



The (Really) Cheap Date

Yes, there is such a thing as free bar food

1/29/14 | [New York City Dining](#) | Ashley Mason

Let us now praise that endangered good thing, free bar food.

In an era when restaurants regularly charge for twee artisanal pickle plates and the gratis bowl of nuts at the bar can be as scarce as the buy-back, it's nice to know there are still some solid, old-school bars offering proper sustenance during happy hour.



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Breeze past the host station at **Keens** with the magical phrase, "We're going to the bar." While the ancient, iconic steakhouse is known for its massive mutton chops, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., there's a place at the bar reserved for those who appreciate life's simpler treats with their pints and single malts: Swedish meatballs, pork ribs, crisp chicken wings and tuna crostini.

Walker's is one of the last real regular bars in Tribeca. In addition its happy hour spread offers real meal potential. On Tuesday through Friday nights, the chafing dish lineup features a changing assortment of tacos, pasta and chicken specials for patrons. (On Monday, it's just a sad bowl of tortilla chips.)

Uptown, bartenders at **Bobby Van's** carry out trays of fried chicken seasoned with Old Bay for a brief and somewhat hard-to-pin-down moment: between 6 and 6:30 p.m. depending on how busy the kitchen is. "The people who are really here for it show up at 5:30 p.m. and plant," shared a bartender. Now you know.



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