

What Does The Most Expensive Meal In The World Taste Like?

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A disembodied voice fills the stark room: “Have you ever thought how difficult it is to meet in space and time?”

A better question might be, “How difficult will it be to get people to pay €1,500 for a 20-course meal?”

After an editor’s preview of Sublimotion, the restaurant from El Bulli-trained, Michelin-starred chef Paco Roncero that opened earlier this month at the Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza, I’m guessing it won’t be hard to fill the nightly 12-seat table service.

The restaurant fuses molecular gastronomy with theater and technology. And it’s already garnered buzz for charging €1,500 per person (about \$2,050) for a 20-course tasting menu—the most expensive price tag for a restaurant meal on the planet. Sublimotion will be open only during the summer season on the island and the menu will change every year.

As a food writer, I’ve eaten at my share of over-the-top restaurants and enjoyed many excellent dishes. But Sublimotion was the most show-stopping and memorable meal of my life.



First, a woman dressed in what appears to be a *Jetsons*-inspired flight attendant outfit brings you to a holding area, where you get a tantalizing peek at what’s to come. Then, you’re shuttled into another room with wall to wall video screens that make you feel like you’re descending deep into the Earth.

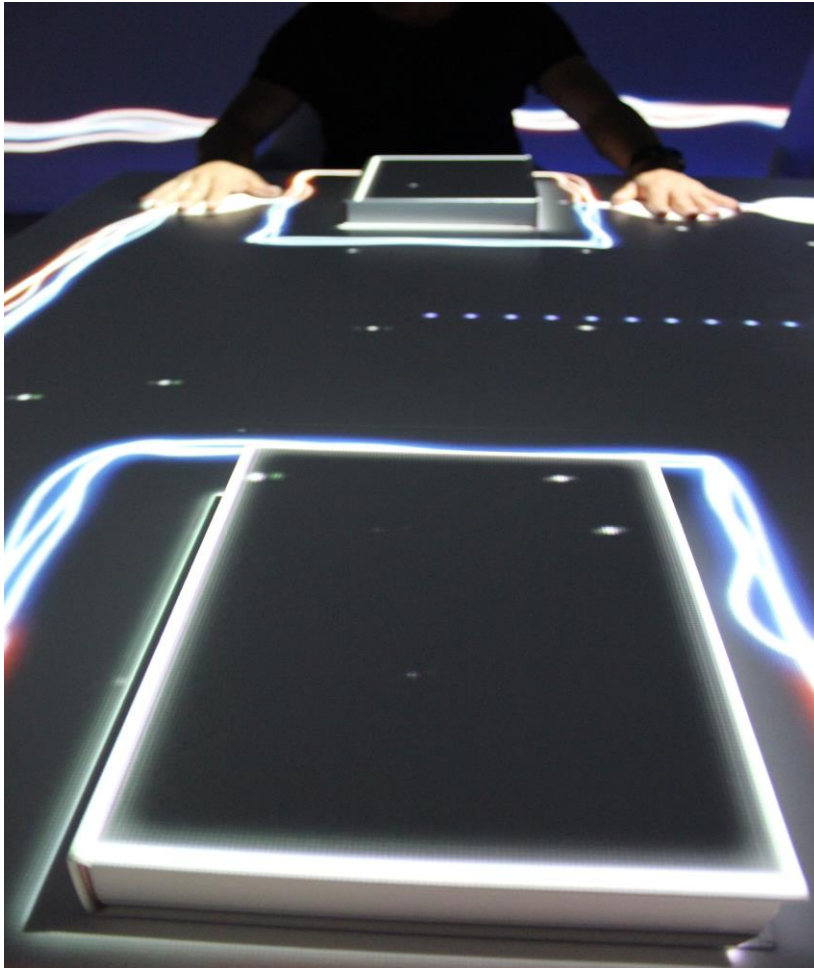
The doors open, and you enter a white room with a white table in the center. Your name is projected on a place setting. An emcee walks in and tells the group not to tell anyone what

you're about to experience, because they'll never believe it anyway. (The first rule of Sublimotion is that you do not talk about Sublimotion.)

Videos are projected onto the walls and tabletop, so sometimes you'll feel like you're flying through space, or watching a garden bloom onto your plate or like you're in a nightclub.

And while the whole thing is avant-garde and highbrow, it's somehow not pretentious. I found myself laughing out loud with my tablemates. A lot.

"It's part of what we are," Roncero told us after our three-course tasting. "We need to eat. We need to share. We need to socialize."



For our first course, a server hands me a book with three vials of clear liquid inside. We pour each one into a beaker on the table in front of us to make our own Bloody Mary. But wait, the emcee says, the cocktail's not finished yet. He tells us to look at the vessel and make it shake with our minds.

And using some sort of magnetic table trickery, the liquid spins in the beaker, to everyone's wide-eyed delight. The servers then pour our cocktails into martini glasses.



It's onto the next course: olive oil three ways. As a liquid, the oil is encased in an edible pouch and hung on a wire with a clamp. It's powdered for a dish that is a riff on the traditional *pan con tomate*. Finally, olive oil took the place of animal fat and was somehow turned into gooey, comforting cheese.



Roncero saved the best for the dessert course. As the table was transformed via video projection into a DJ booth, servers carefully positioned a small magnetic platform in front of each diner, so that it was suspended in mid-air. Then, they placed a CD with two pistachio cookies on top and the whole thing spun like a record as music blasted.



If I hadn't been seated with other reporters, I would have probably clapped and squealed. It's refreshing to experience fine dining, rooted in intellectualism, but with a sense of playfulness and joy.

"It's not just come, sit and leave. It's an emotional experience," Roncero told us after our meal. "These techniques allow people to be in awe and talk about food."

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/maridelreyes/2014/06/30/what-does-the-most-expensive-meal-in-the-world-taste-like/2/>