

TRAVEL

The Most Instagrammable Restaurants Must Have a Table in an Elevator Shaft

From New York to Phoenix, *AD* rounds up ten trendy spots that take derelict elevator shafts and turn them into romantic rooms to dine in

By Megan Johnson

March 2, 2018

Let's be honest—for some people, much of travel these days is about snapping the perfect Instagram shot. And if you're one of those people (no judgment!), these restaurants should be on your travel bucket list, as each one of them sure knows how to distinguish itself. Whether they're industrial freight elevators or exclusive fine-dining establishments, restaurants across the country are finding their former elevator spaces to be the most coveted seats in the house. Here's a roundup of ten restaurants with prime seats in former elevator shafts, and prime locales to up your Instagram likes.



Photo: Dawn Rabinowitz

Oak + Rowan (Boston, MA)

Now a stylish spot for progressive New England cuisine in Boston's Fort Point neighborhood, Oak + Rowan is housed where shoe soles were once made. Built in 1913 by the Boston Wharf Company, the building was home to the Kistler Leather Company, and later to P. Pastene & Company, patron saint of canned vegetables. Now, the ten-seat Chef's Table is in the original elevator shaft of the building, complete with the hefty, beveled steel of the original garage-style loading dock doors.



Photo: Courtesy of Old Town Pizza

Old Town Pizza (Portland, OR)

You can grab a seat inside the former elevator shaft of this classic Portland pizza joint . . . if you dare. Back in the 1880s when the restaurant was a hotel, a young prostitute was found dead at the bottom of the elevator's shaft. Many say her spirit still haunts the restaurant.

Acuario Cafe (New York, NY)

You may not expect to find an entire restaurant inside a freight elevator entrance, but that's what you get at this Dominican restaurant in New York's Garment District. It may be a bit hard to find, but just rely on the lengthy line of folks streaming outward during the lunchtime rush hour. It's not fancy, but it is delicious.

Vivo (Chicago, IL)

The Italian eatery on Randolph Street is home to Table 70, one of the most notorious seating areas in the city. Located above the dining room on the second floor in a former elevator shaft, Table 70 looks down on the rest of diners from a highly private location that can be closed off with curtains, in case guests really want to keep to themselves.

Photo: Courtesy of Standby

Standby (Detroit, MI)

Located in the Belt, an alley that's been entirely transformed by art, Standby is a stylish cocktail bar. While you can't actually have a meal in the building's former elevator shaft, it has been converted into an entrance vestibule. The original elevator doors, which were found concealed in plywood during the building restoration, were reused to create a dimly lit refuge from the outside.

Hugo's Frog Bar & Fish House (Chicago, IL)

If you've dined in the Chicago restaurant, you may have snagged a seat in the Winston Churchill elevator booth, a secluded area located in a former elevator shaft. But the former British prime minister's spot was more of a special order: The restaurant had it flown in and built inside the building.

Photo: Courtesy of Poolville Country Store

Poolville Country Store (Earlville, NY)

Back in the 1800s when the restaurant was a country store, the elevator came into use to transport dry goods between floors. Its pulley is still located at the very top of the shaft space, while one section of the original hand-drawn elevator wheel is suspended from the dining room ceiling. *Photo: Courtesy of Poolville Country Store*

Hanny's (Phoenix, AZ)

In the 1940s, it was one of Phoenix's most prominent department stores. Later, the Hanny's building was repeatedly set on fire as a firefighter training ground. Now a trendy American restaurant, Hanny's got creative with the building's former elevator shaft by installing a glass floor with mirrors on the bottom and top to drive home that "fear of heights" feeling. If you really want to get creeped out, head to the basement, where there's a collection of old dolls sitting behind a table.

Characters (Edmonton, Alberta)

Head north of the border to Edmonton, Alberta for a meal in Characters' elevator shaft. Originally a warehouse, and then a nightclub called Rock City, Characters converted its elevator shaft space to a four-seat semiprivate dining area surrounded by wood and exposed brick.

Photo: Courtesy of Oriole

Oriole (Chicago, IL)

It's a long way from rave house to pricey tasting menu, but Oriole in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood managed to make the leap. Back in the '90s, Oriole's building served as a location for wild raves and giant shows. (Rumor has it George Clinton even played there.) Now, a vintage freight elevator serves as a welcoming area for guests, complete

with midcentury design touches including a bench and antique hutch. Upon arrival, diners are offered a special pre-dinner cocktail to enjoy in the freight elevator.



WATCH

The Stockholm Tunnel Rail is the Longest Art Gallery in the World

THE BEST OF CULTURE AND TRAVEL

1 / 20



The Stockholm Tunnel Rail is the Longest Ar...

7 A-List Celebrities From The '90s Who Skil...

9 Coastal Roads That Will Make You Rethink ...

The 6 Most Luxurious First Class Flights

Secrets from 5 Well-Known Baseball Stadiums...

9 Ja Set i

Explore travel travel ideas
