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The edible helium balloon!

Posted by zoom! on August 25, 2015, at 2:16 pm |

I don't have an actual bucket list, but if I did, inhaling helium would have been on it. I finally got my chance to do it a couple of weeks ago, in the most unlikely of places. An edible helium balloon was served as a dessert course in a fancy restaurant!

I took GC to Atelier for a very special birthday dinner. It's tucked away in a nondescript house on Rochester near Carling, and from the street it looks like nothing special. There's no sign, and no hint that it's even a restaurant. Inside it's pretty understated too – it's small and unpretentious and it's decorated with the owner's three-year-old child's artwork.

There's no menu. And there's no oven. The food is prepared in the kitchen using some wizardly combination of science, magic and the culinary arts, called molecular gastronomy.

You just sit back and prepare to be served a magical 14-course parade of unusual combinations, tantalizing tastes, surprising sensations, and creative presentations. It's about entertaining all your senses, not just taste – although the tastes *are* astonishingly good. You have odd conversations (“Did that yellow powder just turn to liquid?” and “I wonder why this bubble is ice cold?”) We opted for the wine pairings too, so we got pretty high. We were there for almost four hours, but the time just flew by. The waiter and the wine guy were both cheerful and friendly and they served everything with a twinkle in their eye.

The edible helium balloon was the wackiest thing ever. You put your lips on it and breathe deeply and then you talk (I sang Tiptoe Through the Tulips, and GC recited a poem in a British munchkin accent). Everybody in the whole restaurant laughs whenever anybody has an edible helium balloon. Then you eat your sweet balloon and the string, and magical towelettes explode from little pods when the waiter pours a few drops of water on them. (You use the towelette to wipe any remaining balloon sugar from your face.) Then it's on to the next course!

It wasn't just a great meal, it was an extraordinary culinary experience, a lot of fun, and a very special way to celebrate a very special occasion.

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4 comments to The edible helium balloon!

kayT

[August 25th, 2015 at 4:25 pm](#)

That sounds like a very wonderful restaurant; wish I lived there! (I also wish there was video of your meal. Love to see the edible balloon episode.)

Kathleen

[August 26th, 2015 at 7:50 pm](#)

The restaurant sounds wonderful. How did you ever hear of the place?

CeltChick

[August 28th, 2015 at 9:05 pm](#)

I have seen a few brief TV articles about gastronomic science, and it always looks totally weird and completely fun. Happy Belated Birthday, GC!

Deb

[September 2nd, 2015 at 5:36 pm](#)

When Rob and I come to Ottawa, my plan was for us to go to Small Plates...but we might have to do this too.