



LUNCH BREAKS

Skip dinner at the city's top restaurants and fine dine for a fraction of the price

BY CHRIS ERIKSON

FROM Blanca to Per Se, the city is rife with top chefs and \$200-plus tasting menus few can afford — if you can even score a reservation.

Thankfully, many of the city's best restaurants have early-bird specials, but instead of 5:30 p.m., they get started about noon.

Restaurants that might run far north of \$100 a head during the dinner hour have seats to fill during the day, and to put bodies in them, many offer lunch prix-fixe deals that are substantially

below their post-sundown rates. Plus, reservations can be significantly easier to come by during daylight hours. Sure, portions might run smaller, and there might be fewer courses, but the food comes from the same stunning dining rooms, by the same royal-class servers — and the savings are substantial.

Restaurants offering lunch deals include many of the city's perennial powerhouses — Jean-Georges, for example, where the two-course lunch prix-fixe is \$38, or Del Posto, where three courses go for a mere \$39. Here are those and eight other great lunch deals.



The dining room at Bouley is just as pretty in the daylight hours.



BOULEY

At \$55, the five-course lunch tasting menu is nobody's idea of a budget meal, but it's still a deal. The six-course dinner at this TriBeCa temple costs more than three times as much (\$175), and the lunch features a good number of crossover dishes, like kobe-style beef cheeks with

SAVE \$125

blue kale gnocchi, Copper River salmon with a mint pesto crust and the signature porcini flan with Dungeness crab and black truffle (at left). And the bread cart here could make a celiac cry: Four courses are only \$49, though it seems wrong to limit yourself. Monday-Saturday, 163 Duane St., 212-964-2525.