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Rue Saint-Paul East: chef Nick Hodge at Kitchenette; a headcheese burger at Joe Beef; foie gras on spice bread at Kitchen Galerie.



NAVIGATOR

food lover's montreal

Montrealers frequent a bevy of cozy, lively spots during the darker winter months. The ever-growing food scene is part Paris, part Portland, with a unique all-Canadian flair that provides plenty of reasons to bundle up and head north. **BRETT MARTIN**

GO

Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport is served by Air Canada and many other airlines. Flying to Burlington, Vermont, and taking the pleasant two-hour drive north can be a more affordable alternative. In town, an extensive Metro system and abundant cabs make a car optional.

STAY

1/ hotel gault

In Old Montreal, Hotel Gault is a sleek choice, with loft-like rooms, huge bathtubs, and friendly winter deals. Rooms from \$189; 449 rue Sainte-Hélène; 514-904-1616; hotelgault.com

2/ hotel le st-james

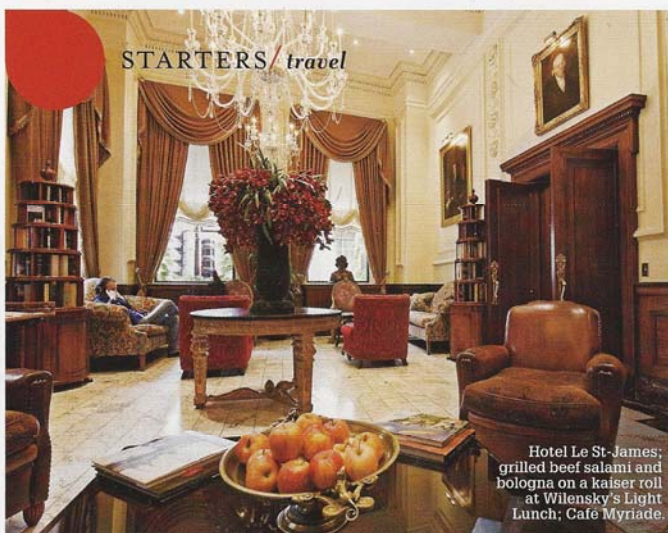
If fin-de-siècle Paris is more your style, check out the Hotel Le St-James; that's what the Rolling Stones and Madonna do. Rooms from \$255; 355 rue Saint-Jacques; 514-841-3111; hotellstjames.com

EAT

3/ joe beef/ liverpool house/ mckiernan

Few establishments capture the current Montreal culinary climate (cheeky and rambunctious in atmosphere; dead serious about food) better than Joe Beef and its sister restaurants, which sit side by side on one block. Chef Fred »

STARTERS / travel



Hotel Le St-James; grilled beef salami and bologna on a kaiser roll at Wilensky's Light Lunch; Café Myriade.



Morin ranges freely from French classics like *lièvre à la royale* (hare stew) to creations drawn from the lush garden and blackened smoker in the backyard. Meanwhile, co-chef and sommelier David McMillan presides over a laid-back bar scene. Liverpool House has a more classic bistro menu (and lower prices), while McKiernan offers satisfying lunch dishes, like a suckling-pig sandwich. 2491 Notre Dame West; 514-935-6504; joebeef.ca

4/ jean-talon market

This European-style market overflows with produce, seafood, meats, and cheeses. Stop at Poissonnerie Aqua Mare for a paper cone filled with fried calamari and shrimp, and follow up with a

Quebecois spring treat: maple syrup drizzled over a bed of crushed ice to create a rough, delectable dessert. 7070 rue Henri-Julien; 514-903-2113; marche-jean-talon.com

5/ café myriade

How serious is Café Myriade about its coffee? So serious that if owners Scott Rao and Anthony Benda see one of their baristas make an error undetected by civilian eyes, they will intercede, taste the result, and insist the drink be made over if it doesn't meet their exacting standards. 1432 rue Mackay; 514-939-1717; cafemyriade.com

6/ wilensky's light lunch

Perhaps the most dubious use of the word *light* ever. The

must-have lunch at this frozen-in-amber Mile End institution is the Wilensky Special: a sheaf of grilled beef salami and bologna hot-pressed into a kaiser roll. Time was when it cost extra to forgo a squirt of mustard—a policy that Wilensky diner and dictatorial chef David Chang would likely approve of. 34 avenue Fairmount Ouest; 514-271-0247

7/ kitchenette

Chcf-owncr Nick Hodge, a Texas native, has a deft hand with Asian, Mediterranean, and southern comfort foods. This upscale diner shows off his range with dishes both inventive (a Japanese “taco” with pulled-beef teriyaki, guacamole, daikon-jalapeño slaw, and yuzu “jello”) and straightforward (barbecued ribs to make his home state proud). 1353 boulevard René Lévesque Est; 514-527-1016; kitchenetterestaurant.ca

8/ kitchen galerie

The staff at Kitchen Galerie wears T-shirts depicting a dead penguin—a reference to the French slang for waiters, and the fact that the restaurant doesn't employ any. Instead, the young francophone chefs double as servers. The menu changes daily, depending on what's on offer at Jean-Talon Market next door, though

some of the specialties—like seared foie gras on a slice of moist spice bread—thankfully are permanent. 60 rue Jean-Talon Est; 514-315-8994; kitchengalerie.com

9/ dna

The generically modern dining room and name of DNA belie the lustiness of young chef Derek Dammann's food. The menu is heavy on homemade charcuterie and shock-value offal (veal heart tartare, pig's head), but there's plenty for the less adventurous, including a beautiful view of the city's Old Port. 355 Marguerite d'Youville; 514-287-3362; dnarestaurant.com

10/ au pied de cochon

Martin Picard's meat-centric Au Pied de Cochon has long been a pilgrimage site for its house-made boudin, fries in duck fat, and *poutine* (the regional meal of french fries, cheese curd, and brown gravy). If you're visiting during maple-tapping season (mid-March through May), ask about Picard's “sugar shack,” a short drive out of town. 536 Duluth; 514-281-1114; restaurantaupieddecochon.ca

