

## Dining Out in Wellington

Food lovers will find plenty of lip-smacking satisfaction in Wellington, with over 300 restaurants and cafés to choose from.

The hallmarks of good Wellington cuisine are the use of local produce, seasonality and innovation. Our influences are international, but you'll soon see the incredible impact our Asia-Pacific neighbours have had on our eating habits. So expect plenty of classic contemporary food, mixed in with all sorts of aroma and spice, all best enjoyed with New Zealand's world class wine and top Wellington coffee.

So prepare to indulge! But where? There are far too many fantastic places to mention here, so we simply bring you those that perform consistently well. Listings are grouped together in 'quarters' – that's Courtenay Place, Cuba Street, Willis Street & Lambton Quay.

### Courtenay Place

*Offering an incredible array of restaurants and bars in the matter of a mere few blocks, Courtenay Place epitomises the 'all within walking distance' mantra of Wellingtonians. As you can see, this is wall-to-wall dining, drinking and dancing, where the melting pot hots up, and the bright lights blaze until dawn. Whoever you are, Courtney's got something for you. Enjoy.*

### One Red Dog

9 Blair Street, ph 384-9777

A lively gourmet pizza joint where noisy people fit in well – perfect for families: you can have capers & anchovies while the kids have tomato & cheese. Colouring-in diversions and highchairs provided. Vegan dishes available on request. Licensed.

### Deluxe

10 Kent Terrace, ph 801-5455

One of Wellington's originals, Deluxe is as popular as ever for its fine coffee and fresh homemade counter food – with plenty of choice for the vegetarians. It has stayed, as it started, quite bohemian in feel, and frequently changing artwork gives you something new to look at. Sit outside to watch the comings and goings at the Embassy Theatre.

### Stamp & Go

21 Majoribanks Street, Mt Victoria, ph 384-8244

A Jamaican jerk shack with reggae grooves and a relaxed atmosphere. Specialities include jerk pork, goat curry, tasty tortillas and cornbread baps. The best of the desserts is Boca Negra, 'black mouth' dark chocolate wedge with vanilla bean ice cream. Yum. Red Stripe beer, mango lassi and Cuban coffee also available. Licensed.

### Regal Chinese Restaurant

Level 1, 7–9 Courtenay Place, ph 384-6656

One of Wellington's many dim sum specialists, offering a lunch and evening menu of traditional Cantonese cuisine. The Regal's yum cha sessions are excellent, with the usual hustle and bustle reflecting thick and fast delivery of hot dishes, done well. Keep them coming and let the plates pile up! Excellent crispy duck. BYO/licensed.

### Caffé L'affaire

27 College Street, ph 385-9748, [www.laffare.co.nz](http://www.laffare.co.nz)

A truly great Wellington café. For a start there's the aroma. After that there's superb coffee, consistently good food, efficient service, interesting interior, alfresco dining, and it's child friendly. Highly recommended. Licensed.

### Courtenay Arms Ale House

26–32 Allen Street, ph 385-6908

An English-style pub serving good pub grub (including bangers 'n' mash), plus the bonus of Wellington's widest range of British ales on tap, including Boddington's, Old Speckled Hen, Chocolate Stout, Tetley's English Ale and Newcastle Brown, and John Smith's. Dance floor, pool tables, dart boards, juke box, open fire, big sports screen and gaming lounge.

### Roxburgh Bistro

18 Marjoribanks Street, Mt Victoria, ph 385-7577,

One of the best restaurants in Wellington, set in a lovely turn-of-the-century cottage. The seasonally changing menu features modern and classic cuisine prepared with care and intelligence – Waikanae crab, mango and Thai coconut chicken salad, hare loin with pinot noir sauce, gingered rhubarb with mascarpone, meringue and feijoa sorbet and fine cheese. You'll want everything on the menu, and seafood lovers will delight. The wine list showcases many of New Zealand's best wineries. Licensed.

### Cuba Street

*A mere 10 minutes' walk away from the hustle and bustle of Courtenay Place is **Cuba Street**, the soul of the city. This most famous of Wellington streets and its offshoots are dominated by cafés serving superb coffee, lashings of good counter food and some first rate a la carte dining. Come to Cuba to loiter, to chat to the locals, and sit in a window to watch the world go by. And make the pilgrimage to the home of Wellington coffee, where it all started nearly 15 years ago...*

### Midnight Espresso

178 Cuba Street, ph 384-7014

The original and still one of the best, more than 10 years later. In fact, many would say that sitting in the Midnight window with Havana coffee and cake is the quintessential Wellington café experience. Its gorgeously garnished counter food is hearty, tasty and certainly not overpriced. Juices, smoothies, teas and hot food also available. And Midnight will be open when everywhere else is closed.

### Logan Brown

Corner Cuba & Vivian Streets, ph 801-5114, [www.loganbrown.co.nz](http://www.loganbrown.co.nz)  
A grand 1920s banking chamber with a lavishly ornate ceiling is home to Logan Brown, frequently touted as the best restaurant in town. This is friendly, accessible upmarket dining, and your hosts sure know how to please. The food is generous, full flavoured and creative with an extensive list of local and imported wines alongside. The bar (that

doubles as an aquarium) has great drinks and tasting platters for those who just want to nibble. Lunch and pre-theatre bistro menu; live jazz on Sundays. Licensed/BYO Sunday.

### Sonar Tari Vegetarian Café

179 Cuba Street, ph 384-2713

Vegetarian and vegan dishes served in peaceful surroundings by happy, helpful staff (resplendent in blue!). The likes of chilli, curry and stroganoff come in three bowl sizes, and plates boast burritos, nachos and the mushroom known as 'Portobello Mellow'. All-day brunch menu and an ever-changing array of counter food available, as are a wide range of juices, smoothies and lassis, coffee, chai and loose-leaf teas.

### Olive Cafe

170 Cuba Street, ph 802-5266

'Fantastic counter selection – tasty and fresh,' says one regular. Local food critic Des Britten rated this best café in 2002, and you can see why. Olive offers contemporary fare served in a pleasant space with a laid-back feel, attentive staff and a quiet courtyard. It's immensely appealing when the evening menu kicks in at 6pm – perfect for a meal with friends or romantic dinner for two. From steak to lentil salad, with fine desserts, and organic ingredients where possible. Licensed.

### Phnom Penh Cafe

103 Vivian Street, ph 382-8882

'Clean, nice lighting, mood music and generous portions' says one punter. Fragrant, delicious Cambodian cuisine (that's the whole range, from garlic bread, through spring rolls, to curry & fried rice). Vegetables abound, and rice is included with all mains. Short, sweet & cheap wine list. Set menus for groups. Family run; relaxed, comfy surrounds with swift service but no hassle or hustle; smoke-free. BYO/licensed.

### Great India

141 Manners Street, ph 384-5755, [www.greatindia.co.nz](http://www.greatindia.co.nz)

An India restaurant in a class of its own, the Great India serves authentic, fragrant cuisine in the style of South Gujarat and Northern India – delicious! The interior is homely, the tables are dressed with crisp white linen, the service is always polite, and the maitre-d' is charming. Good wine list, cocktails and 64 types of beer. Winner of far too many awards to list here. Children welcome. BYO/licensed.

**Willis Street**, encompassing the heart of the city, Civic Square, has impressive eateries at every turn. From coffee kiosks and cheap cafes, to a couple of the best restaurants in town, you won't go hungry here.

### Miyabi Sushi

Willis Street Village, 142 Willis Street, ph 801-9688  
Consistently high quality Japanese food, polite staff and value-for-money keep Miyabi popular, despite its hiding place in Willis Street Village. A wide range of sushi, plenty of seafood and noodles all ways. Its terrific teriyaki comes with miso, salad and rice – a tasty, nutritious and inexpensive feast. Sake and Japanese beer also on offer. BYO/licensed.

### Masi

49 Willis Street, ph 473-3558  
Superb coffee and the best Caesar salad in town. Owner Silo Tabuakovei is an award-winning barista, and her ever-popular café is a testament to her high standards. All-day brunch is a specialty, and the menu changes weekly to include seasonal, local produce. A good range of counter food, prepared with care. Prime people-watching spot in the window, and outside seating.

### Citron

270 Willis Street, ph 801-6263  
As close to perfection as Wellington can do; memorable and highly recommended. An intimate dining room, modern and minimalist, quiet, with low lighting, provides the perfect environment for enjoyment of a three-course set, or nine-course degustation menu. This is creative cuisine representing excellence in local flavour and freshness, beautifully prepared and presented with all the hallmarks of a first class establishment, anywhere in the world. Book ahead. BYO/licensed.

### Ed's Juice Bar

95 Victoria Street, ph 478-1769  
'I started Ed's after returning from Canada ... it was New Zealand's first juice bar and has grown steadily since its birth in 1998. Ed's is founded on good homely values. I really believe in keeping things local, fresh and providing good value for money. Juices, smoothies, organic and vegan food.

**Lambton Quay** is the engine room of the city, dominated from Monday to Friday by scores of suits shuffling out of their high-rises, into the streets for lunching, shopping and after-work drinks. Cheap cafes and sandwich bars abound, but on the weekends the pickings are scarcer, and evenings see the wind whistling through, with nary a soul to be seen. But look a little closer ...

### Arbitrageur Wine Room & Delicatessen

125 Featherston Street, ph 499-5530, [www.arbitrageur.co.nz](http://www.arbitrageur.co.nz)  
A very inviting, classy and well-run establishment offering over 600 wines, 60 by the glass. Come here with an ironed shirt, a clean palate and an appetite for delectables and see if they live up to their claim that they've got 'something for everyone'. The colour-coded wine list makes for easy food matching.

### Leuven

135 Featherston Street, ph 499-2939  
Our Belgian connection brings us mussels and chips with lashings of beer including Duvel, Hoegaarden, Leffe, Belle-Vue and Stella Artois. An evening set menu offers several choices for three Belgian-style courses (and there's waffles for breakfast, too). Housed in a century-old building, the authentic 'brown' interior boasts an interesting array of artefacts to set the scene.

### Chow Woodward

11 Woodward Street, ph 473-4474,  
Exciting Southeast Asian cuisine served in a stylish, modern interior. What seems like a muddle of Cantonese, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese and Malaysian flavours comes out as simple dishes done well. And don't forget dessert – the aromatic baked chocolate mousse with cinnamon anglaise and vanilla ice cream is Wellington's best chocolate pudding, we declare!. Licensed.

### Astoria

159 Lambton Quay, ph 473-8500  
In a pleasant spot in the heart of Lambton Quay, the European-style Astoria opens out on to Midland Park where it courts lunchers and loungers, especially on a sunny day. Mediterranean flavours dominate the menu, and there are many wines available by the glass. Bijou counter food and coffee roasted daily on the premises. Licensed.

## 5 Top Takeaways

### Pizza Pomodoro

13 Leeds Street, off Dixon Street, ph 381-2929, [www.pomodoro.co.nz](http://www.pomodoro.co.nz)  
Authentic gourmet pizza, made by master Massimo Tolve. It comes square, crispy, fresh and fabulous from a wood-fired oven – our favourite. Choose from classics such as Marinara, Capricciosa and Quattro Formaggi, as well as calzone and saltimbocca available at lunchtime.

### Wellington Trawling Seamarket

220 Cuba Street, ph 384-8461  
Pick-your-fillet fish and chips, straight from the fresh fish market.  
Dinner deals, family packs and burgers.

### Hell Pizza

Ph 0800-TO-HELL, [www.hell.co.nz](http://www.hell.co.nz)  
A hell of a lot better than your average pizza delivery. In fact great gourmet pizza, variations of which include Lust, Limbo, Greed, Sloth and Gluttony. They come in two sizes, with good vegetarian options, plus pasta, salads and desserts.

### Moore Wilson Fresh Market

Corner Tory & College Streets, ph 384-9906  
Although not a takeaway in the traditional sense, Moore Wilson is perfect for picnic provisions, offering many of New Zealand's finest foods including deli meats, fresh produce and bread. It boasts easily the best cheese counter in town too.

### Catch Sushi Bar

48 Courtenay Place, ph 801-9352  
Delicious fresh sushi – yummy and good for you. Takeaways always available, or eat in 'on the train'. Japanese beers and tea. Licensed.