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## Eating in Silence is a Golden Moment

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Socializing comes later for diners at Eat in NYC, where meals are enjoyed in total silence to keep the focus food. [EAT](#)

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One New York restaurant is silencing the conversation about dinner—literally. Eat, a restaurant in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, offers monthly prix fixe dinners eaten in total silence.

Sense-deprivation dining is a newer niche trend, with concepts like Los Angeles' Opaque restaurant, where diners eat in the dark, or Belgium's Dinner in the Sky, where the dining table is hoisted 180 feet into the air by a crane, creating new experiences for those willing to explore different concepts and eating styles.

While a new experience in the world of dining out, silent meals are not entirely new—monasteries often observe silent meal times—which is where the idea for Eat's silent meals was born.

Eat, which began serving silent dinners last September, hopes to bring diners closer to their meal through appreciation and focus.

“I wanted people to have an alternative to the manic frenzy of New York City,” says Nicholas Nauman, Eat’s manager and curator. “I wanted to address what I see to be a culturally rampant, deep-seated alienation between people and food. We rarely consider the profundity of the act of eating. It’s an extremely potent way to engage the relationship between our self and others, to be fully conscious occupants of our bodies, and to experience the world with all five senses.”

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Nauman found customers were constantly plugged in and food was the background to the dining experience. "I wanted to create a context in which [eating] became an object of creative engagement for the participants."

The four-course, BYOB silent meal begins with every guest specifying a dietary preference, and Nauman describing the food that will be served to the dining room, which seats 25 people. Diners are then asked to turn off their phones, and silence begins.

"Silence allows as much space for appreciation as the diner would like," Nauman says. Nobody has broken the golden silence yet, perhaps because there is the threat of finishing the meal outside on a bench.

Following the meal, Nauman thanks diners for their time and talking resumes. "One wonderful result is that strangers strike up conversation, becoming fast friends after sharing the silence."

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