

Top 10 Atmospheric & Historic London Restaurants

1. Rules (WC2E 7LB): c.1798, the oldest restaurant in London (disputed with Wilton's). Served Dickens, Thackeray, Galsworthy, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, John Betjeman. Classy.
2. The Quality Chop House (EC1R 3EA): c.1869 'Progressive Working Class Caterer'. Last time I went Peter Ackroyd was at the next table. On the other hand I got food poisoning. Unclassy, literally.
3. Simpsons in the Strand (WC2R 0EW): c.1828, unchanged since Gladstone, Disraeli, Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson ate here. PG Wodehouse called it 'a restful temple of food'. Sumptuous.
4. Café Royale (W1B 4DY): c.1865. Wilde & Bosie ate in this room that drips with elegance. Served Beerbohm, Crowley, Bernard Shaw, Coward, Churchill, Elizabeth Taylor, Mick Jagger. Decadent.
5. Criterion (W1J 9HP): c.1878. Conan Doyle 'discovered' Holmes & Watson here. Opulent.
6. Kettner's (W1D 5HP): opened c.1867 by Napoleon III's chef. A favourite of Oscar Wilde. Louche.
7. Quo Vadis (W1D 3LL): c.1926, on the site where Marx wrote Das Kapital. Exclusive (ironically).
8. The Gay Hussar (W1D 4NB): c1953, Hungarian eatery loved by TSElliot, Labour grandees. Weird
9. Veeraswamy (W1B 4RS): c1926, the oldest cuzzah in town; served Churchill, Chaplin, Nehru. Hot
10. Dacquoise (SW7 2LT): c1943 Founded for Polish exiles in the War. Keeler met Ivanov here. Faded

... And the Most Atmospheric Fast Food Joints

1. Manze's Pie & Mash (various): c.1891-, traditional Eel & Pie shops. Disgusting (but atmospheric).