

JOURNEY EXPERIENCE NYC

IMMERSIVE DINING IN THE FLATIRON DISTRICT

By ANNE RASO

Enter *Journey Experience NYC* and you will immediately feel like you're in an elegant and sophisticated dining room. Go to the back and side rooms, and you will find unique immersive experiences that are \$175 per person—but worth every penny.

The *Journey 360* room is fascinating. Picture a long communal table with classic white linens and five-course menus neatly tucked into the napkin with each guest's name projected onto their seating spot! In addition, there are projections on the walls around you that make you feel as if you are dining in a zeppelin tethered to the Empire State Building and other famous landmarks around the world. Some of the different experiences within this unique eatery include a dark back lounge with fantastic art and furniture from around the world, including a "bottomless" table with endless swirls of lightbulbs under the glass.

The two masterminds behind *Journey Experience NYC* are Broadway producer Marc Routh, a co-owner of the Tony Award-winning Broadway supper club *54 Below*, and noted restaurateur Alex Vanderbilt. Both are proud of the high praise they are getting for their groundbreaking project. Vanderbilt told *New York Lifestyles*, "*Journey 360* is more multimedia and technology-based, so it feels extremely intriguing when you sit at the table with your name emblazoned on the seat. *Journey Odyssey* is more theatrical and has that life-actor integration that makes the show feel more Broadway and less technology."

However, the star in both experiences is the food, the quality, and the creativity of the dishes. Chef Edward Hong has created each dish to support the location and narrative while surprising and delighting the guests through traditional culinary sensations of taste, smell, and visuals. The cuisine is a real mix of styles and includes a lot of raw fish. Vanderbilt calls it "new American cuisine with a Korean influence. We are so proud of our care in preparing and sourcing farm-to-table ingredients, to the prime choice of fish, meat, and other proteins." In addition, sitting at either the front or back-room bars provides a la carte off an elevated bar menu—with no reservations required.



AN "EPIC" EXPERIENCE

If you want standard dining without immersive experiences, book an a la carte dinner in the front room, *Journey Epic Café*. The go-to dishes we tried and have been obsessed with ever since included the appetizers: the *Wagyu Sliders* which are a meal in themselves—you get three giant dry-aged sliders topped with artisanal melted cheddar. Finally, we teamed those burgers with the *Disco Fries*, hearty sticks of potatoes boiled, fried, and then baked with melted Gouda and herbs.

When it came time for the entrees, we decided to go big or go home and share a large steak! The dry-aged *Tomahawk Steak* is an impressive 40 ounces, including the extra-large bone, and can feed three or four people! It is sided with homemade chimichurri sauce, roasted veggies including multicolored carrots, and super buttery mashed potatoes, the perfect medium-to-firm consistency!

For dessert, we split the *Raspberry Mousse* and *Baba Au Rhum*, which are done halfway between "deconstructed" and "classic" styles. The *Raspberry Mousse* features a unique consistency, almost like cookie crumbs have been mixed in, while the *Baba Au Rhum* is served warm, with homemade custard in both the center and on top.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Each night has different immersive experiences, and there will be more choices as time goes on—check the *Journey Experience NYC* website for the themes available the night you want to book.

If you want simple a la carte dining in the *Journey Epic Café* but still want to experience the projections, you can visit the bars and ask the friendly bartenders to show you some visuals.

The most popular immersive journey is *Journey Odyssey*. It features Broadway performers Cady Huffman and Judy Kate doing vignettes about visiting each country representing the five courses. The *Journey 360* option gives you the experience of dining in the center of a volcano. Amazingly, dry ice is placed on your table, so diners are engulfed in smoke when your food comes out. (Now, that's what we would call "theatrical gastronomy" at its most extreme!)

For more information on *Journey Experience NYC*, visit journeyexperience.nyc