

## Tips on restaurant reviews

**Write about the Interesting and Funny.** Was there a fire in the kitchen? Were the men sitting one table over squabbling over their golf game? These things are all part of the dining experience. If it really stood out in your memory, write about it.

**Don't Hide Your Personality.** Some of us can do the whole swirl, sniff and slurp wine tasting without giggling, and some of us can't. So what if you don't write for *Gourmet* magazine? There are still countless numbers of people who want to read about your opinion. After all, that's why they're visiting a public restaurant review site.

**Re-Read Your Review.** After you've finished, take a moment to look back. Check for typos that make you look silly. Try to read it from the point of view of a stranger: would you be captivated by what you're reading? Would you find it useful? Would you give yourself an A? Tweak as necessary.

**Turn one interview into multiple stories.** Ask the chef about his interests beyond cooking -- brewing his own beer? Making her own cheese? Local farmstands? Ask about suppliers, little-known tricks of the trade, or off-the-menu requests. An interview with one chef eventually yielded the bones of two longer stories and a couple of shorts, with a few ideas for future pitches tucked away in my file. The point is to offset the price of a meal and the time spent interviewing with more than one incoming check - a good practice no matter what your writing niche.

**Sweat the details:** Double-check the spelling of names, restaurants, dishes, events, and cross-streets. Verify when the restaurant is open or closed. Get the rep's email and ask for photos if your publication isn't setting up its own photo shoot. Often a restaurant will have a media kit with hi-res photos of the chef and interior shots available for publication.

Observe details regarding the restaurant's atmosphere and decoration, as well as the level of service you receive from all employees you come in contact with: the hostess/host, your server, the busboy (or girl), and even the manager on duty if circumstances permit.

Step3

Study the other patrons closely in order to get an idea of the demographics of the restaurant's clientele. Does the establishment attract families or is it the local college hot spot? You may also be able to determine the dress code by observing what the majority of people are wearing

Concentrate on the texture, flavor and presentation of the food as you are experiencing it. The most crucial element of a restaurant review is the descriptive way you convey the food and its quality.

Begin writing your review soon after you leave the restaurant. You'll be less likely to forget any observations you had if the dining experience is still fresh in your mind.

Step7

Organize your restaurant review into categorical sections. At the very least, you will want to comment on the atmosphere, service quality, food and price. You may want to also review the alcoholic beverage selection and children's menu if applicable.

Write 50 to 100 words for each category you reviewed. The best way to make sure that your review flows is to write it as though you are having a conversation with a friend. Your audience wants to read an honest review that is easily understandable. With the exception of describing food presentation and flavor, aim to keep your verbiage simple.