



Social life section

In Search of the Elusive Quiet Restaurant

“It is important to sensitize the general public to the needs of the hearing impaired. Just as there would be a need for a ramp for those with mobility problems, there should be accommodation for those who are hard of hearing.”

Hear Quebec wants to create a list of quiet Montreal restaurants in response to our hard-of-hearing members who are having difficulty in locating a more tranquil place to dine. Finding a quiet eating spot for people who are hard of hearing (and even those who aren't) can be a frustrating experience. Most restaurants are arranged to maximize revenues by placing tables close together and the decor usually has hard surfaces (e.g. glass or tile), which intensifies the noise. And then, to add insult to injury, music is played in the background.

What is someone who wants a quiet night out to do?

My experience has been that, once I discover a quiet restaurant, it generally closes within a few months. The New York Times food critic describes noise levels in her weekly column, along with price, location and accessibility. The ratings are always “very noisy”. It makes you wonder why she bothers.

But does it have to be this way?

Acoustical panels can be added to make restaurants quieter, and music can be turned down. We should remember that noise is subjective. Never rely on how the restaurant owner might describe the restaurant. There are such other factors as:

- dining during peak hours
- being seated beside the noisy kitchen area
- a large group celebrating a birthday placed next to yours.

There are certain givens, such as the fact that trendy restaurants aimed at younger patrons will have louder music - owners or managers will probably be less open to turning it down. Older patrons tend to want quieter spots and restaurateurs will be more open to turning down the music when mainly catering to a more mature population. And beware the restaurant that blares the music to please the kitchen staff. It is usually the kind of music their own patrons would never want to listen to.

It is important to sensitize the general public to the needs of the hearing impaired. Just as there would be a need for a ramp for those with mobility problems, there should be accommodation for those who are hard of hearing.

David Suzuki in his programme “The Nature of Things” on the Science of Sound makes the point that your brain is prevented from processing taste when you are distracted by noise. As we all know, for example, planes are very noisy and the food always tastes bland.

Please send the name of your favourite quiet restaurant with the location and type of food to df@hearhear.org and we will compile a list and place it on our social media pages and on our website.



Debra Fisher is a speech reading instructor at Hear Quebec and an avid traveler who would like to see a registry of quiet restaurants in all major cities.

A Guide to Finding a Quiet Restaurant in Montreal

By Debra Fisher



Debra Fisher is a speech reading instructor at Hear Quebec and an avid traveler who would like to see a registry of quiet restaurants in all major cities.



Last year I asked Hear Quebec members to recommend their favourite quiet restaurants. Thank you to all who have responded. Suggestions were accepted only from hard-of-hearing people, as they understand the challenge of trying to enjoy a meal with a noisy background. Those with normal hearing may not like noisy restaurants but their ears can make the necessary adjustments. The bottom line is that there is no such thing as a quiet restaurant and my list is shorter than I would have liked.

In my younger days, I remember going to restaurants where the kitchen was behind two swinging doors. They were large rooms with ample space between tables, carpeted floors, cloth tablecloths and napkins.

With today's open style concept, you can hear the kitchen staff at work, the floors are hard surfaces and the tables are uncomfortably close together.

From the restaurant owner's point of view, rents are high and they are only trying to maximize profits.

There are many variables. Probably the most important are the number of diners (and their sobriety). A very busy restaurant will be a noisy one. It is important to go to a restaurant before or after rush hour, at 5 pm in the afternoon, for example.

Certain restaurants will be busier at lunch, others at dinner-time. Some will be noisier on weekdays, others on weekends depending on the location.

Always choose a table against the wall or in the corner. Make sure there is no speaker (for music) above your head.

If you are in a large party, ask for a round table rather than a rectangular table so you can see or hear everybody in your party. Also ask for a well-lit table.

Among the contributory factors making the restaurant noisy, the worst offender is the background music. Always ask for the music be turned down. I often have to ask twice.

In a very noisy restaurant, my husband wears a microphone which is paired with my streamer which brings his voice directly into my hearing aids.

When choosing terrace dining, try to find a table farthest from traffic noise.

It is best to call ahead and make a reservation. Be sure to request a quiet table against the wall or in the corner and far away from any noisy parties.

“Just as there would be a need for a ramp for those with mobility problems, there should be accommodations for those who are hard-of-hearing. The accommodations for the mobility-challenged are permanent. For the hearing-impaired, it is upon request.”

What we all want from a restaurant is good food and the ability to have a conversation. When you support one of the restaurants on the list, be sure to tell them you have chosen this restaurant because you like good food but you also like to enjoy having a conversation.

Restaurants

L'Ambroisie et l'Espace canal

(Casual French)

4020, rue St. Ambroise, porte #140,
Montréal, QC H4C 2C7
(514) 932-0641

Le Cozy Café

(Light fare)

484 Rue Main,
Hudson, QC JoP 1Ho
(450) 458-2233

Duke & Devine's

(Irish Pub)

479 Beaconsfield Boulevard,
(upstairs is quiet)
Beaconsfield, QC H9W 4C3
(514) 694-6731

La Fuchsia

(French)

2000 Ste Catherine St. West,
Montréal, QC H3H 2T3
(514) 939-4408

Maison India

(Indian)

5868 Sherbrooke St. West,
Montréal, QC H4A 1X5
(514) 485-2122

Shanghai Grill

(Chinese)

4050 Ste Catherine St. West,
Westmount, QC H3Z 1P2
(514) 935-9478

Toucheh Restaurant

(Persian-Italian)

351 Prince Albert,
Westmount, QC H3Z 2N9
(514) 369-6868

Restaurant Bonaparte

(French)

447 St Francois Xavier St.
Montréal, QC H2Y 2T1
(514) 844-4368

Daou Restaurant

(Lebanese)

519 Rue Faillon East,
Montréal, QC H2R 1L6
(514) 276-8310
2373 Boulevard Marcel-Laurin,
Saint-Laurent, QC H4R 1K4
(514) 334-1199

Restaurant Fay Wong

(Chinese)

7020 Côte Saint Luc Road,
Montréal, QC H4V 1J3
(514) 484-6663

Ganges Restaurant

(Indian)

6079 Sherbrooke St. West,
Montréal, QC H4A 1Y2
(514) 488-8850

Restaurant ChinaTown Kim Fung

(Chinese)

1111 rue Saint-Urbain,
Montréal, QC H2Z 1Y6
(514) 878-2888

Stash Café

(Polish)

200 St. Paul Street West,
Montréal, QC H2Y 1Z9
(514) 845-6611

Trattoria Tresteveres

(Italian)

1237 Crescent Street,
Montréal, QC H3G 2B2
(514) 866-3226

Restaurant Chase

(Lebanese)

5672 Monkland Ave.
Montréal, QC H4A 1E4
(514) 482-2256

Le Coin d'Asie

(Vietnamese)

6020 Sherbrooke St. West,
Montréal, QC H4A 1X9
(514) 482-4035

Food De Toi

(Healthy eating)

5999 Monkland Avenue,
Montréal, QC H4A 1H1
(514) 484-4663

Il Campari Centro

(Italian)

1177, rue de la Montagne,
Montréal, QC H3G 1Z2
(514) 868-1177

Oreganos Grill

(Mediterranean)

6535 Somerled Avenue,
Montréal, QC H4V 1S8
(514) 487-8541

Restaurant Tao

(Asian)

4242 Decarie,
Montréal, QC H4A 3K3
(514) 369-1122

Yia Sou Greek Grill

(Greek)

5375 Queen Mary Road,
Montréal, QC H3X 1V1
(514) 488-4222