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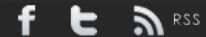


TOP CHEFS  
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# Zermatt's Kitchen Around Dining Experience Tours Four Top Restaurants

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Photos: Steve Mirsky/Cervo/SonnmattenZ'Art/Walliserhof

I found that getting fully acquainted with Zermatt, **Switzerland** goes beyond taking your picture in front of the Matterhorn and doing some skiing or hiking. It's about immersing yourself in local mountain heritage at the Matterhorn Museum and taking a stroll through the narrow streets of historic Old Zermatt. Getting to know some residents and dining at some of their favorite restaurants also helps you realize that rough mountain living dependent on sheep herding, local vegetable crops, and herbs has shaped Swiss cuisine over hundreds of years.

Today's top Zermatt **gourmet restaurants** epitomize the tasty spectacle of simple ingredients prepared to innovative and exacting heights. One of the best ways to witness the chefs' magic



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### Chef Recipes

EXCEPTIONAL DISHES

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Grilled Sweet Tea Brined Turkey

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Chef Jose Andres's  
Gazpacho al estilo de Patricia

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Chef Missy Robbins's  
Funghi al Forno (Roasted Trumpet  
Royale Mushrooms with Fontina  
Fonduta)

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is to join the village's weekly Kitchen Around held Tuesdays and Wednesdays for two to four people. For 158 CHF per person, you aren't just getting behind-the-scenes in the kitchens of any 'ole place. Along with world class skiing, Zermatt ranks as Switzerland's top dining destination in the Alps with 17 restaurants totaling 233 Gault Millau points. Gault Millau is a rating system similar to Michelin stars except with the distinguishing factor that points are awarded strictly based on food quality. Comments about service, price or atmosphere are given separately and don't affect score.



Joining in on this tour takes you into the kitchens of four restaurants for one course each made right in front of you and served with aplomb. Usually a table with full place settings complete with candlelight along with chef selected glasses of local Valais wine await you on the periphery of all the kitchen action. I felt welcomed as the guest of honor with rare access to cooking tips from the chef as well as enjoyable conversations with other staff.

For instances when it's a little less expedient by foot due to distance, two electric powered taxicab rides (combustion engines are not allowed in Zermatt) get you to and from restaurants. This along with at least one surprise culinary-related gift is included in the price. Here's what I experienced:

### Cervo

Take a glass-walled elevator from the village of Zermatt's Rechte Uferstrasse 100 meters up to this newly constructed luxury chalet. Then cross a ski trail which literally ends at the restaurant's doorstep. A large deck outside ensconced in a forest setting overlooks the Matterhorn yet you're minutes above Zermatt's action. Inside, the hotel restaurant décor is rustic modern with antlers comprising handrails and festooning portions of the bar's ceiling. Here I had two appetizers, the first of which was Hobelkase, thinly sliced "planing" cheese rolled up into tubes filled with plum chutney. The other consisted of Roggenbrot (thin slices of crisp rye bread pieces) elegantly arranged like a mini Stonehenge on my plate and filled with a mixture of cream cheese, apple, pear, and fresh lettuce topped with small pieces of Welsh bacon.



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Restaurants

FIVE-STAR DINING



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Houston, TX | Steakhouse, Seafood

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New York, NY | American

Eleven Madison Park is located in a landmark art deco building with soaring 35-foot ceilings and a view of Madison Square Park. We offer an intimate bar featuring 35 wines by the glass as well as seasonal classic and proprietary cocktails. The second floor

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### Alma De Cuba

Philadelphia, PA | Latin

Restaurateur Stephen Starr and Nuevo Latino superstar Chef Douglas Rodriguez pair up in this bold new venture with a Cuban Vibe. Enjoy delicious dishes infused with the sensuous flavors of Cuban cuisine in a vibrant atmosphere reminiscent of Old Havana.

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## Sonnmatten

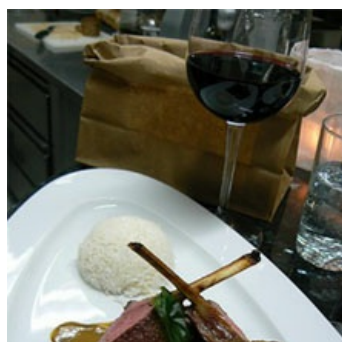


In the words of Head Chef Andreas Stotter, "Our guests are the center of everything we do. We aren't satisfied unless they are ecstatic!" Not only is the service impeccable, but vaunted specialties here include veal cheek with parsnips, potato purée and Romanesco. I was served a deliciously soul-warming Champagne celery soup accompanied by an eclectic selection of house made mini bread loafs. My favorite was what I can best describe as a thick pretzel topped sparingly with salt crystals.



## Z'Art

This restaurant/wine-bar not only features artfully prepared and tasty dishes but also notable works of art on its walls. A type of art gallery (currently black and white mountain scene photos) are on display and for sale. You can order anything from Asian starter "finger-food" to substantial main courses. Here I had what was the "main course" of the evening. A hearty plate of lamb curry studded with two locally butchered black nose lamb chops. The ragout, most generously seasoned with cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom was the perfect





dish apres skiing in -5 C conditions.



### Walliserhof



A Zermatt classic right on the Bahnhofstrasse, this restaurant is divided between the rustic Stübli featuring five types of cheese fondue, various tarts, flambes, plus lighter specialties like ultra-thin, air-dried beef. The other side is a grill where Switzerland often meets Mediterranean influences. Here I went straight to the basement kitchen for a double dessert consisting of a chocolate tort filled with pop-rock like candies as well as a scoop of house made vanilla ice cream topped with a freshly baked vanilla

wafer — a perfect harmonization of the yin-yang dichotomy at work here!



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