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The Absolute Best Restaurants for Lunch in Midtown

Hash-brown tacos from Alex Stupak's biggest Empellón yet. Photo: Liz Clayman

*A lunch that happens in the middle of town need not be middle of the road. The very idea of “midtown lunch” means different things to different people: something quick at a **great halal cart**, the classic three-Martini mini-bender, or chopped salad amid the area’s last remaining power brokers. For the purposes of this list, however, the midtown-lunch destination offers a midday meal that is neither too rushed, nor too languorous. It’s not too fancy, and not too casual. It is neither outrageously expensive, nor is it bupkis. Instead, the best midtown lunch experience is 60 minutes or so of respite from spreadsheets, small talk, and market calls. And these are the best restaurants at which to find that hour of civility.*

3. Indian Accent

123 W. 56th St., btw Sixth and Seventh Ave.; 212-842-8070

Pause for a moment to appreciate the name of Manish Mehrotra’s haute-Indian restaurant. Playful, smart, and justifiably confident. Indeed, at Indian Accent — which Mehrotra opened last year as the New York counterpart to his New Delhi flagship — the chef slays. Two courses, had for \$34, open a world in which one enjoys Bengal rice khichdi, a proto-kedgerie, with smoked papa; tender short ribs topped with tart mango sauce; and a soft-shell crab fried in the style of Koli fishermen that’s presented like a poor crustacean Pompeii victim. It’s lunch, and it’s an adventure.