



Eggplant Tikka Masala with tomato coconut ragout, accompanied by warm naan bread. A Cuban sandwich of slow-roasted pork and sliced ham, spread with tangy dijonaise. Mahi mahi tacos served with a flavorful combination of pico de gallo and lime crema.

At **NICO Kitchen + Bar**, the contemporary, high-energy restaurant at the **New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)**, diners can let their culinary tastes roam internationally or venture no farther than home-cooked favorites, like pan-seared Brick City chicken with broccoli rabe.

The menu changes are all part of a concept of modern American cuisine created by **Andrew Watterson**, NICO Kitchen + Bar's new chef de cuisine. Located at the heart of Newark's reinvigorated downtown, the restaurant has long been a popular destination for its lively pre-curtain scene and business power lunches. The newly re-envisioned menu is designed to complement NICO's facets as a sophisticated bar setting, relaxing dining room and convenient, top-quality venue for ticket holders on the clock.

"We wanted to borrow from different cuisines and have something identifiable from my own background in French cooking," said Watterson, the former chef de partie at Alizé at the Top of the Palms in Las Vegas, where he worked with celebrity chef André Rochat.

Dishes are as diverse as the audiences at NJPAC. They take their cue from Watterson's expertise in French and Asian fusion and are now incorporated in the prix fixe menu offered on performance dates, as well as the regular lunch and dinner menus. In another innovation, the prix fixe selections are available in two-course (appetizer and entrée, \$40) and three-course (appetizer, entrée and dessert, \$44) value-conscious options. Both include a non-alcoholic beverage.

The prix fixe menu includes appetizers such as skate cakes served with braised white beans and bacon, smoked bell pepper and arugula, or pea and goat cheese panna cotta with poached shrimp, tomato and chervil bruschetta. Among the entrées are a honey-miso glazed salmon with sweet and sour peanut lentils, cucumber relish and yuzu vinaigrette, and a gourmet 10-ounce burger garnished with crispy bacon, caramelized tomato jam, sharp cheddar, dill pickles and truffled shoestring fries.

Desserts could include a mascarpone mousse with hazelnut wafers and pears poached in red wine, or a *capirotada de vigilia* spiced bread pudding with mulled syrup, figs and dates, accompanied by dulce de leche whipped cream.

The prix fixe menu enables dishes to travel quickly from kitchen to table so that guests can comfortably meet curtain time at NJPAC if they arrive at least 90 minutes before a performance.

“Modern American’ defines the country as a melting pot and there’s something for everyone here,” added Watterson, who is a resident of Bloomfield. “We’ll be updating the prix fixe menus once a month, sometimes twice. I think our business clientele in particular will discover a lot more variety in our lunch menu.”

NICO also features a wine promotion, “Winesdays,” which offers 50% off selected wines every Wednesday from 4 p.m. to closing.

NICO Kitchen + Bar, which was rated three of four stars (“very good”) by The New York Times in 2013, is operated by Culinaire, a food and beverage provider based in Dallas.

David Wood, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Culinaire, expressed enthusiasm for the refresh. “Chef Watterson has created a menu that is appealing and approachable,” stated Wood. “NICO offers a wide choice of delicious starters, fresh salads, generous sandwiches and globally influenced entrées.”

Chef de cuisine Andrew Watterson is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. and worked in a variety of kitchens. In addition to his position at Alizé, he was chef de cuisine at The Cellar at Red Hook on the island of St. Thomas and was most recently chef de cuisine at the Orange Squirrel in Bloomfield.

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About Nico

NICO Kitchen + Bar, Newark’s sleekest dining destination. Enjoy Chef de Cuisine Andrew Watterson’s modern take on American cuisine, featuring an eclectic menu of crisp salads, delicious sandwiches, inventive entrees, and a great selection of appetizers suitable for sharing. Lunch: Monday - Friday 11:30am to 3pm, Dinner: Monday – Thursday 3pm until 9pm | Friday until 11pm, Saturdays and Sundays Dining in Conjunction with Performances. Delight in the Prix fixe menu available prior to performances and changes monthly. A special appetizer menu and cocktails post popular performances. Happy Hour: Monday - Friday 4pm to 7pm, Bar Bites Menu and \$6.00 select wines, well drinks and \$5.00 beers, Seasonal handcrafted cocktail menu and well selected after dinner cordials available. Winesdays ' on Wednesdays offers half off wines from 4pm to close. Kids menu available. Private dining, events and celebrations can be arranged with catering. NICO Kitchen + Bar is located at 1 Center Street, Newark, New Jersey. All major credit cards accepted and handicap accessible, for reservations visit [opentable](http://opentable.com), nicokitchenbar.com or call [\(973\) 642-1226](tel:9736421226).

About Culinaire

Culinaire is a Dallas-based, privately held food and beverage corporation and food service provider. It provides high-quality food and beverage service to a diverse collection of accounts including San Antonio’s Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, Minneapolis’ Guthrie Theater as well as the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, NJ. In the last 18 months, Culinaire has started service with acclaimed properties including the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. It operates Café

43, Courtyard Café and all catering and special events at the George W. Bush Museum & Library. The organization services other Texas locations such as the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, the Music Hall at Fair Park, UT Southwestern Medical Center and the Fort Worth Zoo, as well as provides dining services in 25 hotels and conference centers nationwide. Additional information can be found at culinaireintl.com

About NJPAC

**One Center Street
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New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, N.J., is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States and is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey – where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state’s and the world’s best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted nearly 10 million visitors (including over 1.5 million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents.