

# Something smells fishy at Calumet Fisheries

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The first day on campus, freshmen have a wonderful floor meeting with their RAs. Some wisdom was imparted on us, general IIT policies were reviewed, and three rules- "Don't. Go. South" were emphasized. This will be one of the few times anyone will ever recommend, no, beg you to go south of 35th.

After waiting for two hours for a U-Pass, we eagerly, and somewhat naively, hopped on the Green line to go wherever it wanted to take us. Getting off at Garfield, bus 71 was waiting for us to continue the journey. About an hour later we arrived. One last challenge awaited us. Even in broad daylight the cramped dilapidated sidewalk was dark as night. Crunching on broken beer bottles and sidestepping the guardian of the underworld (a small garden snake), the intrepid duo made it at last to the Garden of Eden.

Calumet Fisheries is the little shack next to the bridge the Blues Brothers once jumped. It won't wow you with dazzling facilities; it doesn't even have seating or bathrooms. But the fish is amazing. If you don't like seafood tough luck because that's all they have here and it's still worth trying at least once.

All of their fish is fresh caught and is smoked right out back. Calumet Fisheries is one of the few of a dying breed of smokehouses left in Chicago. Soaked in brine overnight and then smoked over natural oak logs, the true flavor of the fish really comes out and that lingering fishiness of regular seafood is but a distant memory. Serving up all things fish from shrimp to scallops to sturgeon to eel, whatever your taste buds want, they've got it.

We decided to order the smoked salmon and shrimp. The salmon is not fishy or

smoky, but instead has a very meaty and oily taste. The skin that comes with the salmon absorbs all of the smoke and becomes a little crispy from the cooking. It peels right off and makes a delicious snack I call the "bacon of the sea." Smoking the horseshoe-like slab of salmon also infuses the meat exposed on the sides with a soft and flavorful layer. While chewing down on the salmon, beware that there are plenty of small bones that you will have to pick out. If you are not a huge fan of seafood I would recommend this.

The shrimp was an explosion of flavor. The fishiness and smokiness that you would expect to find in the salmon instead are found in the shrimp. After playing around with the creepy appearance of the shrimp, we peeled off the legs, shell, and tail and dug in. They will give you a cup of hot sauce to use with the shrimp, but it is not needed because the shrimp is so flavorful to start. However this is not for the faint of heart, and if you are not into seafood you may not like this shrimp.

Be warned though, this fish is very dense and very filling. We shared an order of a pound of salmon and a pound of shrimp, and even as contestants of a 5 pound burger challenge, this meal was almost too much.



Photos courtesy of [accentingchicago.com](http://accentingchicago.com)

But you don't have to trust our judgment. You can hop on the web and read hundreds of excellent reviews about this fantastic place. Even Anthony Bordain, the television food critic from *No Reservations*, said, "[any memory of bad smoked fish] disappears, washed away in a cleansing mist of wood smoke and fish oil."

(Author's note: After construction is done on the Red line the path will change slightly, but will be just as worth it. The Red

line will go to 95th; it's recommend you take the Green to Garfield or Roosevelt and then transfer.)

Calumet Fisheries  
3259 E. 95th Street  
Chicago, IL 60617  
Scale (1-10): Must be your next lunch out  
Cost: \$20 for a pound of fish and drink  
Oddities: Only accepts cash, No bathrooms  
<http://www.calumetfisheries.com>

# Painting a portrait of Bridgeport's eateries

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One of the most diverse places in Chicago, home to five former Chicago mayors, and some of the best food stuffs in the city...and I'm not talking about IIT.

The best way to learn a new area is to learn the local restaurants and food. Luckily, Bridgeport is home to numerous and delicious eateries that you won't find anywhere else in the city.

Usually, most incoming students don't learn of Bridgeport until their second semester, when they decide that the rising housing costs are not worth taking out another five thousand dollar loan, and decide to move off-campus, or got lost in the thicket of Bridgeport on the way to some guy's Wes Anderson-themed costume party.

Bridgeport, originally called Hardscrabble, (a name dating back to when the area was a fur-trading post in the 1818, according to historical records) it became colloquially called Bridgeport after the low bridges on the Chicago River.

Bridgeport is several blocks west of IIT's campus, starting at the railroad tracks after Shields Street, surrounded by the Chicago River on the north and west sides, and ending at Pershing Street in the south. The buffer zone between the official boundaries of Bridgeport and campus hides the mini-neighborhood of Armour Square, but is regarded as part of Bridgeport.

Bridgeport is the perfect bridgeportmanteau of modern and old-fashioned culture, and the places reflect these principles.

There are several Bridgeport staples that every IIT student should be aware of, even if you're terrified of walking across the looming Dan Ryan Expressway bridge(s) that lead into Bridgeport.

Let's start with coffee places. While campus offers reasonable study accommodations, it's nice to leave the IIT bubble periodically.

For the coffee connoisseur, Bridgeport Coffee Company on 31st and Morgan



Photos courtesy of [Elizabeth Burns](http://ElizabethBurns.com), via [Pinterest](http://Pinterest.com)

intersection is the place to be. Bridgeport Coffee has a wide selection of organic, fair-trade products, and strives to maintain direct relationships with coffee growers for the best coffee possible, according to their company website.

The atmosphere is comfortable, and quiet. The menu is vegetarian friendly, and I highly recommend their outside or window seating, because Morgan and 31st is prime people-watching real estate while you chain smoke, and drink too much caffeine.

Check out their brand new location down in Hyde Park, and their spot at the Roosevelt Collection, opening soon.

How about the thrift store-chic, rebellious, but inactive charming hipster you're bound to mutate into during your sophomore year of architecture classes? Jackalope Coffee & Tea House (at 32nd Street and Halsted) will fit your aesthetic more astutely, perchance.

Jackalope, much like the mythical creature it's named after, is quite the sight. This coffee house is bright, colorful, and (a little) louder than Bridgeport Coffee. The customer service at Jackalope is, in a word, perfection, and part of the reason I keep coming back. Bonus round—if you're looking for a unique piece of art for your new dorm room, or some edgy new photo-ops for your Instagram account,

Jackalope can help.

If these coffee houses were 90s sitcoms centered around a hodgepodge group of friends, Bridgeport Coffee would be "Seinfeld," while Jackalope is comparable to "Friends." Except both have free Wi-Fi, maintain 4.5 stars score on Yelp, and serve some of the best food in Bridgeport.

We'll move onto eateries, because everyone loves to eat. If you don't, I don't trust you.

Though technically in Armour Square, Rocky's Bar and Grill (31st and Wells) is hands-down, the quintessential campus sports bar and hangout. Thursday nights are "College Nights" with drink specials for those who can legally drink. They've earned my vote for best fries in Bridgeport, possibly Chicago.

Buffalo Wings and Rings (34th and Halsted) will save you a trip to the north side for greasy wings, fries, and loud sports fans. If you're craving authentic Mexican food, skip a downtown Chipotle, and please visit Pancho Pistola's (31st and Union.) The only Mexican food I can eat that isn't made by Mexican family members.

Niche restaurants that rely largely on local organic products include Pleasant House Bakery (31st and Morgan, across from Bridgeport Coffee Company) and Nana (33rd

and Halsted) have become more popular in Bridgeport's hip scene. Try to make time to visit Bridgeport Pasty (32nd & Morgan) for another gourmet specialty food, the "pasty" (similar to a calzone) only found in Bridgeport.

Pleasant House Bakery specializes in gourmet British meat pies, [insert Mrs. Lovett's meat pies head canon here] and their ingredients vary weekly and seasonally. Nana offers a twist on Southern American food and brunch, with their filling food, and Pinterest-perfect ambiance.

No list of Bridgeport essentials would be complete without mentioning Scoops, the one stop sweet treat shop, on 31st and Wallace. Please forward comical photos of you and your friends on the mechanized horse ride.

Bonus round 2—Rocky's, Bridgeport Restaurant, Buffalo Wings and Rings, and Scoops all offer discounts to IIT, Vandercook, and Shimer College students with I.D.s! Make sure to mention it, and show them your school I.D. or they won't give you the lucrative discount!

If you're still too lazy to venture into Bridgeport, then shame on you. Some of my Chicago GrubHub recommendations include: Dragon Bowl, Ichiban Sushi Cafe, Carbon, Rosati's (great for late night studying or gluttony,) as well as previously mentioned places like Buffalo Wings and Rings, and Bridgeport Restaurant.

Even though Bridgeport has gourmet, scrumptious, and unique options, sometimes a Chicago dog can't be beat. Maxwell's (31st and Canal) is the place to go if you love onions and grease.

35th Street Red Hots (35th and Normal) is the quintessential hot dog joint that serves to the White Sox crowd, so good luck on game days. Morrie O'Malley's (35th and Union) is also popular during game days, but not as worth it. Freddie's (31st and Union, near Pancho Pistola's) is perfect American food, and have annual customer appreciation days, with free food! Who loves free food more than poor college students?

They say the way to someone's heart is through their stomach, and luckily it's the same in Bridgeport.