

Briefs

■ **Dinner and wine**
Prune (54 E. 1st St., 212-677-6221) will honor Neal Rosenthal and his new book "Reflections of a Wine Merchant," today, with a special dinner. Meet, chat and dine with the author. Event costs \$150 per person.

■ **A very green dinner**
Tocqueville Restaurant (1 E. 15th St., 212-647-1515), featuring chef Marco Moreira, is offering both a special three-course lunch, \$36, and dinner, \$48, tomorrow through October 13. The menu celebrates the Union Square Greenmarket by using its ingredients, resulting in a shifting menu. Diners will receive a reusable shopping bag.

■ **Washington dining**
The James Beard House (167 W. 12th St., 212-627-2308) hosts a Washington wine tasting and dinner, May 24, 7pm. Enjoy a selection from the state's top vineyards while dining on salmon with wild Dungeness crab salad, seared foie gras and cherry-filled donuts. Price is \$155.

■ **A culinary sail**
Pier 59, Chelsea Piers (23rd St. at the Hudson River, 212-627-1825), teams up with the Chelsea Brewing Company on May 26, for a guided tour, by Ron Carlson, of Manhattan's largest micro-brewery and a two-hour sail on Schooner Imagine. While on board, sample three custom brews, each paired with a select cheese. Runs from 6:30-9pm; \$75. (Cait Pluto)

It's money in the mouth

By **Cristina Velocci**
 Metromix.com

As economic stimulus payments filter in, the majority of U.S. taxpayers will receive \$600 per person or \$1,200 for married couples filing jointly. This private-equity infusion gives you the perfect excuse to splurge on New York's finest dining delicacies you might otherwise frugally scoff at. We've found worthwhile ways to indulge within budget — and we've even accounted for the tax.

The Russian Tea Room

150 W. 57th St.
 212-581-7100

Fancy sending your stimulus check to Siberia? Look no further than the imperial Russian Tea Room. As of late May, a new tasting flight of three vodkas and three caviars for \$75 has been permanently added to the menu, but that's a peasant's meal compared to the Czar's Palace tasting of black caviar that will set you back \$350.

With one ounce each of the ultra-exclusive Beluga, Golden Ossetra and Serruga caviars, served on a silver tray with stacks of warm buckwheat blini, it's as opulent as the golden tree dripping with oversized Venetian glass eggs in the second-floor dining room.

Feast & Fetes
 212-737-2224

Sometimes the ultimate dining indulgence is having a quiet meal at home — especially when that meal is cooked by star chef Daniel Boulud. OK, so Boulud himself doesn't prepare dinners in private homes, but his catering company, Feast & Fetes, does. A chef from Daniel will come to *su casa* to prepare a private three-course tasting menu for two based on the restaurant's own



The Russian Tea Room is known for its opulence.

(Dennis W. Ho)



Eat ice cream for dinner at Serendipity 3.

seasonal menu.

The meal alone will run you \$450, and that's without the private chef (\$250), wait-staff (\$250) and cost of transportation (\$200 within Manhattan). It may not be the real deal, but it's the closest you'll probably get to having Boulud in your kitchen.

Serendipity 3
 225 E. 60th St.
 212-838-3531

Forget what mom told you, and indulge in some pre-dinner dessert. Now

that you're fully-grown, with a tax rebate to prove it, who's to stop you? Certainly not the folks at Serendipity 3, whose Golden Opulence Sundae will set you back \$1,000.

The sundae includes five scoops of Tahitian vanilla bean ice cream, drizzled with the world's most expensive chocolate, Amedei Porcellana, covered with chunks of rare Chuao chocolate, exotic candied fruits, gold dragnets, truffles and marzipan cherries, and topped with a salt-free dessert caviar known for its sparkling golden color. The whole shebang is finished off with a 23-karat edible gold leaf crafted by master cake designer Ron Ben-Israel and served in a Baccarat Harcourt crystal goblet (yours to keep).

Kobe Club
 68 W. 58th St.
 212-644-5623

Eating at Jeffrey Chodorow's leather-studded steak house and not ordering its signature meat is like going to Atlantic City and not gambling. Therefore, the next time you're dining under those 2,000 dangling samurai swords, you might as well indulge in the meal that will make all other steak dinners look like McDonald's

mystery meat: the Emperor's Flight of all-Japanese Wagyu beef (\$395).

The flight of 4-ounce filet, 4-ounce sirloin and 10-ounce rib eye, cut from the highest grade of Wagyu with a fat marbling score of 8 or higher, is made for two — but you've got an appetite for decadence, so this one's all you. A tip: Start things off with the Royal Shellfish



The Russian Tea Room has deals if you don't want to spend. (Dennis W. Ho)

Or don't splurge

Here's what \$600 can get you if you know how to stretch it:

- **Bamn!**: 200 servings of mozzarella sticks—paid for with 2,400 quarters, of course. (\$3 per serving). 37 St. Mark's Pl., 888-400-2266
- **Buttercup Bake Shop**: 307 cupcakes with \$1.35 left over for tip (\$1.95 per cupcake); 973 Second Ave., 212-350-4144
- **99 Cents Fresh Pizza**: 606 slices of pizza, with 6 cents to spare. 151 E. 43rd St., 212-922-0257
- **Gray's Papaya**: 171 apropos "Recession Specials" (two hot dogs and a papaya drink) plus an extra hot dog and 25 cents for tip—a grand total of 342 hot dogs (recession special: \$3.50; single hot dog: \$1.25); 2090 Broadway, 212-799-0243
- **Dumpling House**: 3,000 vegetable-and-pork dumplings (\$2 for 10 pieces). 118 Eldridge St., 212-625-8008
- **Mamoun's Falafel**: 857 falafel balls, plus 10 cents for tip (70 cents per falafel ball). 119 MacDougal St., 212-674-8685

Plateau (\$95), because with your incentive check, the world is your oyster —and your jumbo shrimp, and your mussels, and your clams, and your Alaskan king crab legs. ...

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