

Eat Out

The city's best restaurants and bars



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Graduate to grown-up ramen

As college students step into adulthood this time of year, we're pushing for them to leave those Maruchan ramen noodle packets behind on the hot plate and study the city's more elevated ramen scene.

By **Karl Klockars** Photograph by **Martha Williams** Photo illustration by **Jamie Divecchio Ramsay**

◀ **Ginza Japanese Restaurant**
19 E Ohio St, 312-222-0600

In the bowl Hidden in plain sight in bustling River North, Ginza has served Japanese cuisine dependably through the decades. The curtained, wood-paneled room offers a dose of quiet tradition hard to find in most places.

The shoyu ramen (\$8.50, pictured at left) boasts a mild soy broth, well-cooked noodles with spinach, scallions and a firm but

not overdone serving of roasted pork. A small piece of nori as an aromatic garnish made perfect sense, and a soft-boiled egg rounded out the dish.

Know before you go For a full immersion in tradition, treat yourself to a gargantuan bottle of Japanese beer and relish the swift, ninja-like service.

Urban Belly
3053 N California Ave,
773-583-0500

In the bowl This hot spot with a well-known chef (Bill Kim, formerly of Le Lan) draws legions for bowls like the

"pho ramen" (\$13), which walks a fine line between tradition and fusion. The chocolate-brown broth is beautifully fragrant with cloves, star anise and black pepper, flecked with bright green herbs. The half-dozen slices of buttery pork belly were rich with layers of fat and soft enough to be cut with a spoon, and the shiitake were sparse but welcome. But is it really ramen? Doesn't matter. Whatever it is, it's damn good.

Know before you go Save a bit of room for the deliciously spicy ginger candy served after your meal, and try early on weeknights to avoid a wait.

