

11 Things to Know About Enigma, Albert Adrià's Barcelona Wonderland

Cloud ceilings, a 40-course tasting menu, and more

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After years on the horizon and [whole lot of anticipation](#), empire builder Albert Adrià has finally thrown open the doors to the final, and perhaps most elusive attraction in his Barcelona-based "[culinary amusement park](#)." Welcome to the strange and highly secretive world of **Enigma**.

Part tasting menu, part maze of experiences, [Adrià told Eater in 2015](#) that through Enigma he hoped to "**reinvent the way we go to restaurants**." Whether he will achieve those lofty goals remains to be seen, but the early word is promising. "The space is absolutely spectacular," World's 50 Best Restaurants academy chair Cristina Jolonch [wrote recently on Instagram](#).

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Adrià has assembled a team of familiar faces to helm Enigma including chef Oliver Peña (formerly chef of Adrià's shuttered 41° cocktail bar), elBarri group sommelier Cristina Losada, and Marc Álvarez (formerly head bartender at 41°).

Since its [debut earlier this month](#), Enigma has managed to fly under the radar of most international media thanks in part to strict rules on taking and sharing photos. But don't expect to get in easily. The online ticketing system books up quickly; seating is almost as limited as details about the extensive menu.

Here are 11 things to know about one of the biggest international openings of the year:



The rendering for Enigma by RCR. | [Enigma / Facebook](#)

. **The menu is very long:** Enigma is tasting menu-only with diners feasting on more than 40 dishes served on unusual, sometimes wire-mesh plates. Small cocktails, mineral water, and coffee are included, and a separate wine pairing option is available. The menu draws on influences from around the world including Japan, Spain, Korea, and Brazil.

2. Patrons need a secret code to enter the restaurant: To reserve a seat at Enigma diners pay a 100€ (roughly \$107 USD) fee online, which includes tax. The fee buys a “ticket” email with a code that a the restaurant staff types into a keypad at the door. The fee is then subtracted from the overall price of the meal at the end of the evening. This essentially guarantees that if a patron no-shows, the restaurant doesn’t lose too much money.



"Pea teardrops and frozen caviar... crunchy pleasures," says 50 Best Academy Chair Cristina Jolonch of this dish at Albert Adria's Enigma in Barcelona. [#Enigma](#) [@enigmaconcept](#) [#EnigmaConcept](#) [#EnigmaBarcelona](#) [#restaurant](#) [@albert.adria.acosta](#) [#chef](#) [#Barcelona](#) [#Spain](#) [#50BestAcademyChair](#) [@cristinajolonch](#) [#foodporn](#) [#caviar](#)

3. The pricing: Each tasting menu is 220€ (\$235.50 USD) including tax and customers can add additional wine or drinks for 90€ (\$96.34 USD).

4. The meal is quite lengthy: While the restaurant's website suggests the meal will last two-and-a-half to three hours, some diners have reported that their experience lasted upwards of four hours.

5. There's an ~enigmatic~ photo policy: The restaurant has a very strict policy about photos and social media. Diners are only allowed to photograph for "personal use" and publication of those photos isn't allowed without authorization. The rule is meant to reinforce "the experiential," Adrià [told *Metropoli*](#). "You have to keep the enigma," Eater contributor [Matty Kim](#) says of his recent meal there. "They ask you, many times, not to post any pictures of food on social media."

6. Seating is limited: The impressive 7,534-square-foot space seats only 24 diners at a time. Only groups of [six or fewer are allowed](#) in each of the restaurant's themed rooms.

7. Almost everything in Enigma is custom-made: RCR Architects helped developed the look for the restaurant. The dining rooms are as whimsical as the restaurant itself with cloud-like ceilings made from wire mesh that changes color and translucent resin walls that look like waterfalls. Still, the colors in the rooms are silvery and relatively muted. The overall affect is meant to feel dreamlike to visitors who pass through the labyrinth of rooms. According to [Food and Wine Gazette](#), Adrià spent around 3.2 million euros on renovations (\$3.43 million USD).

8. The restaurant is broken up into distinct spaces: Enigma is divided into seven separate rooms, [Profesional Horeca reports](#), where diners partake in differently formatted courses. For example, one room dubbed La Plantxa features a teppenyaki-inspired setup with a flattop grill (think Benihana-style). In La Barra, a bartender prepares drinks and snacks in front of the customer.

9. Brace for 41° 2.0: A portion of the restaurant features a revival of Adrià's [now-shuttered cocktail bar](#), 41°.

10. There are some early standout dishes: While the menu at Enigma is likely to evolve over time, [early reports](#), individual accounts, and social media posts have mentioned a number of dishes including caviar and nori, parmesan spheres, goat belly with pomegranate, raspberry pods with dill and sour cream, and more. According to Kim, in certain rooms the menu is only revealed after diners consume it; they're then asked to test their palates by guessing the ingredients. Vegetarian menus are not available.

11. The wine list is restrained: As previously mentioned, the restaurant offers optional wine pairings. "Food is the focus of this restaurant," says Kim, "so the wine lists consist of low alcohol wines with relatively light flavors."