



This is my all time favorite Paris restaurant for the whole package: food, atmosphere, service. L'ami Jean has a bit of a cult following with its hustle and bustle, neighborhood feel, and something special in its energy and the people who fill its seats. Every other time I go, I end up making friends with my neighbors, and that's pretty rare in Paris.



*Cote de boeuf (Stéphane Jego, Chez l'Ami Jean)*

It's an unassuming bustling bistro that delivers on the hearty portions, managing to fuse creativity with classic cooking. The restaurant is always packed in the evening, with chef Stéphane Jego, at the helm for over ten years, clapping and yelling to servers from the open kitchen at the back.

I love when he starts to sound angry in his pursuit of perfection. It sometimes makes the atmosphere what it is, alongside his generous portions and ever-evolving menu. I stopped looking at the menu long ago, always preferring to accept whatever Jego wants to send out.





*Sweetbread (Stéphane Jégo, Chez l'Ami Jean)*

L'Ami Jean is not for the faint of heart, nor for the timid, either in disposition or in appetite. Super chef David Chang agrees in [this](#) profane but hilarious article on Lucky Peach about Chez l'Ami Jean, saying, "you feel like you're slowly turning into a sweetbread drenched in butter for the duration of the meal," which might be the most accurate description of eating the carte blanche tasting menu that I've ever heard.



*Fresh cod and roasted eggplant with peppers (Stéphane Jégo, Chez l'Ami Jean)*

You can order a la carte or go for the tasting menu, but do not, whatever you do, miss his famous riz au lait, his grandmother's rice pudding.





*Riz au lait*

I know you're thinking, rice pudding? Really? I would normally never go for this kind of dessert. But the Chez l'Ami Jean riz au lait is one of my all time favorite desserts, and all other rice puddings are a disgrace by comparison. No matter how much you're hurting at the end of your meal – and you will be hurting if you do it right – you look forward to the rice pudding as if it's the only reason you came.

David Chang agrees, saying "...and somehow, no matter how gross you feel because you just ate like two meals' worth of food, you manage to put away not just one serving, but two. It is the best rice pudding ever."

To me, there is nothing better than walking into L'Ami Jean on a cold winter's evening from the quiet neighborhood street of Rue Malar, into what feels like a culinary speakeasy. You open the door at 9pm, and it is busting at the seams with people, food, wine, laughter, warmth, and a frenzy of activity emanating from the kitchen alongside sizzles and smells and Jego yelling and clapping when a dish is ready, the small family of servers squeezing between chairs to deliver

the next treasure.



Who will I meet tonight? What amazingly delicious thing will I eat? How uncomfortably full will I feel at 1am as my meal is coming to a close, and why did I touch any food at all today? Chez l'Ami Jean is the essence of the French word "convivialité".

If you're a food lover, and you have an appetite, and you're not afraid to be elbow to elbow with your neighbor amongst hustle and bustle, go to dinner at Chez l'Ami Jean. If this all sounds a bit intimidating, then go at lunch, when it's much calmer. Whatever you do, make a reservation, 2 weeks in advance just to be safe. The best time to call is just before lunch or dinner service starts, when things aren't too crazy yet but they'll be answering phones.

Hours: Tue-Sat 12-1:30pm, 7-9pm

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Menu: [lamijean.fr](http://lamijean.fr)