


## Best Bites: Dishing It Up at Preston Hollow's Top Restaurants



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SAVE TO MY LISTS 

The sprawling Preston Hollow neighborhood may be best known for its multi-million dollar estates and high-profile residents, but the enclave is also becoming the city's go-to spot for casual eateries and trendy restaurants.

A good place to start off is in the Preston Forest Shopping Center, where you'll find **The Mercury**, one of Dallas' most chic dining haunts offering everything from gourmet burgers to sushi and sous vide short ribs. For those craving something south of the border, Meso Maya's menu puts a unique spin on interior Mexican cuisine. Pizza lovers will want to add **Dough Pizzeria Napoletana** on their restaurant hit list. The Neapolitan-style pies here even attracted the attention of Food Network's Guy Fieri.



Next up is Preston Royal Shopping Center. Here, you can dive into some of Dallas' best fish and seafood at TJ's Fresh Seafood Market or tuck into handmade dumplings at Royal China, a Dallas institution since 1974.

Craving Italian? Princi Italia, also in Preston Royal— is the spot for fresh salads, homemade pastas and stellar wood-fired pizzas. Or, for a more intimate setting, sit at one of the dark booths or side up to the bar at **Neighborhood Services Bar & Grill** and indulge in well-executed American dishes ranging from burgers to steaks and seafood.

DISH, a perpetually buzzy restaurant with a massive cocktail list and an eclectic roster of insanely good food— is certainly worth the short detour over to Hillcrest Road.

Or head over to Preston Hollow Village, off Walnut Hill Lane and I-75—to tuck into the newest neighborhood hot spots: Pakpao Thai for Southeast Asian food and **Blue Sushi Sake Grill** for its daily happy hours and extensive selection of raw and Asian fusion fare.

### 10 Pakpao Thai Preston Hollow

Don't expect to find your usual bout of sates and curries at this popular Thai restaurant. Instead, plan on satiating your palate with a menu of elevated Southeast Asian fare, much of which has been constructed by Food Network's celebrity chef, Jet Tila. The colorful, contemporary decor filled with pakpao kites— provides a semi-open kitchen for diners to watch Tila's team as they turn out dishes like short rib massaman curry and Tila's signature pineapple fried rice. Pakpao also whips up a stellar weekend brunch. Tuck in on Saturday or Sunday morning for dishes like Thai omelets and Thai tea French toast with coconut cream. Be sure not to miss the Asian-inspired cocktails—the spicy lemongrass infused bloody Mary is a real eye-opener. (214-236-3064)

### 9 Meso Maya

This bustling cantina, spanning out over a cavernous two room space, dishes up modern takes on interior Mexican classics like cochinita pibil, a traditional slow-roasted pork dish from the Yucatán Peninsula that dates back to Mayan times. You'll also find items like mole-bathed chicken enchiladas, as well as a lineup of tacos—think adobo brisket served on fresh white corn tortillas. Speaking of tortillas, the ones here are all freshly made by mixing dry white corn with water and lime powder, before resting overnight and being painstakingly ground into masa. The queso dip with roasted poblano peppers, fresh corn and nopalitos (cactus) is a must. As is the house specialty— Budin Azteca, a Mexican take on lasagna with meat (or vegetables) and cheese sandwiched between layers of tortillas. It's Mexican comfort food taken to the next level. And truth be told, the avocado margaritas here (avocado puree, pineapple and lime juice, Cointreau and Don Ramon tequila blanco) are touted as the best in town. (469-726-4390)

### 8 Princi Italia

Handmade pastas and wood-fired pizzas play a lead role at this neighborhood fave, nestled on the back corner of Preston Royal Shopping Center. It's an airy, polished-looking place that manages to feel both upscale and casually comfortable at the same time. The menu, which is quite affordable— offers something for everyone. Starters range from fresh beet and crab salad with fresh figs and watermelon to black truffle tortellini fonduta and bruschetta topped with fava bean purée. Pasta dishes such as wild boar gnocchi and orecchiette with housemade sausage and rapini prove popular here. As do main courses like grilled branzino and Chianti braised short ribs with chive gremolata. However, you'd be hard pressed to come here and not order one of the wood-fired pizzas, especially when they come topped with items like pancetta, figs and gorgonzola cheese. Also, be sure not to skip out on dessert, the tiramisu, made with layers of chocolate cake and mascarpone cream— will leave you wanting to lick the plate. (214-739-5959)



#### 7 Blue Sushi Sake Grill

This buzzy Nebraska import, with its signature blue-hued dining room and red-lit sake lounge-- has been a hit with locals since it opened earlier this year. And with prices starting at around \$7.50 for eight pieces of sushi and happy hour specials everyday, it's not hard to see why. Take a trip through the extensive sushi menu and you'll find classic rainbow rolls; vegetarian rolls with tempura sweet potato; specialty maki filled with lobster knuckle and claw meat; and nigiri with baked seabass or soy-cured tuna. Also worth exploring is the sashimi which features three types of salmon, four types of tuna and nine types of white fish, including escolar--a rare find on most sushi menus. It should also be noted that Blue sources its fish from some of the best seafood purveyors in the world, yet sells it for far less than many of its big name competitors. But it's not just about sushi here-- diners can tuck into a range of Asian fusion dishes, from tenderloin served atop 500-degree river rocks to chicken satay and charred baby octopus. Be sure to give the drinks list a whirl, the saké selections and specialty cocktails are terrific. (972-677-7887)

#### 6 DISH-Preston Hollow

This strikingly contemporary haunt, in an unassuming strip center off Hillcrest, is perpetually abuzz from open until close. And it's not just because of the food, which-- no doubt will have your taste buds watering. But it's also a place of pilgrimage in its own right for cocktail aficionados. The cocktail list alone covers around 32 offerings--ranging from aperitifs and classics to bespoke concoctions like the The Pear Tree with Absolut Pear Vodka, St. Germain elderflower liqueur, St. George Pear Brandy, lime and white cranberry juices and pumpkin spice. There's also booze served in flights and an extensive global wine selection. For something more substantial, diners can tuck into everything from truffled deviled eggs, flatbreads and dry-aged burgers to peppercorn crusted ribeyes, jumbo diver sea scallops and even grilled cauliflower steak. Kids are also well looked after with a menu of terrific meals priced at \$9. Desserts are a must, especially the chocolate, peanut butter trifle. (214-363-3474)

#### 5 Royal China Restaurant

A stalwart of Dallas' Chinese food scene since 1974, this family-run restaurant is perennially popular for its authentic dumplings, perfectly prepared dim sum and fantastic regional Chinese dishes. While you can expect to find iconic Americanized favorites such as moo-goo-gai- pan and dry-stirred beef--the rest of the menu offers more modern Chinese specialties. Items like hand-pulled noodle dishes and Shanghai-style xiang zao pork belly are stellar, but the big draw here is the dumpling bar. Try to snag a seat up close to watch the dumpling ladies whip up handmade pillow parcels that come filled with everything from shrimp, jicama and ginger to pork, Napa cabbage and chives. It's a good idea to make a reservation before coming, otherwise expect a wait at both lunch and dinnertime. (214-361-1771)

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#### 4 Dough Pizzeria Napoletana

Of all the joints in town that lay claim to the Neapolitan-style standards of pizza making -- only a handful turn out pies as exceptional as Dough. Evidently, Guy Fieri agrees since he featured the restaurant's San Antonio sibling on Food Network's Diners, Drive-ins and Dives. Dough's pizzas are full of fresh ingredients, from mostly local farms-- and are perfectly charred to loveliness in the wood-fired oven that stands prominently in the rustic-chic dining area. The fontina cheese pizza with oak-roasted mushrooms and caramelized onions is outstanding. But if you really want to be in hog heaven, order Fieri's favorite: the Pork Love, loaded with house-made mozzarella, salami, sausage, pancetta and speck. As serious as they are about pizzas, the folks at Dough are equally fanatical about their house-made burrata, filled with the likes of truffle oil, ricotta and mascarpone cheese. Whatever you do, save space for the panna cotta, it's to die for. (972-788-4600)



### 3 TJ's Fresh Seafood Market

It should come as little surprise that one of Dallas' best seafood eateries happens to be tucked inside of a fish market--boasting a daily supply of freshly-caught seafood flown in from all over the world. Served in a comfortable breezy back room space, the menu offers a bounty of tasty selections that range from buttery lobster rolls and crab cake sliders to pistachio crusted Chilean seabass and scallops & grits. It's also a superb spot to slurp down an assortment of freshly shucked East Coast bivalves. Or for those feeling a little fancy, TJ's rocks it with caviar and champagne. To drink, there's cocktails, craft beer and a nice wine list that includes around ten selections by the glass. (214-691-2369)

### 2 Neighborhood Services Bar & Grill

Perfect for power lunches, leisurely dinners or a romantic dinner for two, if you're looking for a restaurant that offers all things to all people-- whatever the occasion and whatever the taste, chances are Neighborhood Services fits the bill. It's a cozy and classy place, sporting dark-woods, leather booths, a long bar, an attentive staff, and truly, deeply wonderful food. And as a result of this catch-all appeal, the restaurant is incredibly popular. The best part about eating here is that there's no such thing as ordering badly. The menu, a please-all selection of well executed elevated American dishes, includes items like caramelized scallops with chorizo, london broil steak and frites, veal shoulder schnitzel and some of the best burgers in town. Start with one of the apps, say grilled avocados or the signature Butcher's Meatballs that come slathered in a coma inducing voodoo peppercorn sauce. End with the butterscotch pot de crème, it's a creamy, luxurious taste bomb. (214-368-1101)

### 1 The Mercury

Don't let the nondescript shopping strip location fool you, The Mercury is a chic dining haunt showcasing terrific modern American fare by Chris Ward, an award-winning chef who has cooked for the likes of former President Bush and ex-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Though the setting may be swish--the menu delivers dishes that are sophisticated and accessible at the same time, and above all delicious. Lobster tacos and forty-eight hour sous vide short ribs lineup alongside such delicacies as wild mushroom risotto with white truffle oil and seared duck breast with duck confit. And at lunch, diners can get stuck into around seventeen gourmet burger variations. The sleek space also houses a separate sushi lounge that is helmed by a former Nobu alum. Here you'll find a repertoire of impeccable maki, sashimi, sake and spirits. Not to be missed is Mercury's Sunday brunch, where everything from fried chicken skins with honey hot sauce to pancakes and eggs Benedict draw in a regular crowd. (972-960-7774)