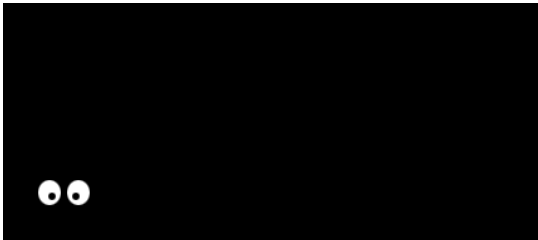


Dining in the dark: Cool novelty or tacky gimmick?

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Dining in the dark in Paris

I hadn't heard about restaurants in which you dine in the dark until my colleague Laura told me about it.

The trend started in 1998 in Switzerland at [Zurich's Blindekuh restaurant](#), reports [Lonely Planet](#). It spread in 2004 to France at a bistro in Paris's 4th-arrondissement called [Dans le Noir](#). The idea is to allow you experience what it's like to eat without using your eyesight. The franchise, which staffed mostly by the blind, has spread to London, Moscow, and Warsaw, with similar eateries in Germany at the [Unsicht-Bars](#) in Berlin, Cologne, and Hamburg, and in a second Blindekuh in Basel, Switzerland.

Here in the U.S., there are the [Dark Dining Projects](#) in New York City (which are not staffed by the blind and which take place at a rotating roster of spots, such as Camaje in [Greenwich Village](#)). Meanwhile, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego have the [Opaque](#) chain.

I'm not sure I'd dine at an all-dark restaurant. I looked at [the user reviews](#) at TripAdvisor for the Paris outpost, and they were mixed. A few weeks ago, someone commented that they were disappointed, writing that "the place is merely a concept and the food isn't that great." But the service is apparently fine: "The blind staff is very professional & very nice," says one reviewer.

What do you think? Would you dine in the dark for a two-course meal, starting at about [\\$45](#)? Feel free to post a comment below.

Personally, I'd be more interested in a sensory-deprivation experience that didn't involve a meal. In Portugal, for instance, [Lisboa Sensorial](#) runs blindfolded walking tours in the capital's historic district. According to one review, participants are blindfolded and then led through narrow streets by a blind guide who shows how she experiences her surroundings, such as the scent of green sardines from an outdoor market or the sounds of Fado, the country's signature Blues music, coming from a bar. Tours happen *once a month and cost about \$26 per person, For details visit [LisbonWalker.com](#).*)