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Types of restaurant

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Various **types of restaurant** fall into several industry classifications 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 a waiter. 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 or a diner, where one orders food at a counter. Sit-down restaurants are often further categorized, in North America, 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 (take-out) outlets with counter service are not normally referred to as restaurants. Outside of North-America, the terms fast casual dining restaurants, family style, and casual dining are not used and distinctions among different kinds of restaurants is often not the same. In France, for example, some restaurants are called "bistros" to indicate a level of casualness or trendiness, though some "bistros" are quite formal in the kind of food they serve and clientele they attract. Others are called "brasseries", a term which indicates hours of service. "Brasseries" may serve food round the clock, whereas "restaurants" usually only serve at set intervals during the day. In Sweden, restaurants of many kinds are called "restauranger", but restaurants attached to bars or cafes are sometimes called "kök", literally "kitchens", and sometimes a bar-restaurant combination is called a "krog", in English a "tavern".

In *Dishing It Out: In Search of the Restaurant Experience*, Robert Appelbaum argues that all restaurants can be categorized according a set of social parameters defined as polar opposites: high or low, cheap or dear, familiar or exotic, formal or informal, and so forth. Any restaurant will be relatively high or low in style and price, familiar or exotic in the cuisine it offers to different kinds of customers, and so on. Context is as important as the style and form: a taqueria is a more than familiar site in Guadalajara, Mexico, but it would be exotic in Albania. A Ruth's Chris restaurant in America may seem somewhat strange to a first time visitor from India; but many Americans are familiar with it as a large restaurant chain, albeit one that features high prices and a formal atmosphere.

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Types

Fast food

Fast food restaurants emphasize speed of service. Operations range from small-scale street vendors with food carts to multi-billion dollar corporations like McDonald's and Pizza Hut. If table seating is available, ordering is not done from the table but from a front counter. Diners typically then carry their own food from the counter to a table of their choosing, and afterward dispose of any waste from their trays. Drive-through and take-out service may also be available. Fast food restaurants are known in the restaurant industry as QSRs or quick-service restaurants.^[1]

Fast casual

Fast casual restaurants are primarily chain restaurants, such as Chipotle Mexican Grill and Panera Bread.^[2] More of the food is prepared at the restaurant than is the case at fast food chains. Fast casual restaurants usually do not offer full table service, but may offer non-disposable plates and cutlery. The quality of food and prices tend to be higher than those of a conventional fast food restaurant but may be lower than casual dining.

Casual dining

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. Chain examples include TGI Friday's and Applebee's in the U.S. and Harvester in the U.K. Casual dining comprises a market segment between fast food establishments and fine dining restaurants. Casual dining restaurants often have a full bar with separate bar staff, a larger beer menu and a limited wine menu. They are frequently, but not necessarily, part of a wider chain, particularly in the United States. In Italy, such casual restaurants are often called "trattoria", and are usually independently owned and operated.

Family style

Family style restaurants are a type of casual dining restaurants where food is often served on platters and the diners serve themselves.^[3] In some regions, alcoholic beverages are not sold at family-style casual dining restaurants.

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, than restaurants featuring lower-quality materials. The wait staff is usually highly trained and often wears more formal attire. Fine-dining restaurants are almost always small businesses and are generally either single-location operations or have just a few locations. Food portions are visually appealing. Fine dining restaurants have certain rules of dining which visitors are generally expected to follow often including a dress code.

Variations

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

Brasserie and bistro

A brasserie in the US has evolved from the original French idea to a type of



The Fat Duck, a fine dining restaurant in Bray, Great-Britain

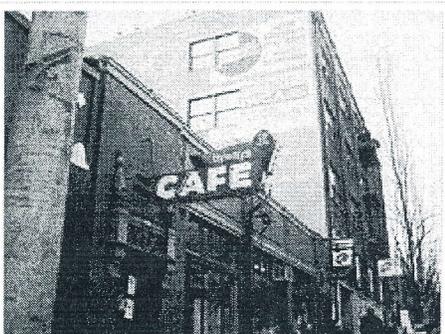
restaurant serving moderately priced hearty meals—French-inspired "comfort foods"—in an unpretentious setting. Bistros in the US usually have more refined decor, fewer tables, finer foods and higher prices. When used in English, the term *bistro* usually indicates a continental menu.

Buffet and smörgåsbord

Buffets and smörgåsbord offer patrons a selection of food at a fixed price. Food is served on trays around bars, from which customers 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. In Italy, a kind of semi-buffet is featured in either a *tavola calda*, serving hot foods, and a *tavola fredda*, which serves cold food. Either can be found in bars and cafes at meal times or in dedicated sites, sometimes with seating and service at a counter.

In the United States, Buffets, Inc., is a large buffet chain corporation which owns Old Country Buffet, Country Buffet, and HomeTown Buffet. HomeTown Buffet popularized the "scatter buffet", which refers to the layout of separate food pavilions. Other American restaurant chains well known for their buffets include Golden Corral, which features food products presented in pans, Souplantation/Sweet Tomatoes (known in particular for its soups and salads), Gatti's Pizza, CiCi's Pizza, Fresh Choice (a smaller competitor of Souplantation), Pancho's Mexican Buffet, Ryan's and Ponderosa Steakhouse. Sizzler is another prominent restaurant offering a buffet.

Café



Cafés are informal restaurants offering a range of hot meals and made-to-order sandwiches. Coffee shops, while similar to cafés, are not restaurants due to the fact that they primarily serve and derive the majority of their revenue from hot drinks. Many cafés are open for breakfast and serve full hot breakfasts. In some areas, cafés offer outdoor seating.

Cafeteria

A cafeteria is a restaurant serving 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. Cafeterias are common in hospitals, corporations and educational institutions.

In the UK, a cafeteria may also offer a large selection of hot food similar to the American fast casual restaurant, and the use of the term cafeteria is deprecated in favour of **self-service restaurant**.

Coffeehouse

See also: Tea house

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, and are thus frequently chosen as sites for meetings.

Destination restaurant

A **destination restaurant** is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw customers from beyond its community.^[4] The idea of a destination restaurant originated in France with the Michelin Guide, which rated restaurants as to whether they

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