



dining below street level

OK, so they don't have the greatest views, but there are some advantages to restaurants—and theaters—burrowed underground. In fact, some of these subterranean eateries serve fantastic food along with a certain insider feel, coziness and clandestine vibe. We descended into the world of underground dining recently to see what it was all about. Here's what we found.

**Half Shell Restaurant, 676 W. Di-
versey Pkwy.; 773-549-1773.**

Dark basements and fresh seafood don't seem like natural pals. But they meld perfectly in this quirky, cash-only seafood bar with low ceilings, a great jukebox and Christmas lights strewn across the room. You can try the decent fried eggplant, oysters or salmon, but the real treasures here are the hot sweet, meaty steamed king crab legs served atop totally extraneous fries and white bread, with a pickle spear, tomato slice and charming lollipop on the edge for \$25.40. Don't expect fawning servers, just good inexpensive seafood.