

?Fall? for local restaurants with autumn Auroralicious



Experience all the tastes the community has to offer with Auroralicious.

Launched earlier this year as a winter and spring experience, Auroralicious is back for the fall, launching this Friday, September 10, and running through Sunday, October 3.

An initiative of the Town, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and the Canadian Food & Wine Institute at Niagara College (The Armoury), Auroralicious has brought together several local restaurants, cafes and eateries to offer customers prix fixe (fixed price) menus of three-course meals.

?The concept is to tour around, try new flavours and find out what else is out there in the community,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

In addition to new restaurants on board, one marked difference between this fall's Auroralicious and the inaugural edition is that COVID restrictions now allow a dine-in experience whereas participants were only able to grab takeout the last time around.

?Everyone wants to try new restaurants and try new foods, and now that we're actually open and we can go in, it will be a different experience this year,? says Sandra Ferri, President and CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Adds Emily Hlusko-Huard of the Canadian Food & Wine Institute (CFWI): ?From a resident's point of view last year, this definitely got us to try a couple of other restaurants we don't normally go do. We're creatures of habit a lot of the time and stick to the same restaurants and Auroralicious is a great opportunity for restaurants and patrons alike to see what's out there, try out new menu items and appreciate all there is to offer in the Town.?

When Auroralicious was first launched, restaurants were recruited to take part and were duly confirmed just days before a new round of stay-at-home orders. The first campaign, says Ms. Ware, pivoted towards a focus of raising awareness that local restaurants were still open for takeout and curbside, and that it was still safe for patrons take advantage of those options.

?This time around, we all know the restaurants are open, still in a recovery phase, and although there is still COVID fatigue, I think this is a great opportunity to get as many people out there as possible supporting commerce,? says Ms. Ware. ?I also think that even though these restaurants are trying to get as many customers as they can, I think this is also a bonding experience for them because they are part of an industry still supporting each other despite [the challenge in bringing in] customers.?

Ms. Ferri agrees with this assessment, adding, ?I think we have seen that camaraderie between the restaurants. The restaurant groups that have been created [on social media] and the camaraderie that has brought has been really successful. You can see they support each other and I think that is what this is all about: all of us supporting each other through a difficult time.?

As the CFWI and the Chamber bring new and previous restaurants back on board, they stress Auroralicious is not asking participating businesses to cut their prices; rather it is a matter of creating a special menu at a fixed price.

“It is putting a different spin and a different flare on this,” says Ms. Ware. “Even though the restaurants always bring their A-Game every day, this is something that has been specially put together and I don't think anyone could lose by taking a chance. In fact, I would encourage [customers] to try a restaurant they haven't tried before. It just makes your evening out that much more of an evening out.”

Adds Ms. Hlusko-Huard: “Step out of your comfort zone, try something new and support local. You'd be surprised what's out there!”

For more on Auroralicious's fall program, visit exploreaurora.ca.

By Brock Weir Editor/Local Journalism Initiative Reporter