



Photograph: courtesy Journey Experience NYC

I had dinner inside a ‘volcano’ at this new immersive restaurant and bar

This new spot near Madison Square Park brings theatricality to your dinner plate.



Written by [Shaye Weaver](#) Wednesday January 25 2023

On Monday, my dinner table began smoking and my dish emerged from a glass cover filled with even more smoke. The room glowed with the amber-red hue of lava and the sound of crackling fire filled the space.

I was at [Journey](#), a new restaurant, bar and lounge that is bringing “theatrical gastronomy” to New York City with immersive video installations paired with fine dining and mixology.

On its surface, it may sound like a gimmick, but a deeper dive—actually experiencing it—yields a fun night out with actually good drinks and food.

Journey, which had a soft opening this week at its Madison Square Park location at 27 West 24th Street, is a celebration of travel and the connections we make with people on our...well, journeys.

The playfully-decorated space shows off a massive collection of globes from thrift shops and antique stores, 3D sculptures of the world's most famous landmarks and buildings above its bar, a display of replica antiquities, and a wall of moving classical art a-la *Harry Potter*.



Photograph: courtesy of Journey Experience NYC

Each area within the space—the bar, the salon, and the café—has a theatrical element.

At the bar, the cocktails you order (Legends of the Fall, Bloody Sunset, Apocalypto and Adorable Ruby) have accompanying comedic skits via augmented reality projected right in front of you on the bar top, including whiskey professor Ben Vereen.

In the “Epic Café,” where you can order a casual breakfast, lunch or dinner, the dishware has hidden 3D designs that you can unlock through an app on your phone.

In the beautiful and boothed Salon, which contains the collection of replica antiquities, projections bring sculptures to life and a hostess bedecked in stunning “FashionTech” couture tells you the stories behind them, adding a layer of live performance to your experience.



Photograph: courtesy of Journey Experience NYC

The bar, Salon and Epic Café each have their own menus from chef Edward Hong.

Two additional experiences are available at Journey: Journey Odyssey and Journey 360.

Opening on Friday, the 50-seat, ticketed experience Journey Odyssey creates a multisensory dinner experience at tables for two and four. Some of Broadway’s most talented performers—Cady Huffman and Judy Kaye—have filmed a series of amusing vignettes that introduce each of the five courses, which hail from different locales: an appetizer in Tokyo, the first course in Venice, and the entrée in Buenos Aires.



Photograph: courtesy of Journey Experience NYC | The Odyssey Experience

Perhaps the most impressive and immersive of all the experiences at Journey is Journey 360, which is where the fire table inside a volcano exists.

The ticketed culinary adventure, which fits 20 people at a time around a long, communal table, features 360 projection mapping that transports diners to four different locations across the world.

On Monday, I did the 360 experience and was whisked away (on a virtual airship named Celestine) from the top of the Empire State Building to the Amazonian rainforest to the artic, from a shipwreck under the sea to the inside of a volcano and finally to outer space. Throughout the entire five-course prix-fixe meal, the visuals and soundscape surrounding us were entertaining and were made even more exciting by an actor wearing a techie dress who led us through the trip.

Each dish corresponded to a setting—Amazonian greens (a salad made with Yuca, tocacho, hearts of palm, Cupaucu vinaigrette) in the rainforest; gin-cured arctic salmon (with cucumber, horseradish, apple and dill) at the Arctic; black cod (with miyoga, bok choy and yuzu dashi glaze) under the sea; braised veal cheek (with forbidden rice risotto, harissa and marscapone); and raspberry mousse with chocolate gelato (almond texture, cardamom foam and Grand Marnier) in space.



Photograph: Shaye Weaver/Time Out New York

While in the volcano, waiters placed dry ice on the table to make it smoke, then they brought out the veal, covered with glass domes. In one synchronous movement, the waiters lifted the domes and vapor poured out across the dish and our place settings. It was the crescendo, the high point, of the entire meal and it was indeed theatrical.

And yes, the visuals were fun, but the best part of the whole experience was seeing this all unfold with the people (strangers) around me. I ended up grabbing cocktails with a couple sitting across the way afterward in the salon, which is not a typical thing for me to do.

If you want to take your own journey in the middle of midtown, tickets for the shows Journey 360 and Journey Odyssey (\$175pp) are available on the Tock app and at [exploretock.com](https://www.exploretock.com). Reservations for the Café or the Salon can be made through Open Table.

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