire demonstrations and musicians going table to table while diners sipped pricey margaritas and shared crudos, empanadas, flautas and huge cuts of beef. Dare we say it: Mar y Sol is the flashiest new restaurant in Dallas right now.

■ Mar y Sol Cocina Latina is at 4511 McKinney Ave., Dallas.

The Mexican

This beautiful restaurant has a reputation for being expensive — but it's the buildout we're talking about. The owners spent a whopping \$11.5 million on the 11,000-square-foot restaurant. Big spenders will find plenty of splurges, like the \$250 margarita or the \$185 Wagyu tomahawk rib-eye. But you don't have to go big. The restaurant's filet and bone marrow tacos, served three to an order for \$29, are delicious.

■ The Mexican is at 1401 Turtle Creek Blvd., Dallas.

Monarch

Monarch and its one-floor-up sibling restaurant, Kessaku, are two of the highest places in Dallas to dine. Views are excellent from both. Monarch is our pick for a fancy restaurant worth the price tag because everything in this redeveloped 1960s-era building feels spectacular. House-made pastas are great to share before diving into entrees like halibut in



Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

At Knife Italian, chef John Tesar impresses diners with his pasta, such as cacio e pepe (front), and steaks. And don't forget spumoni for dessert.



Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

At family-owned Lucia, David Uygur serves a lobster mushroom cappelletti with chanterelles, Parmigiano Reggiano broth and hazelnuts.

saffron shellfish broth or scallops with roasted peaches. Is money no object? The \$270 per person Royale dinner is a tasting menu that serves the restaurant's best.

■ Monarch is at 1401 Elm St., Dallas.

Mot Hai Ba

Vietnamese restaurant Mot Hai Ba is a delightful Dallas date-night spot. It's best to go in twos, as the tables aren't huge. The Shaking Beef (\$40) is a longtime favorite, but we tend to love whatever chef Peja

Krstic is cooking.

■ Mot Hai Ba is at 6047 Lewis St., Dallas.

Nick and Sam's Steakhouse

You want to see somebody famous? Stop into Nick and Sam's. Time stands still inside this restaurant where a celebrity seems to turn up more often than not. Every time we go, we look at the people ordering over-the-top food and drink and wonder: Where'd everybody get all this money?

■ Nick and Sam's Steakhouse is at 3008 Maple Ave., Dallas.

Nuri Steakhouse

Dallas' most elaborate restaurant is Nuri Steakhouse. When it opened in September, owner Wan Kim told *The Dallas Morning News* that he spent \$20 million on the buildout and decor for the restaurant and its members-only club. And look, if you want to dine like a bajillionaire, you can do that here. Despite the high price tag for Nuri Steakhouse, menu items are pretty in line with those of competitors. Korean gumbo (\$15), steak tartare (\$24) and the Nuri Tasting Board (\$99) are three items that have proved popular so far.

■ Nuri Steakhouse is at 2401 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas.

Osteria il Muro

Osteria il Muro in Denton is not a supremely expensive restaurant compared with others on this list, it's worth saying. But it is a nice place, and it's definitely worth your money. Antipasti like house-cured meats, peppers with goat cheese, and chicken liver mousse range from \$12 to \$32. Pastas cost \$25 to \$28. The tough part is snagging a reservation: Everyone in town wants to dine at this little pasta shop up north.

■ Osteria il Muro is at 311 W. Congress St., Denton.

Quarter Acre

Eating in East Dallas has never been better. As we wrote in a story about Michelin-worthy restaurants, Greenville Avenue restaurant Quarter Acre "is one of the rare spots in Dallas where nearly every dish feels like art. They have fun names, like Fish on Chip or B.L.T., but these dishes are more complicated than they appear." New Zealand chef Toby Archibald's restaurant has earned a loyal following.

■ Quarter Acre is at 2023 Greenville Ave., Dallas.

Sanjh

We believe there's an appetite in D-FW for upscale Indian food, and Sanjh's attentive staff is ready to serve. At a recent dinner, we were delighted by the patta chaat, a crispy spinach starter dotted with yogurt and pomegranates. The New Delhi butter chicken and goat curry were two other good orders. Cocktail enthusiasts should look at Sanjh's menu of \$16 drinks that are adventurous and fun.

■ Sanjh is at 5250 N. O'Connor Blvd., Irving.

Shoyo

Omakase restaurant Shoyo is a hidden gem in East Dallas. Walk past the huge, heavy door, and you still can't see inside this tiny fixed-menu Japanese restaurant until you're called in at your reservation time. (And if you don't have a reservation? Make one. Shoyo is too small to take walk-ins.) Chef Jimmy Park and master chef Shinichiro Kondo are doing big things in this small, special restaurant.

■ Shoyo is at 1916 Greenville Ave., Dallas.

Sister

Our favorite place to take out-of-town friends is Sister on Greenville Avenue. This comfortable restaurant hits the spot: It's nice but not exorbitant. The food is interesting but not experimental. You know when you need a winning restaurant without thinking too hard? That's Sister.

■ Sister is at 2808 Greenville Ave., Dallas.

St. Martin's Wine Bistro

Years ago, live piano music was part of nearly all of Dallas' nicest restaurants. St. Martin's Wine Bistro is one of the few spots that still has it today. The nearly 45-year-old restaurant moved from Greenville Avenue to Bryan Street this year, but little else has changed. We like it because it's a reliable place for a nice meal, but it's also great for happy hour. From 5 to 6 p.m. seven days a week, martinis and house wine cost \$10 and escargots, mussels and steak tartare are \$15 each.

■ St. Martin's Wine Bistro is at 4223 Bryan St., Dallas.

Table 13

Table 13 is an unassuming restaurant in a strip center in Addison, but inside is a supper club with live music every night. It's an especially great option for North Texans who live north or west of Dallas because it's easily accessible near Belt Line Road and the Dallas North Tollway — no need to fight traffic to the city center.

■ Table 13 is at 4812 Belt Line Road, Dallas.

Tango Room

One of the sleekest restaurants on this list, Tango Room is a dinner spot that's fun yet refined. Think lobster caviar toast, king crab legs and steak at all price levels. Longtime Dallas folks will remember this restaurant space as the former FT33. Today, it's a den for deal-makers.



Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

St. Martin's Wine Bistro, a 45-year staple in Dallas, serves a coq au vin rouge plate. It moved this year to Bryan Street.



Anja Schlein/Special Contributor

Japanese restaurant Tei-An's Sashimi Premium contains bluefin tuna, kohada, kanpachi, toro and madai.

■ Tango Room is at 1617 Hi Line Drive, Dallas.

Tatsu Dallas

Tatsu is one of the toughest reservations to snag in Dallas, but it's worth it. For \$185 per person, customers get more than a dozen pieces of raw fish, each handed over by the chef on the other side of the sushi bar. We're rooting for Tatsu as one of the Dallas restaurants that might get a Michelin star. Chef and co-owner Tatsuya Sekiguchi is smarter than that. "It's not about aiming for a star, but about providing high-quality service and food," he told us.

■ Tatsu Dallas is at 3309 Elm St., Dallas.

Tei-An

Dallas' first soba noodle house, Tei-An, has been one of the city's best restaurants for more than a decade. Interestingly, Tei-An had a slow start in its first three years. "When I opened, I thought it was the biggest mistake of my life," said owner



Shafkat Anowar/Staff Photographer

Be persistent in getting a reservation to Tatsu Dallas. You'll be rewarded with high-quality sushi.



2023 File Photo/Elias Valverde II

At Via Triozzi, you can start with the whipped ricotta appetizer then dive into a fresh pasta dish.

Teiichi Sakurai in a recent *Dallas Morning News* interview. How happy we are that Dallasites found it and love it. The sashimi platter and the soba noodles are two must-gets.

Pro tip: Unlike many of the restaurants on this list, Tei-An is open for lunch Tuesday through Friday. (It also serves dinner Tuesday through Saturday.)

■ Tei-An is at 1722 Routh St., Dallas.

Town Hearth

If there were a movie version of a steakhouse in Dallas, Town Hearth would be it. This maximalist restaurant has dozens of crystal chandeliers hanging above flashy red booths. It's better if somebody else is paying, because then you can go big: options include prime steak tartare (\$21), loaded king crab tater tots (\$28), 24-ounce bone-in rib-eye (\$96) and creole-style lobster (\$145), to name a few.

■ Town Hearth is at 1617 Market Center Blvd., Dallas.

Uchi

Texas-born sushi spot Uchi is still one of our favorite spots to spend, even as Japanese omakase restaurants have proliferated the Dallas market in recent years. The best place to eat is at the sushi bar, near a chef who can give recommendations every few minutes while you sip on sake.

■ Uchi is at 2817 Maple Ave., Dallas.

Via Triozzi

Greenville Avenue restaurant Via Triozzi is far from one of the most expensive restaurants on this list. But it would be a great place to celebrate an occasion. Owner Leigh Hutchinson and her chefs have created a menu that's fun to eat through as a group. Share the whipped ricotta appetizer (\$18) to start, then order all the pastas if there are enough people at the table. Don't miss Hutchinson's lasagna (\$35), her specialty.

■ Via Triozzi is at 1806 Greenville Ave., Dallas.