

Codes Used in this Guide

Distance

	Short walk
	Walking distance
	Car required
	Long car ride
	In another city
	On another continent

Price

\$	Cheap
\$\$	Reasonable
\$\$\$	Expensive
\$\$\$\$	Very expensive

Codes

AT	Afternoon Tea	LL	Open Late (11 PM)
B	Breakfast	LLL	Open Very Late (12:30 AM)
BW	Beer and Wine Only	LM	Live Music
CO	Cash Only	NO	No Alcohol
D	Dinner	NR	No Reservations
DA	Dancing	OS	Outdoor Seating
DL	Delivers	R	Romantic
FB	Full Bar	RE	Reservations Essential
GG	Good for Groups	RL	Reservations Recommended for Large Parties
HWQ	High Weirdness Quotient	RR	Reservations Recommended
IWL	Impressive Wine List	TO	Takeout
KF	Kid Friendly	TOO	Takeout Only
L	Lunch		



RSA 2006 Restaurant Guide

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Indexes

Welcome

Welcome to the 15th Anniversary of the RSA® Conference. Much has changed over the years—the problems we faced in 1992 pale in comparison to the issues we are dealing with today. One thing that has remained constant is your appetite for good food! I'm sure you will find this guide both informative and entertaining!

Enjoy RSA Conference 2006 and *bon appetit!*

— Sandra Toms LaPedis
VP and GM RSA Conferences

Introduction

Welcome to everyone who makes the RSA Conference an annual pilgrimage, and especially welcome to all you folks who are making your first trip to San José. The RSA Conference has been to San José before. We were here in 1999 and 2000, and again in 2002. If you're keeping score, the first three RSA Conferences, in 1992, 1994, and 1995, were in the Sofitel in Redwood Shores. Then we moved to the Fairmont in San Francisco for three years. We were back in San Francisco, at the Moscone Center, in 2001, and then from 2003–2005.

This year we're in San José because the Moscone Center didn't have room for us. But next year we're back at the Moscone Center, and who knows what will happen after that.

The RSA Conference is now a huge event. In 1992, there were only fifty of us. There was one room of speakers, and no exhibition space. In 1994, Bruce was the first exhibitor. He asked Jim Bidzos if he could sell copies of the first edition of *Applied Cryptography*, and Jim set him up at a table in the lobby. Those days are over. By 1998, the RSA Conference had just over 3,000 attendees. In 2004, 10,000. This year, about 14,000 are expected.

With 17 tracks of programming and an enormous exhibition space, there's a vast amount to see and learn and do. Just tracking down the show's coolest giveaway can be the work of an afternoon. (Best giveaway in the history of the RSA Conference: a set of lockpicks from Securify. Second best: large MagLite flashlights from Cryptography Research, Inc.)

We're here to remind you to keep your strength up, and of course to help you find something fabulous to eat.

Using the Guide

We did our best to make this guide both useful and entertaining. Listings include a simple thumbs-up/thumbs-down code if we either do or don't recommend the place. You'll also find icons to give you some idea how close the restaurant is, and a whole bunch of other codes that indicate special features. There's a key on the inside front cover.

Additionally, there is a series of useful indexes in the back. You can use these to help you find a decent hamburger after 1 AM, or the closest place for veal *parmigiana*. Sure, it would be great if the listings were available in a fully sortable and searchable database, but then you wouldn't have a book in your hands. Besides, if you're geeking that much, maybe you should just, you know, get something to eat.

You want a map, and we didn't include one. This is because the San José Convention and Visitors Bureau prints an absolutely phenomenal map. Go to the info desk at the convention center, or ask the concierge at your hotel for

a copy. Or go to the Internet and print your own: <http://www.sanjose.org/download/2005Dining_Guide.pdf>. Finding your way around San José is a snap, but it's even snappier if you have a map.

(The current San José Convention and Visitors Bureau map—at the time of writing—is at least a year out of date. There are restaurants on the map that have closed, and restaurants not on the map at all. Unfortunately, the map is undated; but you can identify it by looking at the last entry, “148: Togo’s.” If the map you’re given is different from this one, it’s most likely a newer version and undoubtedly more synchronized with the restaurants in this guide.)

We’ve also included a whole bunch of our favorite restaurants that are nowhere near San José. Yes, we know you aren’t going to jet over to New York for dinner on Wednesday night (nor are you going to drive up to San Francisco), but we figured that as long as we had your attention, we might as well talk about the places around the world we like to eat at. The next time you find yourself at Heathrow with a six-hour layover, you’ll thank us.

Hours

When we were new to reviewing restaurants, we always noted their hours. Opening and closing times were mission-critical data, we figured. Our readers will want to know. Quickly, we stopped bothering...for several reasons.

One, hours change, and we have a fairly long lead time on this guide. Maybe we visited a restaurant in November. Come February, things may be different. Maybe they’re open later. Maybe they close earlier. Maybe they’ve started serving breakfast. There’s no way we can offer real-time information; anything we provide necessarily decays in accuracy over time.

And two, restaurants don’t *lie*, exactly, but they’re flexible. Just because the hours posted on the door say that the restaurant is open until 2 AM doesn’t mean that the staff isn’t going to go home early if there’s no one around at midnight. This happens more often than it should, as anyone trying to find food late at night can attest.

We have included some general hours—which meals they serve, and if they’re open very late—but the single most important advice we can offer you is to call first. Pick up the phone, call the restaurant, and ask if they’re open. And while you’re on the phone, make yourself a reservation. That way there’ll be a table waiting for you when you get there, or maybe you won’t have to wait as long.

Why Us?

You might be curious why we, two people living 1,570 miles away from San José, are writing a restaurant guide for the RSA Conference. The reason is simple: we wanted to. (The longer reason is that we wrote a San José restaurant guide in 2002, for a science fiction convention called ConJosé, and about half

of the restaurants we wrote about were still in business. The even-more-complex reason explains why we wrote the ConJosé guide in the first place, but the margins here are too small to contain it. So it was an easier job to update what we already wrote than to start from scratch. This is also why you're unlikely to see a San Francisco restaurant guide from us next year.)

We wanted to because we enjoy writing about food and restaurants. We eat out a lot, and we like to think we have an appreciative yet critical eye for what's happening in the restaurant around us and on the plates before us.

What We Missed

We want to tell you a story. A few years ago, we wrote the restaurant guide for an IETF meeting in Minneapolis. It was a book like this, filled with listings for restaurants both near to and far from the hotel. While researching which restaurants to include, we walked the streets around the hotel with a map, noting every restaurant. We spent a lot of time at this, and we did a thorough job. Or so we thought.

Come the convention, and someone asks why the guide doesn't mention a particular breakfast place. We don't know where it is, we said. So that someone walked us down to the lobby, and out the front door, where we learned that we missed a restaurant around the corner from the hotel. We missed a restaurant that has a large sign on a building across the street, directly in front of the hotel entrance, a large sign that reads "Restaurant" with an arrow. We completely missed it.

We guarantee that something similar will happen with this guide. We tried to be thorough, but there will be things we miss. We know, for example, that we didn't talk at all about Japan Town. We're sure that there are things in the Pavilion that we didn't get to. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that we don't live in San José; we live in Minneapolis.

If you find something that isn't in the guide, consider yourself lucky. With everyone using this guide to find dinner, it might be nice knowing about something that isn't listed anywhere.

Tipping

Yes. You have to. Your server counts on tips to pay his rent, and he pays taxes on a percentage of what you spent, whether you tip or not. You don't have to like it, and we don't either.

Yes, it's a stupid system. We much prefer the European way of doing things, which is to pay the waitstaff a decent wage and to include the cost in the bill. But that's not how it's done here. Here, we leave a tip.

A standard tip is a minimum of 15% of the check—20% at better restaurants—excluding tax but including alcohol. This is easy to calculate: look at

the amount, move the decimal place over one, and then add half again. So if the amount is \$17.42, the tip would be $\$1.70 + .85 = \2.50 , more or less. If the amount is \$8.00, that's $\$0.80 + \$0.40 = \$1.25$, more or less. You get the idea. (You can also calculate the tip off the tax. In San José, double the 8.25% sales tax and subtract a little. But the tax changes in different cities and states.) Rounding is perfectly reasonable, but try to round up more often than down.

If you're feeling cheap, remember that the tip is calculated off the pretax total; the taxes are not part of the server's sales. You've saved a bundle right there, haven't you?

If you're with a group of people, don't round down. You're either 1) making your dinner companions pay more than their share, or 2) cheating the waitstaff out of money they have earned. The tendency for larger parties to undertip (everyone throws what they think they owe into the middle, and if it comes too low they just short the waitstaff) leads many restaurants to calculate a standard tip (sometimes 15%, sometimes as high as 20%) and add it to the check. Look for it so you don't inadvertently tip twice.

Stiffing the server is a big deal, and should only be done in response to actually awful service. We will not leave a tip when our server does not bring something we've asked for, or if he takes the order of people seated after us while we wait to order. We've stiffed servers who delivered the meal and disappeared, never to be seen or heard from again. These are rare occurrences. Neither of us can remember the last time we stiffed the server. And naturally, we'll take an apology and explanation at face value.

Like executive-recruiter search fees, tip percentages have been creeping up over the last decade or so. At the best restaurants in San Francisco, people whisper that an 18%, or even a 20% tip, is more reasonable.

Whatever you do, don't think you won't be remembered. Whether you overtip or undertip, the next time you walk into the restaurant the waitstaff will remember you. We're sure your imagination can suggest various outcomes from that point.

Chain Restaurants

We don't like chain restaurants. That'll be obvious as soon as you start reading our reviews, but we thought we'd say it up front. We find them uninteresting and mostly unappetizing. Their uniformity is oppressive. We don't care for demographically targeted focus-group-tested corporate trend food. And we don't like the way corporate chain restaurants are reducing the quality of food in this country.

What's happening with chain restaurants is a logical result of the role of corporations in our society.

Look up the 1919 court decision *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.*; it's easy to find with Google. That case still stands, and it upholds the fundamental legal principle

that a corporation must put the interests of its shareholders above all other interests; and that it has no legal authority to serve any other interests, customers included. A corporation can only serve its customers' interests inasmuch as it also serves its shareholders' interests. Otherwise, as in *Dodge v. Ford*, the shareholders can sue.

This is pretty abstract, but the point is that corporations own restaurants, and these corporate restaurants must put profits above everything else: above service, above ambience, above food quality. Corporate chain restaurants can have all of those things; indeed, must have them in some degree to stay in business, but only in the service of profits. An independent restaurant owner can decide to buy higher quality ingredients, even though he knows it won't bring him a greater return on investment, because he wants to. A corporation can only decide to do that if it believes that greater profitability will result. This is why good restaurants inevitably go downhill once they go corporate. As a corporation, the restaurant has to trim excess costs and maximize profits: to optimize the bottom line. Anything that doesn't add to the bottom line goes. This might be good corporate policy—and we won't argue that it isn't—but the food suffers as a result.

The food suffers because one of the important easy ways to optimize the bottom line is to limit the quality of the ingredients. For example, a Reuben sandwich at the Carnegie Deli in New York City comes with about a pound of home-cured corned beef, and is so large that you need more bread to make an entire extra sandwich out of it. You get good pumpernickel or rye, excellent kraut and on the whole a sandwich that is more than worth the trip. It's *really good*.

A Reuben sandwich at the national-chain family restaurant Bakers Square is made with frozen corned beef that comes from a dimpled plastic throw-away tray. Every dimple contains a pre-sliced, pre-weighed portion of corned beef. We don't know where the corned beef comes from, or who cured it. It's not something we can easily find out, and is not something the restaurant touts with any pride. The Bakers Square Reuben has cheap white cheese called Swiss that has not got that particularly nutty flavor we associate with good Swiss cheese. The bread is dark, but hardly flavorful. We call it inoffensive. And this sandwich is *just okay*.

Bakers Square began as an independent restaurant in Des Moines called Mrs. C's. It became highly popular and successful and was bought by Pillsbury, which changed the name to Poppin' Fresh and expanded the "concept." That was long enough ago that profitability wasn't the single driving force behind the chain. Back then, they served a vegetable beef soup that was just wonderful. People still talk about it. When ViCorp bought the Poppin' Fresh chain in 1983, that soup went off the menu forever. Now they have over 150 restaurants in California and the Upper Midwest, and they serve soup that comes frozen in a bag—the same stuff that can be got at other chains around town. The big food restaurant food purveyor Sysco has a website that calls this stuff, "The Smart Alternative to Scratch!" Is that so good people talk about it 20 years later? No, it's *just okay*.

What we want out of our meals, both at home and in restaurants, is the stuff that's *really good*. We want the extra trouble, we want the special knowledge. We want, above all, food that someone cares about.

Cutting labor costs to the bone is another example of good corporate stewardship. It's good business to pay the lowest possible wages. And using unskilled, poorly paid cooks doesn't affect the quality of your meal so much in corporate chain restaurants. They must be able to repeat their menu in every location, and dumbing down the cooking process is the easiest way to do that. Cooks in corporate chain restaurants must do things according to the book. They can't bring their own personality into the kitchen. They need no skills in any culinary arts. They are drones. This lack of creativity and skill are major factors in why corporate restaurants are so bad.

(A personal note: Karen worked in corporate chain restaurants for 15 years—half of that time cooking, and the other half waitressing. She doesn't claim to have seen it all, but she has seen an awful lot of it.)

Chains make the rules of preparation very rigid. It's that rigidity (and the cheap ingredients) that causes the mediocrity we complain about. The chains organize the cooking job in a way so the cooks can't screw it up. (They can screw themselves up by being too good at their jobs, though. Get together a good enough crew who can fly through a busy lunch shift, and you'll find the managers cutting a warm body. They're willing to trade the labor cost for the camaraderie and production of a good team. You won't get your food as fast, but as long as the wait is close enough to the guidelines, who cares?)

Watch this QuickTime video: <http://www.zyng.com/video/sm_yakisoba_a.mpg>. It's a few minutes of a cook's training video at a corporate chain restaurant called Zyng's. (It's reviewed in this guide.) The video is on the company's website, so presumably they're not at all concerned if potential customers see it.

If it doesn't put you off corporate chain restaurants forever, we can't help you.

Yes, it's really like that, cooking at a corporate chain restaurant. All restaurants train, of course. Someone has to teach the guy who washes the dishes not to throw silverware away, for example. The difference is what they train to. Good restaurants start with people who already have natural ability and interest, and teach them their trade, using an apprentice-journeyman-master artisan model. Corporate chain restaurants start with people who can show up on time and follow instructions, and teach them to follow a particular set of instructions. Chains, like the one in the video, treat cooks like any other commodity labor, and the overall model is the corporate management ladder.

There are similarities between the two kitchens. Both are striving for consistency. Like all work, both require the same tasks to be repeated again and again. But while the models might appear similar, they remain vastly different.

Anyway, the bottom line here isn't that corporate chain restaurants are awful; they're not. What they are is the low end of mediocre. They're lowest-common-

denominator boring. They're focus-group tested. They don't reach, because they're afraid to offend. They don't want to be great. They limit themselves to being good enough.

Independently owned restaurants are not necessarily better, but they have the chance of being better. They have the chance of being lot better.

They also have the chance of being a lot worse. Lots of independent restaurants serve substandard food, skimp on amenities, hire underskilled labor, and otherwise cut corners. Most health code violations are probably garnered by independents. They don't have regional managers coming around making sure they're up to code, and they don't have national reputations to protect.

For the most part, those restaurants go out of business—and we wrote this guide to help you steer clear of the ones that haven't yet. Because independent restaurant owners are people first and profit-making machines second, their restaurants are extensions of their personalities. And sometimes this can mean greatness.

You could say that the quality of independently owned restaurants is more noisy than corporate chain restaurants. And if each year the bottom $n\%$ on the quality scale falls away, and is replaced by restaurants that are more uniformly distributed, the average quality of independently owned restaurants increases.

On the other hand, many people don't like the "noise." They don't like going into an independent restaurant they've never heard of, because it feels uncertain. They don't know what kind of meal they're going to get and we've all had a lifetime of advertising exposure to teach us that predictable restaurant meals are comforting. That is why corporate chain restaurants are beating out the independents everywhere except the ultra high end...where the chains just can't compete.

But if you ignore the chains, and pay a little bit of attention to local recommendations, you'll have much better meals at whatever price you're willing to meet.



Restaurant Reviews

Agenda Restaurant



399 S First St, San José
408-287-3991

Californian
D, RR, FB, DA, LM, \$\$
<http://www.agendalounge.com>

Agenda has, well, an agenda: to propel a bit of nightlife into notoriously dull San José evenings. It seems to be working out just fine. There's DJ-driven danceteria in the basement club, and you can even be a guest DJ, and make real money doing it. They have live music some nights as well, with the acts being the sort of thing you've heard of if you have any interest in being a guest DJ, and have never heard of if you haven't. There's a pretty-good-and-not-too-expensive restaurant, too.

The menu offers that sort of nouveau comfort food that became popular after 9/11, and they do a decent job of it. Think pork chops with apple sauce, meatloaf, cheeseburgers, short ribs, crab cakes, soups, and salads. Also think prawn linguini, fried calamari, spring rolls, and chicken *satay*, because every culture has its own comfort foods. The wine list is forgettable.

The best thing we've eaten here was a grilled salmon with wild mushroom and pumpkin hash, and portobello vinaigrette, a bargain at \$17.

Agenda's dining room is noisy, and it's kind of a scene, but if you like that sort of thing, here's where to find it.

Or just go to see the enormous soft-sculptured angel in the dining room.

A.P. Stump's



163 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-292-9928

American
L, D, RR, FB, IWL, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.apstumps.com/>

Downtown San José has a handful of “impress your guests” restaurants. Our favorite is A.P. Stump's. It impresses the minute you enter the dining room. We like to call it a contemporary take on a pre-War supper club. The main room is filled with dark, high-gloss wood. Rich tapestries cover the chairs and banquettes. Long, curved, etched-glass panels separate the sections. Alabaster chandeliers and a tin ceiling complement the look. It's an elegant space.

When chef Jim Stump opened this restaurant with his partner Andrew Pavichich Jr. (that's the “A.P.” in the name), he wanted to serve his food his way. Reviews call what he does “New American” cuisine. There are elements of California

cuisine, elements of French cooking, and the occasional Hispanic or Asian accent. Some of the dishes cross so many borders there's no way to classify them. Think of New American in terms of the classic melting pot of American culture, and you have it about right.

Here's one example: Maine lobster and corn pudding soufflé. The lobster comes cradled in its own shell. The corn pudding is topped with a spoonful of osetra caviar. Around all of this is a *beurre blanc* swirled with a lobster reduction, and bits of basil are sprinkled about. It's almost too pretty to eat, but once you do, you find that the corn and lobster complement each other perfectly.

We've been here many times: alone, with guests, on business dinners. Bruce's company once hosted a banquet here. We're generally pleased with what we order, although there are the occasional disappointments. When the dishes are inspired, they're truly good. There are a few more missteps along the way than we'd like, but the menu, though it changes frequently, is generally sound.

The simple beet salad is one of our favorite dishes, and the Stump's version has three different beets: red, yellow, and the heirloom Italian Chioggia.

They're a "chop house" and so offer various steaks, sometimes in competent if uninspired presentations such as with mashed potatoes and greens. Good, yes, but not original. There are many good entrées to choose from, too. We like the duck. We've had it in a single dish offering both grilled duck breast and duck-leg *confit*, and served with hedgehog mushrooms, a whipped potato *galette*, and huckleberry sauce. Preparations change regularly. The several fish dishes we've tried have been good, also.

A.P. Stump's has an excellent, though expensive, wine list. Not only does it have a wide variety of interesting wines, but it's organized by grape varietal, and then by country or state. This is especially helpful for wine novices who are just developing their palates. And there is a good selection of splits, which lets us order two half bottles instead of one full-sized bottle. Good wines are available by the glass, too.

Desserts are worth saving room for, difficult as that may seem. The Dutch chocolate cake is a sinful Valrhona dark chocolate and hazelnut creation served with *crème Anglaise*. The pear beignets are delicious, as are the apple tarts (served with vanilla ice cream, *crème Anglaise*, and caramel). If you're full, have the lemon granita or any of the sorbets. Again, the menu changes frequently.

The building sits on what was formerly the Paul Masson–Charles Le Franc Champagne Cellar, and the restaurant's wine cellar once stored Paul Masson's private stock. Those downstairs rooms are available for private parties; a long time ago Jim Bidzos hosted RSA Conference dinners there. And if you're nice and ask politely, you can get yourself a tour of the cellar.

Lunch is served Monday through Friday only.

Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)



Californian

301 S Market St, San José
408-278-4555

L, D, RR, FB, IWL, \$\$\$

<http://www.sanjosemarriott.com/dining.html>

The celebrity chef movement has inevitably dragged us to the brink of such calamities as the foodtv.com website, with its advertisements for Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup. This is strangely weird, because the elevation of cookery to a prominent cultural position has also helped advance the American palate far beyond the salty blandness of typical American dinners circa, say, 1960. The combination of post-Vietnam immigration, the 1964 New York World's Fair, and Julia Child's television show—not to mention Alice Waters or cheap long-distance transportation—has brought us to today's adventurous restaurant table: ingredients and techniques from all over the map, as much fresh and local meat and vegetables as can be gotten, and a creative and talented chef steering the entire ship.

Welcome to the world of Michael Mina.

Bon Appetit's 2005 Chef of the Year, Michael Mina is known for taking simple flavor combinations and making them amazingly delicious. We first encountered him at Aqua in San Francisco, and we've eaten at Michael Mina in San Francisco and Nob Hill in Las Vegas. Arcadia is his fifth restaurant—he has two others in Las Vegas—and his first in San José.

Arcadia is a pretty enough room: sleek lines, large windows, and muted colors. It doesn't dazzle, and this is a style we've seen a few times lately. We'll be glad when showmanship comes back to the front of the house and we get our breath taken away by an extraordinary dining room. Until then, we'll just enjoy the food. There's a large open kitchen, which we do not believe every restaurant requires, and there's an open gas oven in one corner of the kitchen, which is either there just for show or maybe they cook bread in it—we couldn't get a straight answer.

The food is pretty much what you'd expect from a Mina restaurant, with a tilt towards "comfort foods." One menu we saw included steak and potatoes, pork chop and beans, fried chicken (a whole chicken for two), and macaroni and cheese. Everything is good, and some things nod towards great.

We liked the tempura soft shell crab and the Maine lobster corndogs to start. We also liked a Michael Mina standard: the spicy tuna *tartare*. The precise details vary, but it always has a bit of scotch bonnet pepper and a quail egg, and it's always mixed tableside. The waiter recommends, and we concur, that you eat this quickly, as the flavors are best when very freshly mixed.

We've also had good luck with the soups. We love the choose-your-own-salad course. From a page of 35 different salad ingredients, you can choose up to ten. If you do the math, that's 286,454,523 different possible salads: one a night for a couple hundred thousand years. (Actually, it's 286,454,524 different pos-

sible salads, because in theory you can choose the null salad. But we're not sure how they'd charge for that.) But some of those possible salads aren't very appetizing, like the one with four dressings and nothing else. Or the crunchy-and-dry salad: toasted pine nuts, pecans, spiced honey walnuts, garlic croutons, and parmesan croutons—and nothing else. Mathematicians, Karen has long since noted, ponder these sorts of things far too often while they wait for their dinners.

Less interesting are the seasonal shellfish. They're not bad, but you can get clams, oysters, and lobsters elsewhere. Still, the "Large Tasting Plate" of spiced prawns, raw clams and oysters, scallop *ceviche*, Dungeness crab, and Maine lobster is an impressive sight.

The scallops are delicious, though, and we very much liked the scallops and potatoes dish, served with caviar sauce. And the pork chop mentioned above, served with some of the best baked beans you'll ever have and succotash, is well worth ordering. The service is personable and generally prompt, though people go oddly missing as the evening gets later. We think it is silly and pretentious to require the servers to walk around with one hand resting palm out on the smalls of their backs, but that seems to be part of the "meticulous attention to detail" that the restaurant's website goes on about.

Arcadia is the Marriott's only restaurant, so they serve breakfast as well: expensive but perfectly serviceable. There's an express lunch menu of salads, soups, and sandwiches. (We recommend the pulled pork sandwich for lunch. Or the albacore tuna sandwich.) And they offer a "Pre-Theater Menu" for those who want an early dinner.

Armadillo Willy's

995 Saratoga Ave, San José
408-255-7427



Barbecue

L, D, NR, TO, BW, \$

<http://www.armadillowilys.com>

Real barbecue is cooked over a hardwood fire. Gas or electricity is cheating. Or, as the saying goes, "baking it is faking it."

Armadillo Willy's doesn't fake it. The woodpile out back is proof. And the smell: you can smell the barbecue from blocks away when the wind is right. You just can't buy that kind of advertising. And the cops seem to eat there constantly. In our book, that's a pretty sizable recommendation.

Their beef brisket and pork shoulder—both chopped, and served in sandwiches and platters—are cooked the old-fashioned way, just like the famed armadillos of Texas have done since the state was a country unto itself...or something like that. They also serve ribs—regular pork ribs and baby-back pork ribs; both are tasty. They use good meat, and the sauce is delicious. You can order the meat hot or mild; we suggest ordering mild and getting a dish of

hot sauce on the side. You can also buy the sauce in local grocery stores, and they often have the empty five-gallon buckets to give away, should you need a five-gallon bucket that still smells slightly of barbecue sauce.

They've upgraded their soggy old buns from days of yore to tasty, sturdy Kaiser rolls from local bakers Le Boulanger, so we like 'em better than ever these days. The sides are the disappointment of the place. "Willy's beans," standard on all platters and optional with sandwiches, are mediocre. The potato salad is your best bet. The cornbread is tasteless. The coleslaw is horribly strange; it's made with peanuts. At least the French fries (hand cut daily) are good.

Armadillo Willy's is informal. You order at the counter and are handed one of those electronic coasters with your drinks. When it starts blinking and vibrating, your order is up. Oddly high tech, in a backwards kind of way. (And no, it doesn't vibrate enough to spill your Coke.)

Oh, they also serve things like chicken sandwiches and hamburgers. There's even a salad or two on the menu. We have no idea how they taste; we've never even seen someone in the restaurant eating one so we could ask. You can't walk to Armadillo Willy's from the convention center; you'll need to splurge for a cab. We recommend doing so, because we love the barbecue here. They're a small chain found throughout the Bay Area, so try 'em wherever you are.

Bella Mia



Italian

58 S First St, San José
408-280-1993

L, D, RR, FB, KF, LM, OS, R, \$\$
<http://www.bellamia.com>

It is our observation that the top tier of restaurants in downtown San José has declared itself by charging \$6 or more for a bowl of soup. We don't actually agree with these self-assessments in every case, but it's nevertheless true that some of the best and most expensive places are actually getting people to shell out that much money for soup. A bowl of soup costs \$5 at Bella Mia.

And so we judge Bella Mia to be about as good under its new ownership as it was before. That is: pretty good, not much to complain about, really. The new chef is a California Cafe alum, and we've eaten at their outpost in Minnesota several times. You can expect a good, though not adventurous, meal here. If your dinner companions eat Italian, they'll find something they like.

Just skip the double pork chop. Not that there's anything wrong with it, it's just the latest trendy thing, and thus must be avoided. On the other hand, the menu offers "miniature grilled cheese sandwiches," and who doesn't want that? Our favorite dessert has the peculiar name "Chocolate Nemesis"—we can't explain that.

Entrees will run you under \$20, pizzas are about \$10.

Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shop

115 East San Carlos, San José
408-275-8827



Ice Cream

L, D, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$
<http://www.benjerry.com/>

You're in northern California, so it makes sense. But who knew that, nationwide, Ben and Jerry's most popular flavor is Cherry Garcia® Ice Cream? Followed by:

2. Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Ice Cream
3. Chunky Monkey® Ice Cream
4. Chocolate Fudge Brownie™ Ice Cream
5. Half Baked™ Ice Cream
6. New York Super Fudge Chunk® Ice Cream
7. Cherry Garcia® Low Fat Frozen Yogurt
8. Phish Food® Ice Cream
9. Peanut Butter Cup™ Ice Cream
10. Coffee Heath Bar Crunch® Ice Cream

Benoit

20 Rue Saint-Martin, Paris
+42 72 25 76



French

L, D, RE, FB, \$\$\$

Benoit is our favorite bistro in Paris. It's in the 4th, near the Louvre, and it's been around since 1912. The first time we walked inside—at random, about five years ago—we fell in love with the place. The restaurant has a Michelin star, but we didn't know that then. We just liked the large planters that ringed the restaurant, shielding it from the bustle of the city. We liked the bistro feel: the cramped tables, the working elegance, the food spilling out of the kitchen. We saw a duck lying on a sideboard—a wild duck, dead, with head, feet, feathers, everything—and thought: “We need to eat here.”

We have, many times. We've even been lucky enough to have family visiting Paris with us, and we've eaten there with them. The waiters look familiar now, and we think perhaps they recognize us. The food is delicious, and the atmosphere is warm and convivial. It's our standard first-night-in-Paris restaurant.

That duck on the sideboard was hardly unusual. As you read your menu, various dishes are paraded by, described, and served to people seated near you: terrines, a salad, a *soup du poissons* (so “jacked with Pernod,” as Tony Bourdain aptly puts it, that one could smell it across the room), a chicken completely encrusted with pork.

Actually, that's not always true. Near as we can tell, they do that for most people, but don't when 1) the restaurant is so very busy that they don't have time,

or 2) you're exuding American tourist vibes. If you're interested in the food, even if you don't speak any French, you're likely to get the full treatment.

Everything is delicious here. Start with the fish soup, or maybe a duck paté. You can have seconds on the terrine if you like. On one visit we had a pretty donut-shaped paté made from thin alternating layers of veal tongue and *foie gras*, and an almost-as-pretty cold lobster salad. On another visit we remember a delicious duck meat and *foie gras ballotine*.

Main courses are also wonderful. One time we ordered a roast partridge. It came in sections—we think we got the whole bird—roasted, and served with a small head of a delicious French cabbage we had never seen before, some potato slices, and a light *jus*. Simply incredible.

The *cassoulet* is heavenly, and more than one person can eat.

So is the *tete de veau*: a piece of veal cheek, ear, tongue, and brain served *pot au feu* style with boiled potatoes in a sauce of mustard, capers, and tiny pieces of hard-boiled egg.

If they have it, try the salt-encrusted chicken. They'll bring it out to show you: a whole chicken completely encrusted in maybe half an inch of salt. The cooking technique seals in juices and flavor. We always order chicken in France. Chicken is so tasteless in the United States (the phrase "tastes like chicken" really means "tastes like nothing"), but in France chicken tastes like poultry should.

Roast pigeon, duck *confit*...we've never gone wrong here.

Get the chocolate mousse for dessert. And then get something else besides.

The big news about Benoit is that it was sold. In April of last year, the Alain Ducasse Group bought the restaurant from the family that had owned it for three generations. They have said they're not going to change a thing. We've been there once since then; so far so good.

Ben's Fast Food Restaurant



Chinese

31 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-9995-5560

L, D, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$

This place serves not-very-good Chinese fast food. It's all stuff you've seen before, and it's all stuff that tastes better elsewhere. On the other hand, a one-item plate is only \$2, a two-item plate is only \$3.50, and a three-item plate is only \$5. If price matters more than quality, this place just might be for you.

But splurge and get the pearl milk tea. It's only \$2, and it's worth the fun.

Blake's Steakhouse and Bar



Steak

17 N San Pedro Sq, San José
408-298-9221

L, D, RR, TO, FB, KF, LM, OS, \$\$\$
<http://www.blakessteakhouse.com>

If you want some dead cow, this is the place to go in San José. It's a local favorite, and they do a fine job. Many different cuts are available, and you can get them topped with a variety of options: béarnaise, Maytag blue, mushrooms. There's a steak sandwich that'll set you back \$12; it comes with bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, and Monterey jack cheese.

You can skip the heavy dose of meat and order something lighter like pasta primavera, too. The wine list is built for a steak restaurant, with prices to match. Otherwise, this is a fine restaurant. It's light and airy, there's a large bar in the center area, and it has a friendly feel. Quite a counterpoint to the serious meat at your table.

Blue Monkey Taco Lounge



Mexican

1 E San Fernando St, San José
408-275-6600

D, LL, LLL, NR, FB, \$

This is really a small, upscale bar that serves tacos and quesadillas in the corner. You're not here for the food, you're here for the bar. Which means you should be reading some other guidebook.

On the other hand, if you need a martini and taco combo at 2 AM, you don't have many other choices.

PS.: The dress code says "no kicks." If you, like us, aren't cool enough to know what that means, they probably won't let you in.

BoTown Chinese Restaurant



Chinese

409 S Second St, San José
408-295-2125

L, D, NR, TO, NA, GG, \$

BoTown is a large, clean, Chinese restaurant. They've got a friendly staff, and a large menu in three languages: Chinese, Vietnamese, and English. The week-day lunch specials are on a limited menu, including Chinese standards like bean curd with vegetable or orange chicken; these are a few dollars cheaper than the dinner menu prices. We recommend anything in black bean sauce.

And be sure to look under the “Vietnamese Food” section of the menu for the curried frog. We know you don’t want to miss that.

They’ve got huge round tables if you’re going out to eat with a dozen friends.

Britannia Arms



English

173 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-278-1400

L, D, LL, NR, FB, OS, GG, \$\$
<http://www.britanniarms.com>

Sum up the Britannia Arms this way: behind the bar, the Pabst Blue Ribbon tap is right next to the Harp tap.

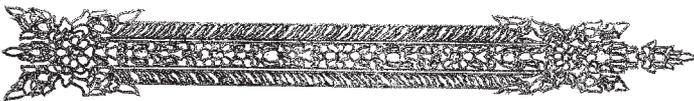
Britannia Arms serves traditional British pub food of the sort most of us recognize by name at least. There’s fish and chips, various meat pies, bangers and mash, Cornish pasty, mushy peas, cider...that sort of thing. For eight bucks, they’ll sell you a bottle of HP sauce or a chicken quesadilla. They are in California after all (it’s a small local chain), and they offer various soups, salads, burgers, and other standard American bar food, too. Lunches cost \$7–\$8, dinners more. A bowl of soup will set you back \$4. Of course, a couple of pints of beer or cider will significantly affect your total bill, and probably the rest of your afternoon.

None of it is great, but nothing is terrible either. (If you’re stuck here, we recommend the corned beef and cabbage—assuming you like both corned beef and cabbage, that is.)

They proudly advertise EIGHTEEN televisions as well as three big screens. We might as well say it up front: we don’t like televisions in restaurants. They’re annoying. They’re distracting. They’re inescapable. The problem is something called the “establishing reflex.” Our brains, like the brains of all vertebrates, are hard-wired to notice sudden movement. The reason is obvious: vertebrates that didn’t possess that trait tended not to survive long enough to reproduce. And that brain process is what television activates—continuously. We’re simply incapable of ignoring it.

Eighteen televisions means that it’s pretty much impossible to sit such that you can’t see one. Maybe the fact that the local pro hockey team captain is one of the Britannia Arms’ co-owners has something to do with that.

On the other hand, they have a large and very pleasant outdoor patio in the back, if the weather is nice.



Buca di Beppo



Italian

925 Blossom Hill Road, San José
408-226-1444

L, D, LL, RR, TO, FB, GG, KF, \$\$

Buca di Beppo started as a local family restaurant in Minneapolis (where we live) in the early 1990s, and has expanded into a national empire of family restaurant “stores.” There are twenty-one Bucas in California alone.

It’s crowded and it’s loud and the food is plentiful. Large groups are welcome, encouraged, even. This is not the place for singleton diners. This is where you want to go for great whomping amounts of American-style Italian food.

Everything is served family-style, which means you get a huge bowl or platter of what you ordered (everything is *à la carte*), and you serve yourselves. The servers, in our experience, underestimate the portions, and this is especially true if you’re ordering several entrées. When they say that an entrée serves two to three, what they mean is that it serves four to five hungry people, or two to three people over the course of several days. Happily, you can take the leftovers home, and Italian food always reheats well—although this is harder if you’re staying at a hotel.

The food is good enough, though unspectacular. The preparations are uninspired and offend no one. Make sure to order the garlic mashed potatoes, one of the real delights on the menu. We think it’s all a little salty; an hour after eating at Buca, we’re thirsty. And go early if you’ve got a big group; they get busy.

For some reason, we’ve only gone to Buca with Karen’s family. Don’t despair; we believe that it is fully possible to go to Buca without Karen’s family. But it’s the kind of restaurant you’d want to go to with *someone’s* family.

Cafe 1850



Coffee Shop

Circle of Palms, 50 W San Fernando, San José
408-287-4111

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

On the first floor of the Knight-Ridder building, it’s your basic soup-sandwich-coffee place. Salads run \$4–\$6, sandwiches \$5–\$6. They have a soup and sandwich special at \$5.25. And their free Internet access gets them mentioned in far more wi-fi directories than online restaurant reviews, which is an indication of something—but we’re not sure what. But there’s plenty of plaza for eating outside, and they have coffee (\$1.50) and bakery stuff at breakfast.

Cafe Boba

110 E San Fernando St, San José
408-286-2233



Coffee Shop

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.cafebobas.com>

They're named for that weird sweet fruity tea that comes with (we're not making this up) giant tapioca pearls in it. Everyone should try it once. They serve coffee and tea, and some pre-made food. They have tables and a couch and free wireless.

But between you and us, we wouldn't order the eggs here. Let us know if you do.

Café Primavera at the Tech

201 S Market St, San José
408-995-1094



Lunch

L, NR, TO, NA, \$

This place is just about perfect for an RSA lunch: close, fast, cheap, good. It's great food hidden in the Tech Museum, thereby catering to the foodie subset of cryptographers and geeks. They have salads, sandwiches, personal pizzas, and pasta dishes. A bowl of soup costs \$4. There's free wi-fi, and a huge jar of Atomic Fireballs on the counter by the cash register.

The grill closes at 4 PM, but the gift shop is right there and they have all kinds of cool toys.

Café Primo

303 Almaden Blvd, San José
408-795-1200



Lunch

L, NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.primocafes.com>

We're going to let you in on a secret. The best close place to have lunch near the convention center is across the street from the Hilton, in the Ernst & Young building. It's a little sandwich place called Café Primo.

Primo is almost as fast as fast food, and a whole lot better. It's upmarket for a lunch counter, with tablecloths and real plates for lunchers eating there, and a decidedly Italian angle on the menu. Think sandwiches—cold and hot—salads, soups, and pastas. Bruce generally gets the mushroom and Gruyère quiche, which comes with a nice spinach salad. The turkey Cobb focaccia sandwich is

also good, served with gorgonzola, bacon, tomato, and avocado. Lunches run from \$6 to \$8, which makes it a bit more expensive than fast food.

But it's closer, and therefore faster.

Unfortunately, Café Primo closes at 3 PM and it's not open for dinner or on weekends. On the bright side, if the weather's nice, they have lots of outside tables, and pretty decent coffee for \$1.25. Even better, they bake cookies in the afternoon. Get 'em while they're hot.

Chacho's Mexican Restaurant



Mexican

18 S Almaden Ave, San José
408-293-1387

B, L, D, TO, FB, KF, \$\$

Try Chacho's if you wonder what they mean when they (whoever "they" are) talk about the local innovation called Cal-Mex. This is Mexican food for California diners. This is not a put-down; Chacho's is a good restaurant—best of its type in the downtown area. We were surprised at not hearing Spanish in the dining room, but don't let that mislead you. The Sanchez family imports their spices from Mexico to provide the most authentic flavors possible. It's just that the Sanchezes we talked to speak fabulous English, too.

The fajitas are delicious, and run \$13–\$15, depending on the meat. For something smaller, try the *sopes* or the *chiles rellenos*. Most of it is that cover-your-plate-with-stuff style of Mexican food, so you won't go away hungry.

We also liked the *enchiladas de mar*, with shrimp. And the *ceviche* appetizer. And order a bottle of the *tamarindo* Jarritos to drink. Or experience some of the 90-plus tequilas at the bar. They serve some mescales too, but don't let your enthusiasm get away with you; trying over 100 distilled spirits is not the work of one convention.

Breakfasts are uniformly good here, but we have two specific suggestions. Try the *azteca*: shredded corn tortillas scrambled with eggs, onions, *japapinos*, and pico de gallo, and served with refried beans. It'll wake you up. Or the *camino real*: shredded beef scrambled with eggs, onions, and a mild salsa, also served with refried beans.

Service is fast, and everyone is incredibly friendly and accommodating.

And while you're there, look around really closely. Owner Maria Teresa Sanchez collects old photos of Pre-Revolutionary War Mexico, and these are displayed all over the dining room. Also, one wall is covered with the most astounding Dia de los Muertos mural ever seen. Laugh at death. Drink tequila and admire Pancho Villa. Have some *mole poblano*.

China Wok

9 N Market St, San José
408-280-6688



Chinese
L, D, TO, NA, \$

What can we say about this generic Chinese restaurant? Hmmmm.... The sizzling platters are good. The clay pot dishes are interesting. There are a lot of vegetarian items on the menu. Better options are close by.

Chinese Gourmet Express

150 S First St #111, San José
408-998-4878



Chinese
L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

You've seen this sort of Chinese food in mall food courts and airports all over North America. It's a steam table counter, where you pick two or three entrées and get a choice of steamed or fried rice. Orange chicken is the most popular dish, being a renamed and more citrusy General Tzo's chicken, because too many people who eat in mall food court Chinese restaurants can't pronounce "Tzo." A combination plate will run you five or six dollars. The food is unspectacular but inoffensive, and it's certainly cheap enough.

Citronelle

3000 M Street, NW, Washington, DC
202-625-2150



Continental
L, D, RE, FB, IWL, R, \$\$\$\$
<http://www.citronelledc.com/>

Citronelle is much more than dinner; it's dinner and a show...for a few well-placed diners.

The kitchen is next to the dining room, separated by a large glass wall. It's laid bare, for everyone to see. There are three tables directly in front of the glass wall: two four-tops, and a single table for two. Half of those ten chairs face the kitchen, the other half away. So each night five people—twice that if half eat real early and the other half eat real late—get front row seats to watch the kitchen. We love to eat here. Bruce loves to eat here when he comes to DC alone. The food is delicious, but it's almost beside the point. We love to watch a top restaurant kitchen work.

But first, we have to look at the menu. Citronelle only has set menus. Diners can either choose an appetizer, entrée, and dessert (with an optional cheese course); or one of two tasting menus: five or seven courses. One of the nicest

things about the Citronelle menus is that, unlike so many other similar restaurants, even the seven-course menu doesn't stuff you with food.

Of course, the kitchen is so clean it sparkles. The walls are white. The appliances, tables, and shelves are all stainless steel. It's well-lighted. In front, just on the other side of the wall, is a kitchen table set for ten. This table gets an even more special set menu, and is booked months in advance. Behind them is a long aluminum counter covered with rectangular serving trays. This is the pass between the chefs and the waiters: waiters in front, and chefs behind. Each tray corresponds to a table. Behind the table is the kitchen area: rows of prep areas, and various stoves and ranges in the back.

The *amuse bouche* comes soon after you order. Once it was cauliflower mousse, shallots, and osetra caviar, served in an eggshell held aloft by a silver penguin. (You have to see it.) Delicious. Another time it was a slice of tuna mousse, served with a lobster sauce, diced potato pieces, and bits of parsley.

About eight cooks, all dressed in white, prepare the food. It's hard to count, actually. They're always moving around, and some parts of the kitchen are out of view. The kitchen is just far enough removed from the dining room that it's hard to see what they're doing; the only time you get a real good look at what's going on is when they arrange food on the plates on the trays on the long table.

The food here is uniformly delicious. One of the tasting menus started with a porcini, chestnut, and *foie gras* soup, accented with roasted chestnuts and a piece of duck *confit*. The soup was rich and flavorful, and served piping hot. On another visit, we started with a layer-cake stack of crispy potato cakes separated by slices of tuna *tartare* and diced *haricots vert*, surrounded by ginger and basil sauces. Tuna *tartare* dishes are often like this, and are best mixed together immediately before eating. This one was marvelous, a mixture of tastes and textures that kept their separate identities yet melded together well.

On the right-hand kitchen wall are rows of paper slips. These come on and off throughout the night, and seem to correspond to tables. Who ordered what and when, is our guess. Copies of these tickets hang by each station, so that everyone knows who ordered what and when it needs to be ready. Other copies are on the trays on the long table.

Michel Richard rules his kitchen. On the glass wall, over to the side, you can see the words "Michel's Kitchen." He's often in the kitchen earlier in the evening, usually on the waiters' side of the long table, chatting with the chefs and staff or watching the show with the rest of us. He has confidence in his chefs, and it shows. He comes into the dining room to talk with the guests. Sometimes he's upstairs in the bar area.

The kitchen is a sea of calm. The cooks are professional with each other, sometimes even jovial. It's like watching a dance, or an operating room. Everyone knows his own job and what is expected of everyone else, and everything comes together on a plate and on a tray and is taken into the dining room.

Some of Richard's creations fall a bit short. Usually it's when they try too hard. His *foie gras brûlée* is an example. Think of a savory *brûlée*. Pureed *foie gras* on the bottom, a hard caramel top, and embedded dried fruits. Sounded interesting, but it didn't work—the fruits were too bitter, too overpowering. Likewise his fanciful *osso buco*. It isn't traditional *osso buco*; it's lamb cheek meat, with a "bone" made of potato and filled with a "marrow" of mashed potatoes. Clever, amusing even, but not nearly as good as we hoped.

Those were the only two downers we've ever had there, and we've visited several times. The roast lobster, served with a ginger emulsion, onions, and beet sprouts, was delicious. The dish had everything: taste, texture, and—via the red sprouts—color. The roast duck breast, served with *aiguillette*, Araciba coffee and a touch of maple syrup, was just as good. That dish came with something called "baked rice beans," which are small beans and matched the flavors perfectly.

Sometimes you can see stress in the kitchen—words exchanged between the cooks and the waiters, or between the different waiters. We can't figure out what they're conferring about. Maybe something's not ready on time, or maybe something isn't done right. It's best not to know, we think. The cooks are in charge of arranging things on the plates. They regularly pull things out of pots and pans and bowls with tongs and arrange them on plates. Someone is in charge of cleaning the rims of the plates before they get delivered in the dining room. Parts of the kitchen work are comfortingly familiar. Near the end of the evening, you see more varied tasks in the kitchen. One of the cooks took a loose-leaf album to a counter, where he added pages to it. Another cook sharpened his knives. Everyone's station got cleaned, of course.

Citronelle offers a cheese course, but it's not worth the bother. It's a selection of three cheeses, no choice, from the kitchen. Once it was a Camembert, a blue, and a goat cheese. They should do better than that.

Dessert *is* better than that. Everything we've had is good, but we'll mention two in particular. The *crème caramel* cheesecake, served with raspberry sauce, is delicious. (It came with a glass of Jurançon wine, late-harvest and slightly fortified, that matched perfectly.) And once they had a special dessert, a poached pear with chocolate sauce, shavings of dried raspberries, and a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Perfection.

At the end of the evening, the kitchen slows down. The cooks talk more and cook less. The dining room, too, is slowing down. And that's when you realize that the room is beautiful, the service was invisible, and that it's been three hours since you first sat down. Maybe someday we'll sit at a table in another part of the restaurant and simply have dinner. But probably not; the kitchen show is just too interesting.



City Bagels

52 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-275-0151



Lunch

L, NR, TO, NA, \$

Tell me, does this sound good to anyone: “Egg mixed with cheese, chives, and mushrooms then cooked in the microwave for two minutes with a slice of cheddar cheese”? We didn’t think so.

On the other hand, they’re a great alternative to expensive hotel breakfasts. You can get a plain bagel with cream cheese and a cup of coffee for about \$2.65. The staff is incredibly nice, too. The lunch sandwiches aren’t great, but they’ll sell you a sandwich, a bag of chips, and a can of soda pop for \$5. A good budget place.

City Bar and Grill (Hilton Hotel)

300 Almaden Blvd, San José
408-947-4444



American

B, L, D, FB, OS, \$\$

Okay, we admit that other people like this place more than we do. Other people say the dining room and bar are attractive, and that the food is good. No one says it’s a bargain, and given the expense-account nature of most hotel dining rooms (this one emphatically included), no one expects a bargain. However, this is absolutely the closest restaurant to the San José Convention Center. It’s not terribly good, and there’s nothing really interesting on the menu. The restaurant can be noisy, and service crawls to a halt when the restaurant fills up. But it is close. And for that reason alone you may find yourself eating there.

Don’t despair; it’s possible to get in and out with minimal damage. The key is to set your expectations correctly.

The City is a hotel restaurant at a convention hotel. This means that it is used to people wanting all sorts of meals at all sorts of times. Not that this is a “breakfast anytime” kind of restaurant—that would be beneath the Hilton’s station—but you can find all sorts of large and small plates on the menu: soups (\$5 a bowl), salads, pastas, sandwiches at lunch, and larger entrées.

You can get pretty much anything you would expect from a standard “American” menu, albeit at inflated hotel-restaurant prices, of course. The pastas and salads aren’t bad, and neither is the blackened chicken breast sandwich. (Don’t bother ordering the charbroiled chicken breast sandwich.) The meatloaf and the pot pies (\$15.50) are also okay.

Dinner entrées are uniformly mediocre, and we recommend you walk a couple of blocks to almost anyplace else if you can spare the time. If you’re stuck at

the City, order one of the chicken dishes or something with fish. But steer clear of the crab cakes, especially if you know what they're supposed to taste like.

The wine list screams "we don't care." Actually, this isn't at all uncommon in American restaurants. The restaurant knows that it needs to serve wine, but no one on the staff knows the first thing about wine. So they go to some wine distributor and say: "Give me a wine list of about this many choices at these sorts of prices." And the distributor puts together a list of common wines that are widely available and are sure not to offend anyone. Diners recognize some of the wines on the list, so they're happy. The restaurant can charge as much for a glass of wine as they pay for a bottle, so they're happy. People who care about wine and actually want something that goes with the food eat elsewhere, so they're not a concern.

It's easy to criticize a restaurant for doing this, especially because there are so many delicious and food-friendly wines available, but it makes sense from their perspective. A good wine list is going to have a lot of complicated listings with strange makers and foreign words. The typical American diner won't understand the list, so the waitstaff has to be trained to explain it—otherwise it won't sell. It's much easier for a restaurant to buy Wine List #1 from the distributor, which sells itself without any waitstaff training, even though the wine isn't very good.

Educating the American wine palate isn't really an option, so your only solutions are to bring a bottle of wine with you and pay corkage, or eat elsewhere. We recommend eating elsewhere; there's so much better available within walking distance.

If you're staying at the Hilton, you can get any of this food in your room at an additional charge. Good luck.

Cuccini

72 N Almaden Ave, San José
408-287-1737



Middle Eastern

L, D, FB, OS, GG, \$\$

<http://www.cuccini.com>

Cuccini's main entrance is on Almaden Avenue, but you're most likely to approach it from the back entrance on San Pedro. There's a sign on the street, pointing to an alley just left of 71 St. Peter. You'll walk down an interior passage that is entirely done in dark wood shakes, and when's the last time you walked through a wooden mall? At the end, you'll find Cuccini, a Middle Eastern place with the usual suspects on the menu, and belly dancers on some nights.

We always order samplers in places like this, because we like a bit of everything. The appetizer sampler is \$12, and comes with hummus, falafel, dolmades, tabouli, and some olives. Practically a meal in itself. Wraps are about \$8, and entrees range from \$8 to \$27. Our advice is to hit their \$.50 draft beers

at happy hour and get an early dinner. We liked their kebabs, and everything with lamb. The falafel's good, too.

Oh, and there's a patio, of course, with a hookah, so there's your chance to try that.

Dac Phuc



Vietnamese

198 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-297-5517

L, D, NR, TO, NA, CO, \$

We have a fondness for Vietnamese dives, especially ones with heavenly smells coming from the kitchen. Even more especially when there's lots of local folks having lunch there. We're suckers for good *pho tai*. *Pho* is beef noodle soup—which is a wondrous and perfect meal. Not spicy; it's rice stick noodles, slices of beef, and a slightly anise-flavored broth. On the side you'll get some sprigs of basil, a handful of mung bean sprouts, a wedge of lime, and some jalapeños. Add these to taste. *Pho* is pronounced “fah,” sort of; you have work a very slight “r” sound into it. Or just ask for #1; that works, too, and will get you a huge bowl for \$5.

They also have pork *bun* (#16 on the menu)—pronounced “boon,” but not so long on the vowel—a sort of noodle salad with crisp fresh veggies, rice stick noodles, and some meats on top. We like that they serve soursop fruit shakes, but aren't sure about the banana fritter blazed with whisky dessert.

And like all Vietnamese dives, service is lickety-split.

Dakao Restaurant



Vietnamese

98 E San Salvador St, San José
408-286-7260

B, L, D, NR, TO, BW, HWQ, \$

Interesting things are happening here. First, there's a Vietnamese restaurant that has one of the most extensive and authentic menus we've seen (if “authentic” means “serves steamed pork blood”: #26 on the menu). But they also serve common, ordinary *pho*. Or try the *bun*. We like #64, with grilled shrimp and pork. Just pour the fish sauce over the whole bowl.

And if these old standbys are no news to you, branch out on the menu and explore. Don't forget the soursop shake, #192. Soursop is a weird tropical fruit that's slightly lemony but is not citrus; it's unbelievably good. Watch out for the big black seeds.

Dakao is also a takeout place. They've got a hot table of entrées ready to go, as well as a lot of pre-made and pre-wrapped packets of stuff like spring rolls, and mysterious things we can't tell what they are.

And they have, for a mere \$2, the best and cheapest fast food around: *bahn mi* sandwiches. *Bahn mi* is just Vietnamese for French roll; you'll have a choice of fillings. Get the roast pork. Some of the other choices are more anatomy lesson than food, but the roast pork is delicious. You might as well get two; this is the best sandwich in town. Cold, with veggies, and some kind of fabulous sauce. Take the jalapeños out if you get too many. It's amazingly, astonishingly good.

Dakao is also a Vietnamese grocery, with pre-portioned containers of...stuff... that's food...we're pretty sure. And more identifiably, cans of mangosteens and chilled cans of grass jelly drink. Nobody spoke English when we dropped by, but don't let that stop you. They've been in business for 15 years or so, and they're great.

Deep Restaurant and Lounge



American

87 N San Pedro St, San José
408-287-3337

D, FB

<http://www.deepsj.com>

Closed when we came by, but it'll be open for you. Good luck.

Don Pedro's



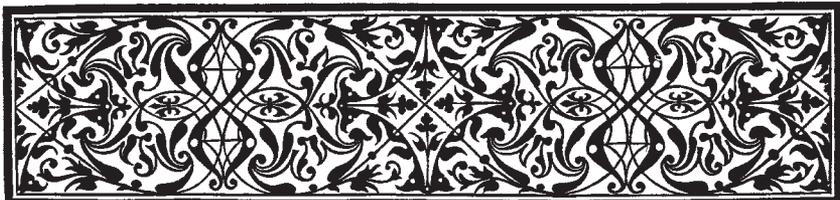
Mexican

43 Post St, San José
408-977-0303

L, D, NR, TO, BW, \$

This is your basic American-style Mexican restaurant. There is absolutely no reason for you to eat here, unless you want French fries for breakfast, and if that's the case we can't save you. There are far better examples of this restaurant close by.

If you're stuck here, order the octopus cocktail. Really.



Downtown Chinese Fast Food



130 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-297-0568

Chinese
L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

This restaurant is exactly what its name says: nothing more and nothing less. Think “Panda Express” with a much smaller decorating budget. Yes, it’s fast and cheap. But so are a lot of things.

Anyone who feels like solving an NP-complete problem can tell us how many of these sorts of restaurants there need to be in order for there always to be one within a block of you, wherever you are in downtown San José. It sure feels that way.

Eigensinn Farm



RR #2, Singhampton, Ontario, Canada
519-922-3128

Eclectic
D, RE, NA, \$\$\$\$

Eigensinn Farm is kind of hard to explain. Michael Stadtländer was a celebrated Toronto chef. Twelve years ago, he gave it all up to move two hours north to his own farm. There, he serves a set menu to eight to twelve people each night for \$250 Canadian (\$175 US). Famed in articles and reviews, Eigensinn Farm is Stadtländer’s experiment in cooking off the land; the food he serves is as organic as he can get it, and as much as possible from his farm and his neighbors’. Based on everything we’ve ever read about the place, Eigensinn Farm is a different sort of restaurant.

We knew it was different the moment we pulled into the driveway of the farm. There was no sign telling us we were at the right place, and the house didn’t look in such great shape. An abandoned bus is on the property, and the large barn is pretty dilapidated. Ducks, chickens, Guinea fowl, and a pea hen wandered around the parking area. We saw a woman in a chef’s apron hanging washing on the line, and guessed it was the correct place.

We deliberately arrived a bit early so we could walk around the farm. There were three large pigs in one pen and a pile of piglets in another. The large vegetable garden was barely started in May when we were there, though the herb garden looked well-established and well-tended.

Eventually we saw a handmade sign that said “Eigensinn Farm” over an entryway.

The only door was a back door, which opened into a darkened mud room. There was a washer and dryer, a refrigerator, a pile of boots, and a row of coats

on pegs. Karen tried the most obvious door and we ended up in the kitchen—oops. The other door led into the dining room.

Actually, it was the living room of the house; but it was set up as a dining room. There were two tables for two, one for three (that was us), and a table for four. Eleven people would be dining at Eigensinn Farm that night.

Eleven lucky people. A table at Eigensinn Farm is probably the hardest reservation to get in Canada. Let's do the math. Figure ten people each night. Figure six nights a week. Figure 40 weeks a year, with days off and vacations and winter when it's too cold and too far. That adds up to 2,400 diners per year, less than many fine restaurants serve in two weeks.

When we called for our reservation, a single group of eight had reserved the entire restaurant. But they hadn't paid yet, so we put ourselves on a waiting list. When the group canceled, we were in.

We received a tentative menu by e-mail a few days before so we could choose wines—the farm has no liquor license and is strictly BYO. Three is an awkward number, and we brought a Herbert Lamy white Burgundy, an off-year half bottle of d'Yquem for the *foie gras*, and a 1975 Rioja for the meat courses. A sweet Riesling stayed in its bottle; by the time dessert rolled around, we had had enough wine.

Michael's wife, Nobuyo, runs the front of the house. She met us in the dining room, took our wine, and showed us our table. By any measure, the room is eclectically furnished. The walls are painted by someone who paints walls about as well as we do—that is to say, with more style and good intention than actual painterly skill. There's driftwood, shells, and candles collected in arrangements and in piles. The ceiling is painted with an odd colorful amoeba-like pattern, not quite finished as we ate, but Nobuyo expected Michael would finish it over the next winter. Twigs act as a border high on the walls. Bright colors are everywhere.

The two other couples arrived, and we all introduced ourselves. (The table for four arrived later, after we had started eating, and we never met them. The three smaller tables were grouped closer together, and occasionally we talked about the food with each other.)

Nobuyo is Japanese, and she had a younger Japanese woman assisting her with the service. (We decided they were not mother and daughter.) Together, they served ten courses to the eleven of us.

Course 1: *Amuse* platter. Five different morsels were arranged on a pretty handmade horseshoe-shaped plate. First was a fresh oyster topped with spiced sake and chopped shallots. Second was a very tasty piece of sautéed whitefish, with a vinegar and parsnip glaze. Third was a delicious bit of cream of asparagus soup; there were some other flavorings that we never identified. Fourth was a piece of ham from Stadtländer's smokehouse served on toast. The ham was excellent: not too chewy and not too salty. And fifth was a piece of jackfish sashimi, served with garlic, chives, ginger, and soy—also delicious. Everything

was tasty, and the entire tray felt harmonious—strongly flavored and perfectly balanced.

Course 2: Soup of upland cress—which we assume is similar to watercress—with a piece of lake trout and sprigs of fresh parsley and sorrel, served in a beautiful handmade soup bowl.

Course 3: Sautéed *foie gras*, served on a single ravioli of peach puree and ginger, with flaxseed oil, blackberry vinegar, and maple syrup and some oxeye daisy leaves. The *foie gras* was perfectly cooked, and went deliciously with the other flavors. We liked the tastes of peach and maple, and the texture of the ravioli against the *foie gras*.

Course 4: Braised canner lobster, served with lobster bisque, wild rice, and *mizuna*. Another perfect dish: a very flavorful lobster set against the nuttiness of the wild rice and the bitterness of the *mizuna*.

Course 5: A tower of white spring salmon and black bass, served in a cream chive sauce with sea asparagus and a piece of sea urchin on top. Our one wish was for this dish to be hotter. Actually, nothing came out of the kitchen really hot, but we think this dish suffered the most because of it. Otherwise, it was perfectly fine. The fish was good. The sauce was good. The sea asparagus—tiny green “asparagus” that grows in estuaries—was very tasty.

Course 6: Black currant sorbet. The sorbet was delicious—rich and flavorful and not grainy—and the presentation was beautiful and very much in the style of the place. The sorbet was in the punt of an upside-down broken wine bottle. That bottle was set in a broken handmade bowl. Between the bottle and the bowl were sprigs of apple blossoms and mint leaves.

Course 7: Barbecued squab, served with celery root puree, lovage, morels, celery root chips, and something that we wrote down as “squab innards sauce.” Game and wild mushrooms—nothing wrong there. The celery flavor worked well, too.

Course 8: Lamb chops with grilled wild leek bulbs, potato gnocchi with wild leek pesto, asparagus, and lamb *jus*. Both the lamb and the wild leeks were from the farm, which we found kind of magical. We’d seen them potted up outside the door as we came in, and later asked. Stadtländer had found the wild leeks while foraging on his property, and was transplanting them to his garden. It was magical dish: melt-in-your mouth lamb. The gnocchi was exceptional and so was the asparagus. But the wild leek bulbs were even better: crunchy and flavorful. We could have eaten an entire bowlful.

Course 9: Four cheeses: Pont Couvert, an unnamed mild blue cheese, a fresh goat cheese, and a cow-and-goat cheese called Matis...all from Quebec.

Course 10: The dessert course consisted of three desserts. We had a Bavarian cream pie, with strawberry, yogurt, and apple; a rhubarb hazelnut meringue cake; and wild ginger ice cream. Everything was delicious.

It's hard to explain why this meal felt so different from any of the other fine restaurant meals we've had. Part of it was the atmosphere. Nobuyo was a wonderful hostess, and the whole dinner felt more like being served in her home than at a restaurant. Early on in the dinner, for example, Michael and Nobuyo's son came out of a side room (his bedroom?) and walked into the kitchen. Again and again we chatted with the couples at the nearby two tables, sharing wine and commenting about the food.

Part of it was the style. Eigensinn Farm is a different kind of restaurant. Michael Stadtländer is not running a restaurant kitchen; he's cooking a single meal for eleven dinner guests. We've cooked a ten-course meal for eleven dinner guests. Of course, Michael is a far better cook than we are, but the point is that what he's doing is more like what foodies do in their own kitchens than what chefs do in a restaurant kitchen. (After dinner we were talking with Michael. He said that he had four assistants in the kitchen, but only really needed one.)

Part of it was the menu. Stadtländer really tries to put together a menu that reflects the farm and the season. He tries to use local ingredients: wild leeks he gathered himself, lamb he raised himself, herbs he grew himself. His menu is harmonious: interesting but not flashy. He's a great chef who tries to put the food first.

And part of it was the food. Karen commented how impressed she was that Stadtländer was willing to serve food that didn't look model-perfect but still tasted delicious. The presentations were beautiful, as were the dishes, but taste was the most important. In a world of high-end chefs trying more and more bizarre presentations, Eigensinn Farm just felt more "real."

And that's the word that best describes a meal at Eigensinn Farm: real. Sure, there are better meals out there, and more expensive ones. But there isn't another restaurant where you feel like you've been invited to dinner, where you're pleased that the family cat has decided to walk through the dining room and that the large dog has filled up the doorway. There isn't another restaurant where you feel, really feel, that the chef is cooking just for you. And there isn't another restaurant where you can, at the end of the meal, wander through the kitchen and realize that it is more a home kitchen than a restaurant kitchen—with odd art on the walls and a newspaper-strewn breakfast table in the back—albeit with a 12-burner Garland.



El Sabroso Mexican Grill



17 S Fourth St, San José
408-289-9925

Mexican
B, L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

There are so many fake Mexican restaurants in San José; we're always happy when we find a real one. El Sabroso is authentic Mexican food for authentic Mexicans, but they'll let you order some, too.

Try the burritos and tacos. You have your choice of meats, but we recommend *pastor* (barbecued grilled pork) or *carnitas* (roasted pork). They also have fish tacos, not authentic but delicious nonetheless. If those don't interest you, have the enchiladas or tamales...or anything else, for that matter. There's a lot of good here.

And if you've never had it before, order the *jamaica agua fresca* to drink. (It's made with hibiscus blossoms.)

This is also a great place for breakfast. We like the *chorizo con huevos*, but the rest of the choices are good, too.

Emile's



545 S Second St, San José
408-289-1960

Continental
D, RR, FB, R, IWL, \$\$\$\$
<http://www.emiles.com>

Emile's is one of San José's "good" restaurants, a local classic. Even after the computer revolution dies, and San José once again becomes a fruit-tree-laden backwater farming and tourist town, Emile's will remain a gourmand's oasis. Sure, the menu might change a little, but its essence will remain.

Emile Moser has been running this kitchen, and the rest of the restaurant, since 1972. And he has been receiving awards for almost that long. Emile's has been a DiRoNA (Distinguished Restaurants of North America) award winner every year since 1976. *Wine Spectator* has given it an award of excellence since 1985. Probably every food and restaurant magazine has given this restaurant some award or another. It deserves them all.

Emile's is a classic Old World restaurant that has been slowly moving into the modern era. The room is pretty and romantic. Imagine white linen tablecloths, flowers everywhere, beige walls, and muted lighting coming from hand-blown lamps. Maybe the room is a bit too boxy, a bit too muted. But no one in the restaurant ever seems to mind. They like it just the way it is. And they're too busy enjoying the food, which is uniformly very good.

Think of Emile's as a fine French-Swiss restaurant with California and Mediterranean influences. They serve fresh fish, and game in season. If you've been going there for the past two and a half decades, your old favorites will still be available. If you're a 21st century diner, you won't be disappointed, either. The lobster Thermidor and rack of lamb are presented happily alongside the beef with garlic risotto and grilled swordfish with pineapple cilantro salsa.

You'll find an evening at Emile's to be pretty expensive. Entrees range from \$25 to \$35, and a bowl of soup costs a chart-topping \$9.

If you're on an expense account, or are feeling like splurging, Emile's is a fun restaurant to eat at. The waitstaff is surprisingly approachable. They're happy to explain dishes; they're happy to discuss the menu. They are currently offering a "build your own tasting menu" option with smaller portions of the entrees. This sounds like fun to us. Emile himself is likely to come out from the kitchen and chat about the menu. Sometimes it seems like he knows half the people in the dining room. Maybe we were just there on atypical nights, or maybe every San José native has been coming here to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and everything else for decades. Whatever the reason, the dining room can feel a little bit like a party. For a restaurant as fine as this one, the informality is incongruous but welcoming.

The full name of this place is Emile's Restaurant and Cooking School. And yes, there is a school attached to this restaurant. Emile and others give classes in various cooking techniques. We don't know the schedule or the admission requirements. We do know that a few years ago, in the middle of the dot-com boom, someone with the bright idea for a company name of eMiles.com wanted to buy Emile's domain name and turn it into a website that made money from frequent-flyer miles. It's a great example of the dot-com nonsense that went on in San José, and Emile never sold. Pity, really. He probably could have cashed out before the bust if he did.

E&O Trading Company Restaurant



Pan-Asian

96 S First St, San José
408-938-4100

L, D, LL, FB, GG, \$\$\$

When the E&O Trading Company—E is for elephant and O is for ocean, by the way—opened in San José in 1999, pretty much everybody raved about it. Every last detail, from the house-made beer to the décor to the small plates made for sharing, was a hit here in the Santa Clara Valley. It still is.

It's certainly a pretty restaurant. The interior retains some of the character of the 1895 building it occupies. The 17-foot ceilings are festooned with Burmese fabric hangings and the corners are filled with Asian gewgaws: wind chimes, a gilded bookcase, animal heads representing the Chinese zodiac, open bird cages. The wooden furniture completes the look, spilling out onto the sidewalk

when it is warm enough. Someone invoked some serious feng shui here. Or maybe the ghost of Marco Polo.

E&O serves food from all over Southeast Asia: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Many of the best dishes are served as small plates, which was the hot trend in 1999, and which shows no sign of fading.

E&O didn't invent this kind of cuisine, but they do a decent job with it. The dishes can be uneven, but you can have a good meal here. The menu is interesting, and when the dishes work they're very good. Our favorites are the Thai crab cakes (served with lemon grass and chilis), the Imperial duck rolls, the crispy squid, and, like absolutely everyone else, we loved the Indonesian corn fritters. Most things come with their own dipping sauce; try to keep the pairings straight. We also like the pork chops with Filipino *adobo* sauce. And the ginger mushroom tower is always a hit: six mushroom skewers leaning up against a pile of fried rice noodles with a sweet soy dipping sauce.

On the flip side, pass on the Thai crepe. Ignore the beef *satay* on sugar cane: it's too sweet and the peanut sauce doesn't rescue it.

The trick here is to order dishes for the table, and share everything. Four people is ideal for dinner: fewer and you can't try as many dishes, more and dividing the results starts getting complicated. The waitstaff suggests this protocol when you first sit down.

The restaurant has a brewery in the basement (you can visit it if you like), and its own line of beers. We're not qualified to judge, but friends who are recommend the India Pale Ale (a hoppy full-bodied ale), the Eastern Golden Ale (not hoppy or bitter at all), and the Gecko Bay Wheat (an unfiltered, yeasty beer). We are amused by the large cube with a different beer on each face sitting on every table; you can roll this "beer die" if you can't decide. Luckily for us, the wine list is pretty good and fairly inexpensive, and they serve a nice selection of wines by the glass.

Two other minuses. One, the restaurant can be very noisy. That's the ambiance they're looking for, so you just have to go with it. And two, the desserts can be disappointing. Don't order the *crème brûlée*. Actually, just go somewhere else for dessert.

Eulipia

374 S First St, San José
408-280-6161



Californian

D, RR, FB, R, \$\$\$

<http://www.eulipia.com/>

Some call this New American food, and some call it California cuisine, or contemporary cuisine. It's the staple offering of perfectly pleasant restaurants with competent and talented, but not brilliantly gifted, chefs.

Red and gold beets? Check. And look: it's Caesar salad. Yep. It's the same sort of salads you get at nice restaurants all across the country. Dependable and delicious, very much the expected menu items.

Eulipia offers these, and moves into the entrée course with grilled hanger steak with sautéed mushrooms and caramelized onions...and rack of lamb....

There's more, but it all starts to sound so...familiar. If you eat a lot of this sort of food, Eulipia has nothing new to offer you. But if this cuisine is a novelty or an occasional treat for you, Eulipia's friendly staff and nicely appointed dining room will delight you. It's a dressy, expensive place, where dinner can easily top \$75 for the two of you, especially if you investigate their wonderful selection of what we call "foofy cocktails." (You know, umbrella drinks—Bruce sometimes orders them by color.)

Evvia Estiatorio



420 Emerson St, Palo Alto
650-326-0983

Greek
L, D, RR, FB, GG, \$\$
<http://www.evvia.net/>

There's no Greek restaurant in downtown San José, but this one over in Palo Alto is definitely worth driving to. Everything here is delicious.

We recommend starting out with the *Pikilia* appetizer sampler: *dolmades*, *taramasalata*, *melitzanosalata*, and *tzatziki*, served with pita bread. If you're adventurous, also order the grilled octopus appetizer: *octapodi salata*. Then order a Greek salad or a cup of soup, and an entrée. The vegetarian *moussaka* is delicious. So is the *psari sta karvouna*: grilled seabass.

The dining room is large and pretty, with a huge fireplace along one wall and an open brick grill on the other.

We think this is the perfect impress-your-clients restaurant, if you're looking for that sort of thing. Or assemble a group and have the family-style dinner, with five appetizers and a salad before your main course.

Express Deli Cafe



325 S First St, San José
408-279-0970

Sandwiches
L, D, NR, TO, NA, OS, \$

A storefront cubby of a place, good for a quick tuna fish sandwich, Caesar salad, or breakfast burrito. There are lots of choices: hot and cold sandwiches, bowls of chili or soup, or a Reuben. We like the falafel burger; avoid the meat-

ball sandwich. They make a decent chicken *parmigiana*, and the turkey ranch special is also very good.

The coffee's not bad, and there are plenty of cold drinks on offer. It's mostly take-away, with only six counter seats inside and three small tables outside.

Fahrenheit Ultra Lounge



Trendy

99 E San Fernando St, San José
408-998-9998

L, D, LL, RR, FB, DA, \$\$

<http://www.fahrenheitultralounge.com/>

Let's be honest: a lounge, restaurant, dance hall, whatever complex for beautiful people isn't really for us. They might as well have a large "No Cryptographers Allowed" sign on the door. But if you're looking to meet a special someone, you might have better luck going here than working on your latest identity-based cryptosystem.

Reviews on the Internet are mixed, but one thing seems clear: this place isn't about the food.

Fat Duck



Food Science

1 High St, Bray, England
+44 1628 580333

L, D, RE, FB, R, \$\$\$\$

<http://www.fatduck.co.uk/>

(This is Bruce's review; Karen hasn't been here yet.)

You know it's going to be an interesting meal when someone wheels a Dewar flask filled with liquid nitrogen to your table.

The Fat Duck is a UK restaurant in the small town of Bray, near Windsor. Chef Heston Blumenthal is known for serving some of the most interesting food in Britain.

The restaurant is simple and unassuming. From the outside it looks like just another squat row house. Inside, the furnishing is spare, with a lot of low beams that the waitstaff has to keep warning tall customers about.

I came for lunch on a Saturday, during a seven-hour layover at Heathrow. I landed from Chicago at 10 AM, hung around the airport lounge for an hour and a half, and then took a taxi to the restaurant. I figured on a two-and-a-half-hour meal, and I would be back at Heathrow by 3 PM. Plenty of time to catch my 5 PM flight to Islamabad.

So I made a reservation.

My choices were a three-course lunch menu, an interesting selection of *à la carte* dishes, or the tasting menu—which I ordered. And which began with a Dewar flask of liquid nitrogen cascading vapors all over the place.

A waiter appeared with a pressurized canister, which he said was filled with green tea, lime, and egg white. He was going to make a ball of the stuff and then “cook” it tableside in the liquid nitrogen. I was to eat it in one bite, immediately after he took it out of the Dewar flask.

Okay. The stuff that came out of the canister looked like shaving cream, and it sputtered a bit as he dropped in the nitrogen. When it was done, he put it on a plate and handed it to me. I did as I was told. It was a ball of mostly air, crunchy on the outside and a creamy vapor on the inside, with hints of the tastes he described. Kind of like a savory sorbet, kind of not—really like nothing I had ever eaten before. A fascinating palate cleanser.

This is going to be interesting, I thought.

Next came two small squares of gelée: an orange one and a beetroot one. Again, instructions: “Eat the orange first.” It was okay, but the beet gelée was delicious. Another savory dessert-like item.

Then I was served an oyster covered in passion fruit jelly—another absolutely delicious morsel. The menu claimed that there was lavender, but I couldn’t taste it among the passion fruit and oyster flavors. It was, again, kind of dessert-like but not. The pairing of oyster and passion fruit was delicious. I wanted another.

Instead, I got another dessert: mustard ice cream served with red cabbage gazpacho. A stunningly beautiful dish: a small ice cream quenelle in the middle of this vivid purple soup. Again, amazingly delicious. Again, strong and interesting flavors that combined together well. Again, I wanted more.

Next up: a parfait. It had three layers: langoustine cream on top, quail jelly in the middle, and pea puree on the bottom—topped with a small piece of roasted *foie gras*. This was the most decadent dish so far. I loved the way the flavors and textures blended. I loved everything about this dish.

And I still hadn’t gotten my first course on the menu.

Time to catch my breath. I had just eaten five absolutely delicious tiny dishes, each interesting both in itself and together as a progression. The flavors moved from simple to complex, from spare to decadent. They were all clearly designed to startle and delight. And clearly, blending flavors in an interesting way is Blumenthal’s strong point.

The first course was snail porridge, topped with small slices of ham, fried fennel, and some walnut oil. It looked a lot like green risotto. This was clearly not dessert, but it was again a clever blend of interesting flavors. Snails are strong

and earthy, and the ham and fennel accented that perfectly. There was garlic too, of course. A delicious dish.

The second course was roast *foie gras*. The *foie gras* was topped with little bits of chive—I think—and chamomile. The plate had cherry puree, amaretto jelly, some sort of cream, and a couple of almonds. Again, a fascinating and delicious blending of ingredients I wouldn't have put together.

And every dish so far was presented beautifully: everything artistically arranged just so. That kind of thing is commonplace at these sorts of restaurants, but I thought it was done especially well here.

The third course was the same story. Blumenthal has written about trying to capture comforting tastes from youth. This dish was called “Sardine on Toast Sorbet.” There was no toast, but there was a sardine sorbet that tasted like tinned fish. He topped it with a few salmon eggs, and served it with a mackerel *ballotine*. This was a very strongly flavored dish: all three flavors were loud on the palate. The genius was in how they blended.

Next came a piece of poached salmon crusted with licorice. It was served with baby asparagus, some of the strongest mayonnaise I have ever tasted, tiny shreds of grapefruit, very strong olive oil, and shavings of a strong licorice. Again, this wildly unlikely combination of ingredients was wonderful. Mayonnaise and grapefruit—definitely. Who knew?

Course five was sweetbreads cooked in a crust of pollen and salt in a fire made from hay. I have had dishes cooked with hay before, and when it works right the result has a hint of hay-like smoke. This technique calls for a mild meat, and sweetbreads were a good choice. It was served with very pretty light-green cabbage, parsnip puree, and a couple of cockles. This was the weakest dish of the night. It was all good, but it didn't come together like the other dishes did.

Then, a break before my desserts: a small disk of white chocolate topped with caviar. Better than I expected, by a lot.

The first dessert was called “Mrs. Marshall's Margaret Cornet.” I got a little card explaining who Mrs. Agnes B. Marshall was and how she invented an ice cream maker and was the first to make an ice cream cone, back in the late 1800s (seventeen years before it was “invented” at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair). This cone had apple sorbet on top, and orange/ginger mixture below. Very good.

Another break: pine essence and sugar, eaten with a small piece of vanilla bean. This was supposed to evoke some comforting taste from British youth, but of course that was lost on me. But it was important that I eat it, I was told, to prepare me for the pine dessert to follow.

That dessert was three things on a plate: some mango and Douglas fir puree, a *bavarois* of lychee and mango, and some black currant sorbet. This was served with black currant and green peppercorn jelly. Fir is not a common flavor and while this was interesting, and tasty, it was not awe-inspiring.

Next, some more things not on the menu. A carrot and orange lollipop, really just a sliver to crunch and eat. Then some orange and beetroot gelée, this time mixed together and sweet. And a basil *bavarois*.

And then it got really weird. I was served a gold paper box in a bowl, and some parsnip-infused milk in a small pitcher. Inside was “parsnip cereal,” I was told. I hope this wasn’t another one of those comforting tastes from British youth. While it was interesting, and good, I was glad that there weren’t more than a few spoonfuls. It was very strong.

Finally, the eighth (and last) course on the menu. On the plate was a small scoop of “smoked bacon and egg ice cream” over tomato jam, a small piece of French toast, and a small scoop of caramel covered with morels. This was accompanied by a small dish of tea jelly. The right way to eat this, I was told, was to eat everything on the plate together and to use the jelly as a palate cleanser. I did, and while it was all interesting, I didn’t think it worked all that well. The ice cream was just weird, the tomato was...well tomato. (Cooked tomatoes are a standard British breakfast thing, so that’s probably where it comes from.) Caramel and morels is definitely a good idea, though.

I wasn’t done yet: next came chocolates. I got four: pine, oak, tobacco, and mint. There was some confusion in the beginning, as the waiter wasn’t sure if the second one was oak or leather. But it was definitely oak. I didn’t care for the tobacco, and I’ve never liked mint with chocolate. The pine and oak chocolates were okay.

I declined coffee, so I was done: two and a half hours total for lunch. My taxi was waiting for me, and I spent the entire drive back to Heathrow wondering what leather-flavored chocolate tasted like. And I made my plane with lots of time to spare.

Flames

4th Street Garage, San José
none yet



American
B, L, D, NA, \$\$

Flame’s wasn’t open in time for us to review it.

It’s supposed to be the same coffee shop as the Flames at several local addresses, including 449 South Winchester Blvd. Bruce had way too many utterly uninteresting meals there, as it was very close to Counterpane’s first company headquarters. If that’s the case, he’ll tell you to eat elsewhere.

On the other hand, Karen likes greasy spoons, and bottomless cups of coffee. What’s more, she met Tony Bove, the harmonica player for the Flying Other Brothers, at Flames and had breakfast with him, the night after attending a

show the band played with Mickey Hart and Bob Weir, so she thinks it's a cool hangout.

Fleur de Cocoa

39 N Santa Cruz Ave, Los Gatos
408-354-3574



French Pastries

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

<http://www.fleurdecocoa.com>

Fleur de Cocoa in Los Gatos is the closest thing you'll find to a French bakery in Silicon Valley. They bake a delicious *pain au chocolat* and make an even better cup of hot chocolate. Their pastries are wonderful, as are their chocolates. And don't get us started on their cakes and tarts.

If you want real food, Fleur de Cocoa offers a small bistro menu for lunch: French onion soup, a variety of quiches, *croque monsieur* and *croque madame* sandwiches, and a mixed green salad. If they have an onion tart on special, get that. If they have a *saucisson en brioche* on special, get that.

Flying Martini Brothers

69 N San Pedro St, San José
408-287-6969



American

L, D, LL, LLL, NR, FB, OS, \$

<http://www.flyingmartinis.com/>

This is a bar that serves food. It wasn't open yet when we walked by, but the menu was in the window. Nothing special. Appetizers were \$7-\$8, salads at \$6-\$8, sandwiches at \$7-\$9. The entrees ranged from spaghetti and meatballs at \$9 to a charbroiled rib-eye steak at \$16.

You can also expect flavored cocktails that have the inaccurate name "martini." Look for Nutter Butter and Peppermint Cream; and someone should order the Starry Night and tell us about it later.

They'll have both indoor and outdoor seating, and it looked like a nice place.

No other information, sorry. As we go to press, even their website is nothing but a splash page.

It's where Goodfella's Bar and Grill used to be, if that's any help to anyone.

Fountain (Fairmont Hotel)

170 S Market St, San José
408-998-1900



American

B, L, FB, KF, AT, RR, \$\$

This is your basic hotel restaurant: breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tea. Yes, it's a pretty room. No, none of the food is memorable. They do a weekend brunch here—10 AM until 3 PM—if you like that sort of thing. We think it's silly that they have a dress code, especially since it is Smart Casual. Makes us want to get up our best Stupid Formal outfits and see what happens when we ask for a table. Oh, and they request that you make a reservation.

Fresh and Natural Café

280 S 1st St, San José
408-283-0320



American/Vietnamese

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

We really wish we could recommend this place, because it would be such a good story. Fresh and Natural is a standard sandwich place on the first floor of an office building. No big deal, but the owner is Vietnamese and he offers *pho*.

Pho is delicious, and it would have been great to tell you all to visit this sorry-looking lunch counter, ignore everything on the menu, and order the *pho*. But unfortunately, the *pho* here is terrible. The stock is all wrong, they use mystery meatballs instead of sliced meat, and they don't give you enough condiments. So don't bother with this place, for *pho* or anything else.

Fuji Sushi

56 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-298-2854



Japanese

L, D, TO, BW, \$

Fuji Sushi looks like a perfectly generic Japanese restaurant, but they must be doing something right, since they are packed for lunch a lot of the time.

You can get all manner of designer rolls for prices ranging from \$6 to \$13. The Rock's roll, with *hamachi* and eel, is \$6.95, and the King of Fish roll is tuna, avocado, and *tobiko*, for \$5.95. They might be a good choice if half of your party doesn't want raw fish.

The rest of their menu is filled with Japanese entrées: udon, soba, beef and chicken teriyaki, *katsu don* (breaded pork cutlet), tempura, etc. Entrées hover around \$10; sushi is more, of course.

Gordon Biersch



American

33 E San Fernando St, San José L, D, LL, LLL, RR, FB, GG, KF, LM, OS, \$\$
408-294-6785 http://www.gordonbiersch.com/restaurants/san_jose.html

It started in Palo Alto, which makes us want to love it, but alas, we do not. Chain restaurants that can't produce reliably good food and reliably acceptable service just don't make us willing to go back.

But if you're the sort of person who finds comfort rather than banality in corporate chain restaurants, you might enjoy Gordon Biersch Brewery. You'll enjoy it even more if you don't mind a loud, rowdy crowd who are there for the beer and music (both of which are pretty good).

The sound level is, in fact, astounding.

On the other hand, one online reviewer had this to say, "Did I mention the awesome outdoor patio that you can SMOKE in?"

Grande Pizzeria



Pizza

150 E San Carlos St, San José
408-292-2840

L, D, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$

A recommended hangout if you simply must have a whisky sour with your two-topping large pizza. They've been around forever and ever and have recently refurbished the place. The owners are Italian, pizza by the slice is less than three bucks at lunch, and the portions are huge on everything.

Grill on the Alley (Fairmont Hotel)



American

172 S Market St, San José
408-294-2244

L, D, LL, FB, \$\$
<http://www.thegrill.com/SanJose>

Like the Fountain, this is your basic hotel bar and restaurant. It's a better bar than restaurant, but honestly, it's not that good at either one. One thing to

watch for: the entire menu is *à la carte*. That means you pay extra for potatoes, vegetables, and everything else—so the cost adds up quickly. A bowl of soup runs \$5.50, and coffee is \$2.50.

Harry K Ono Café

312 South 3rd St, San José
408-295-4010



International

B, L, D, NR, TO, BW, \$\$

This is one sweet little restaurant. The menu says “fresh down home cooking,” and that’s basically what you get. They serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner here, and honestly, we could eat all three.

For breakfast, order the *cilaquilles*: fried tortilla strips, eggs, cheese, and home-made salsa, all simmered together. Delicious.

For lunch, grab a sandwich. We’ve never had a bad one here, but we particularly like the Caribbean chicken, the cran turkey, and the jamba wrap.

For dinner there are small plates like duck breast with pomegranate sauce, prawns in Creole sauce, and chipotle wings; and large entrees. The barbecued ribs are delicious, as is the roasted game hen with Marsala wine.

All of this in what feels like someone’s living room.

Hawgs Seafood Bar

105 S Second St, San José
408-287-9955



Seafood

L, D, BW, \$\$

We like Hawg’s better than Red Lobster, even though Hawg’s definition of “seafood” barely acknowledges the whole concept of “fish.” And we simply don’t know what to make of a seafood restaurant that doesn’t mention what sort of oysters they are serving.

Many of Hawg’s seafood dishes are sort-of Italian: seafood sauté with pasta, grilled shrimp with risotto, fettuccine and rock shrimp...that kind of thing. Alfredo this, marinara that. It’s not terrible, but it’s entirely uninteresting. Admittedly, we’ve only been here once. The lack of inspiration in any of the dishes we tried, and our complete lack of enthusiasm for any of the dishes we didn’t try, make it hard for us to go back. We can tell you not to order the seafood *quesadilla* under any circumstances.

If popcorn shrimp sounds good to you, this is where to get it.

Henry's World Famous Hi-life



301 W Saint John St, San José
408-295-5414

Barbecue
L, D, NR, TO, FB, GG, KF, \$\$

Henry's operates by one basic rule, and understanding that rule is key to understanding Henry's. The rule is perplexing. It is simple. It is ridiculous. The rule is this: customers may not see their salads placed on the table. Once you've internalized Henry's guiding principle, everything else makes sense.

Henry's is both a bar and a barbecue restaurant. It's in what looks like a low-rent sixties roadhouse of a motel, on the corner of St. John and North Almaden Boulevard. The San José Sharks play in a stadium a couple of blocks away, but Henry's has been in San José far longer than professional hockey. It's one of those places that's called an "institution" by the locals, which in this case means they've forgiven the bit about the salad. And that the food is really good.

Your first impression of Henry's is that of a neighborhood bar. It was decorated when it first opened in 1960—much expense was spared—and not touched since. There's a long bar and some tables. We counted fifteen beers on tap. (The wine list is useless.) Through a small archway ahead of you is the restaurant—there's nowhere else it could be—but don't go there yet. If you do, you'll be immediately spotted as a first-timer and ushered out. Worse, you might see a salad placement.

You have to order in the bar. There's a large menu on one wall, listing different steaks and chops. There's chicken. There's pork chops. There are a couple of optional sides. But honestly, if you're not here for the ribs you should be elsewhere. You don't want the teriyaki chicken. You don't want the New York strip steak. You want the ribs. To be precise, you want the baby back ribs. (The menu claims that they're only available on weekends, but they've always had them whenever we've walked in.)

Once you order, you'll be told that you'll be called when your table is ready. When you're called—often it only takes a minute or two—you'll be ushered into the dining room, where your table is ready with your salads already in place. Like magic, it is! Who would have imagined? The waiter will helpfully point out the different dressings, so you know where to sit. That's right, you're supposed to seat in salad-dressing order. (It's not that bad; we blue-cheese people need to stick together.)

The ribs arrive. They're all served with a baked potato and Henry's homemade garlic-and-chive butter. Tasty stuff, but they put way too much of it on. You'll also get a side of warm barbecue sauce. Also homemade, it has a strong taste of hickory and is not sweet at all. It's good for dipping the toasted garlic bread into. The ribs are the fall-off-the-bone variety, and they're delicious. Don't forget the sauce.

If you can tear yourself away from your food, look around. You'll see tables of happy diners—some not ordering the ribs—and occasionally an empty table with waiting salads. It's actually hard to catch someone setting the salads up. Again and again we've watched an empty table, only to turn our heads for a second and miss the salad placement. It's the immaculate conception salad. (On one visit Bruce did actually see some salads being set down on a table. He won't spoil the magic, though.)

Another of the place's quirks is that they do not serve dessert. You'd better order the full slab.

Hip Pop



Popcorn

37 S First St, San José
408-287-8767

L, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$

Popcorn's what they got here: plain, cheese, caramel, with and without nuts. They also sell flavored popcorn: caramel, cheddar, parmesan and garlic, pizza (yikes!), "extreme cheese" (whatever that means), "movie style." (We supposed that last option must be with salt and dreadful artificial butter, but truth to tell, the hip hop music on the stereo system disinvited us at the door.)

Also, smoothies.

But maybe some of you want popcorn and smoothies for lunch.

House of Siam



Thai

55 S Market St, San José
408-279-5668

L, D, TO, BW, GG, R, \$\$

150 S 2nd St, San José
408-295-3397

L, D, TO, BW, GG, R, \$\$

House of Siam is easily the best Thai restaurant in downtown San José. It's a traditional Thai restaurant, and the food is both authentic and yummy.

Everything is good here. We can recommend the "waterfall beef salad," which is more of an entrée than a salad. It's chunks of charbroiled meat, iceberg lettuce, cucumbers, mint, roasted rice powder, lime juice, garlic, and chilis. Like all good Thai food, it's a fusion of flavors and textures. Their *tom ka gai* soup is also delicious: chunks of white-meat chicken in a coconut broth with lemon grass, cilantro, chili, Thai bay leaves, lime juice, and the gingery flavor of galangal root.

Curries are hot, medium, and mild. Remember, in this place “hot” means hot. Don’t order it hot unless you are fearless. One of the best mild curries is their yellow curry vegetables: tofu, pea pods, bamboo shoots, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, all in coconut milk and yellow curry.

The restaurant has been lively every time we’ve been there. Actually, there are two locations. The one on South Market is older, a homey sort of restaurant with traditional Thai weavings on the wall. The South Second location is newer: more plush and modern, with some traditional Thai seating where you’ll sit on the floor and loll on cushions.

Two sisters control the kitchen at these restaurants. We have no idea if one works at one, and the other at the other, but it seems like a logical supposition.

Hukilau



230 Jackson St, San José
408-279-4888

Hawaiian
L, D, LL, FB, LM, \$\$
<http://www.hukilau.tv>

It can be hard to get in Hawaii—you have to get away from the tourist areas—but we like Hawaiian local food. It’s simple, flavorful, and filling. Oddly enough, what’s considered substandard in Hawaii is weird and exotic in San José...so you have Hawaiian restaurants like Hukilau popping up.

If you’re actually Hawaiian, they do serve grilled spam. And *loco moco*. If you’re wondering, *loco moco* is one of those workingman’s peg-the-cholesterol-meter dishes: a scoop of white rice topped with a hamburger patty and a sunny-side-up egg, and then smothered in gravy. Really; we’re not making this up. Hawaiians eat it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner—although hopefully not all on the same day. You can find them at every mom-and-pop restaurant on the islands (away from the tourist areas, that is).

We prefer the regular-but-Hawaiian-themed options like the roast pork. The *ahi poki* is delicious. The burgers are fine, too. And yes, it actually is authentic that dishes come with a scoop of macaroni salad and steamed rice.

Ignore the quesadillas and nachos.

You can also order a fruity island drink. And if you come on a weekend night, there’s live music.



Hydration Co.

310 S Third St, San José
408-298-9968



Japanese
L, D, LL, NR, TO, NA, \$

This is another one of your basic coffee-and-some-food restaurants that cater mainly to San José State University students, but with a twist. The twist is that the food is Japanese. It's not very Japanese, but it's Japanese style.

Hydration Co. serves bento boxes. They have an assortment—chicken, fish, squid, tofu, etc.—each with rice, salad, and *oshinko*. Cheap, too; you can get a \$5 lunch here easily. The drinks are mostly what you'd expect. We recommend you order one of the iced teas and add tapioca pearls for an additional \$.50.

If you're feeling daring, have the avocado milk tea. You'll be amazed at how good it is, and how entirely unlike guacamole it is. The restaurant is clean, bright, and friendly, and a nice place to linger for a few hours. They offer free wireless, but charge you \$1 per hour if you want to plug into a power outlet.

Il Fornaio (Hyatt St. Claire)

302 S Market St, San José
408-271-3366



Italian
B, L, D, GG, RR, FB, \$\$\$
<http://www.ilfornaio.com/>

Il Fornaio is a victim of the dot-com bubble. Once, it was an excellent Italian restaurant. Bruce remembers regularly eating at the one in Palo Alto, ten or twelve years ago. It was one of *the* places to meet for dinner. It was one of the places to plan a company, cut a deal, take over the world. At the height of the frenzy, Il Fornaio itself was planning an IPO.

And now there are a couple of dozen Il Fornaio's. They run all up and down the Pacific Coast, as far north as Seattle. The menu is cookie-cutter. Il Fornaio's own corporate website says that "the menus are developed collectively by the company's two-dozen Italian chef-partners and are based on authentic Italian recipes." That sums the place up. If you want a centrally developed, marketing-tested, Italian-based food, this is the place to go. If you want authentic, walk a few more blocks to Paolo's.

This is not to say that Il Fornaio is bad. It's a good restaurant, and the bakery stuff is all marvelous. If you have a large group, the menu is going to have something for everyone. And the kitchen can handle groups with ease.

While writing this review, we printed the menus—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—from the restaurant's website. We looked the menu over, trying to remember a meal or a dish that stood out. Nothing came to mind. We've both eaten

there several times, and while we both remember the meals as good, we can't point to any one dish as being exceptional.

But we found lots of things on the menu that we'd be happy to order.

The San José Il Fornaio has a particular place in Bruce's professional history. It was there, on 28 April 1999, that Bruce and Tom Rowley (over dinner with Karen and Tom's wife, Cathy) officially agreed to form Counterpane Internet Security, Inc. The rest may not be history, but it certainly is biography.

There's a café in the front, if you're looking for a coffee-and-Danish breakfast.

Jack in the Box



Burgers

148 E San Carlos St, San José
408-287-7520

B, L, D, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$

Karen collects PEZ. A couple of years ago, Jack in the Box had a PEZ promotion. She managed to snag a couple dozen of them without having a single meal there. We didn't want to break the record for this guide.

There's no JitB where we live, but perhaps many of you locals have already seen the television commercial with this round-headed Jack character on horseback inciting his army of baguette-wielding bakers with their flat-bread shields. If not, you can see what we're still snickering at by visiting <<http://www.breadisback.com>>.

One more fascinating and useless fact: the chicken Caesar salad here has over 1,300 calories, even more than the version served at the Old Spag Factory.

Johnny Rockets Restaurant



American

150 S First St, San José
408-977-1414

L, D, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$
<http://www.johnnyrockets.com/>

This is a theme restaurant found over much of the country, and since the chain was founded in 1986, it's a little hard to grasp the meaning of their "The Original Hamburger" slogan. There's nothing wrong with it, but given how easy it is to make good hamburgers and fries, there shouldn't be. We suggest that you might prefer to go back to the 1950s for cherry cokes and burgers at Peggy Sue's, since that is the local institution.

Kantjil en de Tijger

Spuistraat 291-293, Amsterdam, Netherlands
020 620 09 94



Indonesian
L, D, RR, FB, \$\$

This is easily the best Indonesian restaurant in Amsterdam, and probably the best Indonesian restaurant in Europe.

Go with a group. You must go with at least four people. Eight is better. Order the *rijstaffel*. A *rijstaffel* is basically a varying menu of all sorts of Indonesian dishes. It's all served together, and it rapidly turns into "more dishes than can fit on the table." We can't even begin to list them all, but there was beef, pork, chicken, fish, shrimp, vegetables, and, of course, rice. The food just came and came, along with lots of sauces: peanut, coconut, tangy barbecue, ginger-tomato. Everything is really good here, and it's all meant to share informally. Portions are large. Ask for $2n/6$ orders of "*rijstaffel* for two," rounded up, where n is the number of people in your party, and you'll have more than enough food. Order an additional single dish of something if you don't.

Kitsho

19541 Richwood Drive, Cupertino
408-873-1444



Japanese
L, D, RR, TO, FB, \$\$\$

We think that Kitsho serves the best sushi in Silicon Valley. It's expensive, but fresher and tastier than you'll find elsewhere. The *miso* soup is homemade, and better here than elsewhere. Same with the *agedashi tofu*—delicious.

Order off the menu, or try the *omakase* (chef's choice) and see what you get. You can set the price, and the more you spend the better it will be. A good starting place is \$45. For those of you who have access to a car and want sushi, Kitsho is definitely worth the drive. Or take a taxi; it's not that far.

Krung Thai Restaurant

580 N. Winchester Blvd, San José
408-248-3435



Thai
L, D, RR, TO, FB, \$\$
<http://www.newkrungthai.com/>

Our vote for the best Thai restaurant in Silicon Valley is Krung Thai. Everything is tasty here.

Order *satays* to start. Then, one of their salads. Next, several random dishes off their extensive menu. We are especially fond of their coconut milk curries. And green papaya salad. And the *pad thai* is wonderful. And...you get the idea. It's all about the flavors in Thai cooking. Share everything, so everyone gets to taste everything. Yes, the menu is huge and daunting, but it's hard to go wrong by picking what you like.

This really is Thai cuisine at its best.

Krung Thai is not your typical family-run ethnic restaurant. The dining room is pretty, the waitstaff is professional, and everything feels a little upscale. Definitely worth the short drive. And if you're bringing a party of six or more, they ask you to call ahead and let them know.

Kukar's House of Pizza



Pizza

527 Almaden Blvd, San José
408-292-2199

L, D, LL, NR, TO, FB, GG, \$

The most important thing you need to know about the House of Pizza is that it's closer than you think, just a long, long block away from the convention center. The next most important thing you need to know about the House of Pizza is that they can easily serve parties of a dozen or more. The fact that the pizza is actually pretty good is almost irrelevant.

The House of Pizza is both a bar and a restaurant. Not a pretty Californian fern bar, but an old funky neighborhood bar. There's a jukebox. There's weird bar art on the wall. There's a video game room in one corner. And there's a kitchen in the back.

Walk to the back and order your pizza. They come in four sizes, all large. Even the "very small" is 11 inches in diameter. Toppings are oddly priced: a single price for 0–1 toppings, another single price for 2–5 toppings, and an additional charge for each topping over five. What this means is that if you want two toppings, you might as well get five. The toppings are utterly standard choices, with the exception of *linguiça*, a sort of spicy Portuguese sausage.

There's other stuff on the menu too: a couple of pastas, Italianesque sandwiches, burgers, etc. There's a tired-looking salad bar at one end. Our advice is to order the pizza. If you want a sandwich or a burger, go somewhere else.

After ordering, you'll get an upside-down cup with a number written on it. Take that beacon, find a table, and sit down. Your pizza will find you when it's done.

Everything is made to order. On the plus side, your pizza is going to be fresh. On the minus side, it's going to be a 20-minute wait.

Traveling the world, we've had some weird pizza. We've seen Japanese pizza with shrimp and kiwi fruit. We've eaten pizza in Poland with barbecue sauce. We've eaten pizza in Naples with water buffalo cheese (better than you might think). This pizza is nothing like that; it's New York-style thin crust pizza. No, it's not New York pizza, it's "New York style." (Actually, we're not interested in your "only in New York" story.)

House of Pizza makes a good thin crust. It's chewy, with a nice texture. The toppings are generous, and the sauce is thick and strong. The cheese is flavorful, and there's a lot of it. The cheese covers the entire pizza, up to the edges.

Unfortunately, it's not very easy to eat. For some reason, the kitchen cuts their pizzas in a checkerboard pattern. Middle pieces are very difficult to hold. And because the pizza was cut up immediately after coming out of the oven, the cheese is still liquid when you're served. Those first pieces are difficult to separate from the rest of the pie. All you get are paper plates and plastic forks, which makes the whole operation even more difficult. All we can suggest is to persevere. It's good pizza.

Since House of Pizza is also a bar, various beers are available. Nothing exciting. And there are no free refills on the sodas. We don't think there's anything wrong with that, mind you; we just wanted you to be warned.

House of Pizza offers carry-out, and you can call ahead with your order. The place looks kind of dangerous at first, but we assure you it's not.

La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)



Italian

233 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-286-8686

L, D, RR, TO, DL, FB, OS, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.lapastaia.com/>

La Pastaia ("The Pastamaker") is the sort of place you linger at, and come back to. This is modern Italian cooking, happily influenced by what's fresh and in season. The flavors here are complex but perfectly chosen.

Have some wine, order a *primi* and a *secondi*, and be sure to order dessert. The last time we were there, we ordered the stuffed pork chops with apples and sage, gorgonzola sauce, and fried polenta. And the wood-fired trout stuffed with lemon and rosemary, wrapped with *pancetta*. Both were delicious.

If you've never had *osso buco*, try that.

You can expect to spend \$50 or more per person for a couple of courses, depending on the wine. (And it's a nice wine list.)

Or stop by for a quicker, but still civilized, meal. Try a pizza or *insalate*; at lunch they have panini sandwiches. This idea will set you back about \$15 with tax and tip—a nice way to enjoy one of San José's finest restaurants without

breaking the bank. There's no dress code, but you're expected to look fairly nice. Also, according to the menu, only one sardonic person per table will be permitted. If you're a large party, you should decide beforehand who it will be.

La Peñita



601 S First St, San José
408-295-0434

Mexican
B, L, D, NR, NA, \$

It's a bit of a walk, and it's a walk in the seedier direction from the convention center; but trust us on this one.

La Peñita serves Mexican food: the real deal. Everything on the menu is worth eating. The place smells great.

The individual tacos, enchiladas, and tostadas are \$2.50 each. The larger burritos are \$4.75. Light lunch plates are \$6.25, and larger plates—covered with rice and beans—are \$8–\$10. Order a Jarritos Mexican soda with your meal; we like the *tamarindo* flavor best.

The dining room is small, and it isn't pretty. But it's filled at lunch time—locals, cops, students, everybody eats here—which should tell you something.

Really; we recommend this place highly.

La Taqueria

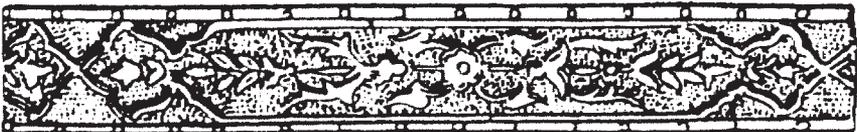


15 S First St, San José
408-287-1542

Mexican
L, NR, NA, \$

This is your basic lunch-only *taqueria*. Order at the counter—tacos or burritos—and wait until they call your number; they'll do it in Spanish and English. Get your food, and go sit on one of the wooden benches to eat it. Honestly, it's not that special and you can do better elsewhere.

And that's a good thing. In too many cities in the United States the only option for tacos is Taco Bell, and this is *way* better than Taco Bell.



Laurel's Delights

60 N First St, San José
408-292-5211



Sandwiches

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

Downtown San José is filled with this sort of café that serves random sandwiches, salads, and soups. Laurel's Delights is one of the better ones.

We liked the turkey ranch sandwich, and the tuna steak with celery, green apples, and dill. You'll find your own favorite.

They're also certified by a "green restaurant" program, so you can have your lunch and save the planet at the same time. It doesn't even cost extra.

La Victoria Taqueria

140 W San Carlos St, San José
408-298-5335

B, L, D, LL, LLL, NR, NA, GG, KF, \$

131 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-993-8230

B, L, D, LL, LLL, NR, NA, GG, KF, \$

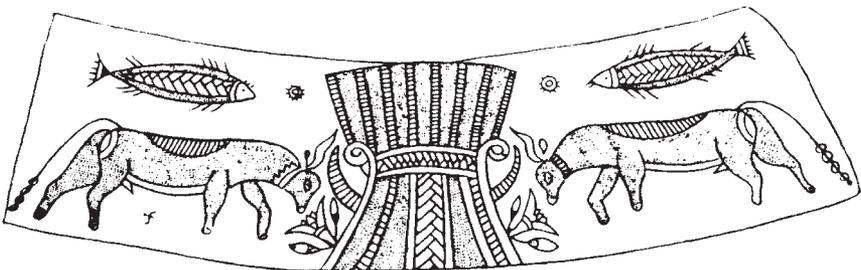


Mexican

At this mainstay for San José State University students and all downtowners, you'll find that everything's good. The burritos are the star of the menu—big but not overwhelming, and the meat fillings always taste fresh. Top that with the incredible secret recipe known locally as "ORANGE SAUCE!!"; it's the stuff student legends are made of. If your palate doesn't go too far up the Scoville scale, you'll want to give it a miss. Likewise, if you consider mayonnaise and its kin to be toxic substances.

La Vic offers vegetarian choices, too, of course: it's Mexican. And they're open until 2 AM, which is primarily for the late-partying students at San José State University—but you can take advantage of it, too.

And if you're up too late trying to break AES, you can get breakfast burritos here, too.



Le Boulanger



95 S Market St, San José
408-286-6780

Bakery/Cafe
B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$\$
<http://www.leboulanger.com>

A family-owned California original, this bakery chain has 17 locations in the Bay Area. They bake a wide range of breads, pastries, and cookies, and also offer soups, salads, and sandwiches. Order at the counter, and wait while they make it and call your number. Warning: the pizzas aren't very good.

Lunch here should set you back about \$9. They also have free wi-fi, good breakfast pastries, and some completely wonderful oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies.

Le Papillon



410 Saratoga Ave, San José
408-296-3730

French
L, D, IWL, RR, FB, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.lepapillon.com>

We are well-versed in the nuances of the stiff, formal French fine-dining experience. We've dined at Michelin-starred restaurants all over France; indeed, all over Europe. It's an experience we like, for all its oddness.

We are amused when we are told things like "coffee does not come with cold milk" after we've asked for that. We like watching the waiters maneuvering the rolls onto our bread plates by lifting them between the backs of two soup spoons. We enjoy having a course that can be consumed in two bites, yet comes with three utensils. It's like a lesson in drama and cultural awareness every time we sit down to dinner.

Le Papillon does not disappoint us. While the restaurant is decidedly in California (it's at one end of a strip mall, for heaven's sake), the dining room is hushed with reverent expectation. The music is soft, the guests murmur between themselves. But there is an opportunity for the more egalitarian American experience, too. The waiters are considerate, not imposing. They were imperturbable when a large table of us requested strong coffee as an aperitif. (We were expecting a *very* late night, and no, we didn't have to ask for cold milk.) "The customer is always right" is not a concept one encounters often in certain restaurants. But our idiosyncrasies were simply part of the flow at Le Papillon, and we loved them for this alone.

But let us tell you about the food. It's French, yes. And you'll find some occasional accents from the Asian palate, perhaps *sashimi* served with *daikon*, or a *miso* vinaigrette on a salad. More traditional dishes like pan-seared *foie gras* with truffles or burgundy snails, or beluga caviar, are usually on offer. And

some inventive dishes like crab soufflé will certainly be on the menu, as well as seasonal specialties like red deer.

We've been there a bunch of times: sometimes just the two of us, sometimes with another couple, and sometimes Bruce with a table of business associates. We've never been disappointed. The menu changes regularly (and is sometimes available online), so it's difficult to recommend specific dishes. In any event, the tasting menu is the way to go. Not every course will be perfect, but an awful lot of them will be wonderful.

You'll want the Grand Marnier soufflé for dessert, and you'll want to order it early on, because it takes significant prep time.

Le Papillon's wine list is notable. They have an extensive selection of West Coast and French wines. We are particularly enamored of their pinot noir selection, and have found excellent wines at reasonable (for a restaurant) prices. Corkage runs \$20, which is fair, given this restaurant. The dining room is better suited for a romantic dinner than a business meeting, although they get some of both. The several rooms give the restaurant a cozier atmosphere than its size indicates. The tables are not crowded together, and the room doesn't buzz with the constant din of conversation. The décor is similarly muted: pretty walls and floral decorations.

This is all comfortingly Continental. And while the waitstaff is blessedly unobtrusive, they are also informative and pleasant, and with good will take questions about the menu. But it's not cheap. Dinner can easily cost \$75, wine extra. A bowl of soup costs an eye-popping \$8. The same menu is available for lunch; figure about \$15 less per person. We think it's worth it, though, either way.

Los Cubanos



Cuban

L, D, BW, \$\$

22 N Almaden, San José
408-279-0134

Run by a Cuban family, you'll find the sort of traditional food that sets Cuba apart from the other Latin American cuisines. Slow-roasted pork is tops here, steeped in garlic and spices and cooked so thoroughly that no knife is necessary. You'll get a huge portion of black beans and white rice (*moros y cristianos*) as well as fried plantains, which are a sort of cooking banana. This is about a \$12 lunch, more at dinner. They have Brazilian entrees as well: sea bass and prawns in light tomato sauce, \$23 at dinner. This place is a treasure.

Manresa



320 Village Lane, Los Gatos
408-354-4330

French
D, RE, FB, IWL, R, \$\$\$

<http://www.manresarestaurant.com/>

Manresa is the best restaurant in the South Bay, no exception.

The chef is David Kinch, formerly at Sent Sovi in Saratoga. The cuisine is what we think of as Modern Celebrity Chef; you can see influences from French, Catalan, and California cuisines. Given the abundance of California's Central Coast, of course Chef Kinch uses stone fruits from the orchard down the way, local organic produce, and other tree fruits from local growers. Food is better when it's closest to having been alive.

Many of the dishes on the Manresa menu (which changes so often that we can not tell you what to expect) are cooked slowly and gently. You might find an heirloom tomato gently cooked into tomato soup, with an extraordinary rich, perfect tomato flavor. It's the particular skill of David Kinch to make everything taste more like itself. He likes the *sous-vide* process, which is one of the latest gimmicks top chefs like to use, but which also really does allow flavors to develop slowly and deeply.

His training has taken him through France, Spain and Germany, and he especially likes to bring a bit of whimsy from his experiences to the Manresa table. His "beggar's purse" was popularized at the Quilted Giraffe in New York City; the egg dish—let it be a surprise—came from Arpège in Paris.

We really want to write more; we had a single wonderful meal here last November. But we were both tired from a long flight, and we didn't take notes like we should have. And then we lost the copy of the menu we took from the restaurant. But trust us; you'll have a wonderful meal here. Everyone says so. All the reviews say so. All the foodie websites say so. The predictions are unanimous.

We also have nothing but nice things to say about the service. Too often, front house staff in a fine restaurant are remote and cool, attempting (we think) to use distance to recreate the professional reserve of a Continental waiter. That simply doesn't charm us in America.

At Manresa, the staff has a likewise perfect attitude. While their professionalism is unremarkable in its polished ability, they *also* manage to convey real delight in their work, and in the food they serve. The perfect subtlety of it was quite fine. We enjoyed our meal all the more because everyone carried with them an undercurrent of "Isn't this wonderful food? Can you believe how marvelous this tastes?"

And they were right.

McCormick & Schmick's



170 S Market St, San José
408-283-7200

Seafood

L, D, RR, FB, \$\$\$

<http://www.mccormickandschmicks.com>

There's a lot of good in this restaurant, but there's also a lot of bad. The trick is ordering properly.

At the top of your menu, you'll see a list of the day's fresh fish. Order from this "Fresh List." Air freight has changed the business of fish in this country. McCormick & Schmick's gets their seafood flown in from wherever it's caught, on that same day. On one recent menu, we saw fresh yellowtail from Mexico, fresh scallops from Florida and Massachusetts, fresh *hamachi* from Japan, and fresh tuna from Hawaii. Yes, it's really fresh; that's the magic of air freight.

Right under the list of fresh fish, you'll see these important words: "Most Fish Can Be Simply Grilled and Served with Lemon." That's your key to a good meal here: fresh fish served simply.

Venture onto the rest of the menu, and it's hit-or-miss. Most of the complicated preparations aren't very good, and obscure the true taste of the fish. There are exceptions—we really like the blackened catfish, for example—but it's a good rule of thumb.

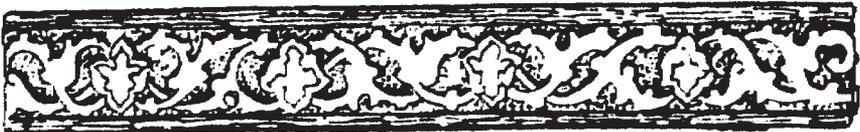
We always start with a plate of oysters. McCormick & Schmick's always has several on the menu. We like the tiny Kumomotos; Malpeques and Fanny Bays are also good. The seafood corn chowder is okay, the onion soup less so. Pity, since a bowl of soup costs \$5.

There are a few non-seafood items on the menu—chicken, steak, pork chop—but we've never seen anyone order off that part of the menu.

The wine list is mostly unimpressive.

McCormick & Schmick's is mostly a business restaurant chain, providing a reliable way to use your expense account in at least 50 cities all across the country. The ambiance reflects that. They proudly do not serve "blender drinks," which we think is a weird thing to be proud of. Service is professional, but nothing special. We find their statement that "respecting the 'old-fashioned' way of doing things, wait staff take orders from memory" nothing short of appalling—it's a certain way for someone to screw something up, possibly at your table.

We think Scott's, a couple blocks away, has better seafood. But you can have a fine meal at McCormick & Schmick's.



McDonald's

90 E San Carlos St, San José
408-293-7016



Burgers

B, L, D, LL, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$
<http://www.mcdonalds.com/>

No two countries with McDonald's have ever gone to war with each other. If they served whirled peas, it would be too perfect.

Melting Pot

72 S First St, San José
408-293-6020



Fondue

D, RR, FB, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.meltingpot.com/SanJoseca/home.html>

Are you interested in your own fondue restaurant franchise? If you are, take a look at the Melting Pot. Franchises are still available in many metropolitan areas.

Are you interested in having fondue for dinner? If you are, this is your only choice in San José.

See how this business works? Demand, meet supply. Supply, demand.

Actually, while the Melting Pot doesn't serve exceptional food, it isn't half bad. They offer a variety of cheese fondues, meat fondues, and chocolate fondues. Fondue is fun, although it's more suitable for a romantic date than a business meeting. The dark and cozy dining room certainly encourages an intimate evening playing with your food, and the menu is at its best when you order "The Big Night Out." That's a four-course extravaganza of fondue, including cheese fondue, Caesar salad, your choice of meat fondue, and of course, chocolate fondue for dessert. This will cost you \$44 plus drinks, per person.

You can spend less, but it's not cheap. A cheese fondue—think of it as the appetizer—costs \$7 per person. A meat fondue runs \$22 or so, and it's \$14 for a dessert fondue. But who doesn't want an entire bowl of liquid chocolate to dip an array of fresh strawberries, bananas, and pineapples, plus cheesecake, marshmallows, pound cake, and brownies, into? We're getting hungry just writing about it.

And you can get a free chocolate fondue just by signing up for the "Club Fondue" on their website. That might be just the ticket if you suddenly make the acquaintance of a cute cryptographer while visiting the exhibitors at the convention center. Perhaps as important, the fondue is heated with magnetic induction coils at tableside; that's pure geek right there.

Mexico Bakery

87 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-272-3838



Mexican

B, L, D, NR, TOO, NA, \$

They make *tamales* and *tortas* (which are sandwiches *a la* Mexico City). Mainly, this is a bakery. Takeout only. The regulars won't go anywhere else, so it's worth a try.

Miro's (Crowne Plaza)

282 Almaden Blvd, San José
408-998-0400



Mediterranean

B, L, D, BW, \$\$

Miro's is a short step better than a typical business-hotel restaurant. Nothing's actively horrible, but nothing is very good, either. If you want a quick meal and are happy to pay hotel-restaurant prices, Miro's will work. If you're looking for something you will savor, try someplace else.

The menu is Mediterranean-ish, which only means that you see Mediterranean accents on many of the dishes. Like any good hotel restaurant, you can choose from salads, pastas, meat, and fish. During the day there are sandwiches. The dinner appetizers look like the ones in any hotel restaurant in the country. Sometimes there's a lunchtime buffet (no schedule; it depends on occupancy), but it has never looked appetizing enough to try out. A bowl of soup costs \$4.

The menu tries to be more than it is. Instead of a simple cheeseburger, you can order a "grilled Angus chuck burger with Tillamook cheddar, applewood smoked bacon, California avocado, on a foccoccia roll." Or you can try a dinner of *garam masala*: broiled lamb sirloin, creamed organic spinach, celery root, and fennel slaw." That's the obligatory Indian-influenced meat dish, by the way, and it wasn't very good.

At least Miro's is fast. Hotel restaurants know from people in a hurry, and the food comes out quickly. And the restaurant is clean and well-lighted. You'll always see people having meetings at Miro's, their laptops buzzing amongst the dishes and glasses.

And we sometimes go there on purpose, even. Generally Bruce orders the club sandwich which, this being California, comes with avocado.

This being Silicon Valley, there's a vending machine in the lobby that sells iPod Shuffles and power supplies alongside the Alka-Seltzer and more pedestrian whatnot.

Mission Ale House & Deli



97 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-292-4058

American
L, D, LL, NR, FB, \$
<http://www.MissionAleHouse.com>

The Mission Ale House serves your basic burgers and sandwiches, appetizers, and salads. Nothing special, but you're here for the beer. You won't find any lambics or the more complex and interesting beers in the Belgian style, but there's probably something here you'll like. If you only like beer a little bit, try the Newcastle Brown Ale, as it's not at all hoppy or bitter. If you don't like beer, have a cocktail; they make those too.

The crowd is pretty young, and it's a bit of a meat market, but hey, maybe that's a good thing.

Montgomery Inn



9440 Montgomery Rd, Cincinnati, OH
513-791-3482

Barbecue
L, D, RR, TO, FB, \$\$
<http://www.montgomeryinn.com/>

You're here for the ribs. Specifically, you're here for the "barbecued choice pork loin back ribs," and you can choose one of four sizes: petite, order, slab, and king slab. Karen usually gets the order. Bruce: either the order or the slab, depending on how hungry he is. It comes with their homemade barbecue sauce, which you should ask for on the side. And order the Saratoga chips or the baked potato, as you prefer, instead of the French fries. The Saratoga chips are thick potato chip-like slices of potato, perfect for dipping in the wonderful homemade barbecue sauce.

There's other stuff on the menu, but honestly, we haven't tried most of it. The beef ribs are okay, and we don't remember anything wrong with the roast duck. We can't imagine going here and ordering seafood—actually, we can't imagine ordering anything other than the pork ribs.

These are meaty, flavorful ribs, served dry at your request, or with a hot glaze of sauce. The sauce is just that right mixture of sweet and sour, with a little bit of hot. Sometimes the ribs are better than other times. At its worst, it's great. At best, it's a slab of heaven.

Buy a bottle of their sauce to take home. We've used it when we've made brisket, and it always tastes delicious.

Muchos!



72 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-277-0333

Mexican
L, D, NR, NA, \$

The wall of rotisserie chickens should tip you off that this is no ordinary burrito place. The chicken is flavorful, succulent, and worth the trip. The chicken burrito is good enough that people write haiku about it. Really:

spit-roasted chicken
in two hands a huge bundle
delectable lunch

Okay, so maybe it's not Basho. But it's better than the average chicken deserves.

Another good option is the roasted chicken, served with rice, beans, salsa, and tortillas. Just \$7 for the half chicken, or \$4.75 for the quarter bird. These are good cheap eats.

Notice the wall of hot sauce bottles. Kind of a neat collection, we think, and we always add zip to our food with a few of them.

My Burger Place



76 E Santa Clara St, San José
408-286-6311

Burgers
L, D, LL, NR, NA, \$

Flame-broiled burgers on a decent bun, and crinkle-cut French fries. Way better than McDonald's. But McDonald's is cleaner. And Muchos! is right next door.

New Island Café



20 N Almaden St, San José
408-292-7096

Hawaiian
B, L, D, NR, BW, \$\$

We had to go to press with this guide before it opened, but it will be open for you. Give it a try; the Hawaiian-style Asian menu looks interesting. Not expensive, either.

19 Market Bistro and Bar



19 N Market St, San José
408-280-6111

Vietnamese

L, D, RR, FB, \$\$

<http://www.19market.com>

19 Market is a pretty restaurant. It's nicely painted and attractively lit, with sturdy furniture in dark wood. There's a solid bar along one wall. The menu serves "modern Vietnamese cuisine," which is something we're both fond of. Think Vietnamese dishes with a dash of Chinese or Singaporean influence.

We liked the lemongrass chicken (\$9) with bell peppers, basil, scallions, and lemongrass. Also the grilled salmon with spicy green beans, \$15. (See what they mean by "modern Vietnamese cuisine"?) The scallops with Asian greens in garlic black bean sauce (\$16) are also good.

Disappointing was the shaking beef, \$16: cubes of beef cooked in a wok with onion, garlic, pepper, and other spices. We love this dish when made right, but 19 Market's fell short. Drive to San Francisco and order it at the Slanted Door.

Entrees are in the \$9 to \$13 range, and we think the best way to eat here is to order several things for the table and share. You can do the same with the Starters section of the menu, where prices range from \$6 to \$10, and you can sample grilled quail, salt and pepper soft-shelled crab, and Korean barbecue ribs. We also liked the exotic and tasty banana flower salad.

The service is friendly and efficient, if a bit slow. We think this place is worth walking a bit out of your way for. And if you're wondering if this is the old address for Rue de Paris; yep, it is.

O'Flaherty's Irish Pub



25 N San Pedro St, San José
408-947-9007

Irish

L, D, LL, LLL, FB, LM, \$\$

<http://www.oflahertyspub.com>

Ireland has developed an industry of exporting Irish pubs. They build them there, then they take them apart and ship them elsewhere. Maybe the workers have a drink at them between the assembly and disassembly steps—we don't actually know.

We think this is neither good nor bad in itself. The quality of a pub depends more on the staff, the locale, and everything else. We rather liked O'Flaherty's. Think standard pub food: shepherd's pie, fish and chips...that sort of thing. They share a kitchen with Blake's, so the food is slightly better than your normal pub fare.

O'Flaherty's has live music on Sunday nights from 5 PM, and since we like Irish music, we say, "Go." You should be able to get free wi-fi at their outside tables, maybe inside as well if they've improved the signal strength.

Old Spaghetti Factory



Italian

51 N San Pedro St, San José
408-288-7488

L, D, RR, GG, KF, \$
<http://www.osf.com/>

We have nothing but a warm and fuzzy fondness for you, dear reader. There is nearly nothing we won't do for you. We'll eat the weird food, try the strange new restaurant, and dutifully take notes when we should be enjoying ourselves. And we'll write up these reviews and pass them out to you, free of charge, because we care.

We really do.

But we refuse to eat at the Old Spaghetti Factory. Nope. We won't do it, and you can't make us.

We've both eaten there, somewhere in the country, when we couldn't otherwise avoid it. We know what it will be like: crowded and about as good as either of our moms made. (Both our moms are pretty good cooks, but neither one is EYE-talian.)

Karen doesn't even like the Old Spaghetti Factory font.

There are enough interesting independent Italian restaurants close to the conference that there's no need to consider eating here, unless the Old Spaghetti Factory chain product is something you already know and like. Or, since it is mainly a West Coast chain, perhaps it seems like exotic foreign food to you. In either case, you don't need us to tell you about it.

We noticed on their website that the dinner-size portion of the chicken Caesar salad has over 1,200 calories and more carbs than the lasagna—so who knows what's going on there?

On Fourth: A Novel Café



Sandwiches

Martin Luther King Jr. Library,
E. San Fernando & S Fourth St, San José
408-808-2490

B, L, D, NR, NA, \$

<http://www.spartanshops.sjsu.edu/onfourth/index.htm>

On Fourth is in the library—get it?

They offer standard sandwiches, salads, wraps, soups—all freshly made and given whimsical names from books you've heard of. The restaurant is clean and the people are friendly, and this is the only place in downtown (that we noticed) that is willing to make you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. The soup's good, and just \$3.50 for a bowl. They also have a good selection of coffee and tea, including the subtle and lovely Moonlight Spice white tea.

Original Joe's



Italian

301 S First St, San José
408-292-7030

B, L, D, LL, LLL, NR, TO, FB, KF, OS, R, \$\$
<http://www.originaljoes.com/>

The 1960s were a simpler time in American dining. Steak ruled the menu, and dinner meant a huge slab of meat. Salads meant iceberg lettuce. People ordered shrimp cocktail if they wanted to be fancy. Fish was an afterthought, and no one ordered it, anyway. This restaurant is a time machine. It's been sitting in this spot, unchanged, since 1956. That whole California Cuisine thing, the final quarter of the twentieth century: Original Joe's never noticed.

The time machine turns on as soon as you walk into the restaurant. It's dark, with a décor somewhere between a supper club and a 1960s diner. Bow-tied waiters scurry here and there with plates overflowing with meat. There's a counter to your left, for you kitchen junkies who like to watch, and there's rows of Naugahyde-covered booths in front of you. A hostess is happy to take you to your table.

The menu looks like it was designed in the 1960s. "Italian food excellently prepared by our trained chefs," it says at the top. Actually, the menu is only Italian-esque. You can get spaghetti as a side dish, and some of the dishes come with tomato sauce on top. But think meat: steak, prime rib, veal. There's chicken and there are some seafood dishes. There's a section for sandwiches (if you want something smaller) and salads (if you want something lighter). They also serve breakfast (although they don't open until lunchtime).

The entrées all come with a choice of sides. You can get French fries, baked potato, vegetables, or ravioli or spaghetti (the aforementioned Italian selections). And the portions are enormous. The veal parmigiana completely covers the plate. The mound of deep-fried scallops is a vast pile. The steaks are sold by weight, and they're huge. The pot roast looks as if it would serve a family of four.

Almost makes you wish it all tasted good.

Not that the food tastes actively bad; it's just uninspiring to the 21st century palate. The restaurant is full during mealtimes; this is obviously what their clientele wants. But we have nothing to recommend, no dish we can point to and

say “They do that well.” What they do well is remind you how far the restaurant industry has come in the United States since 1956.

Original Joe’s has kept up with the times in one area: prices. Most entrées run in the \$18–\$25 range, with steaks slightly higher and sandwiches around \$10.

Sadly, an interesting quirk of this restaurant changed a few years back. They used to be the last restaurant in town to add up your bill by hand, without the aid of any computerized system. No more; Original Joe’s has joined the computer age.

Oyster Bar



Seafood

Grand Central Station, New York, NY
212-490-6650

L, D, BW, FB, \$\$

<http://www.oysterbarny.com>

Buried levels deep in Grand Central Station is the Oyster Bar and Restaurant. It’s been there since 1913. And it is where you go for oysters.

Oysters. Raw oysters. Either you love them or you don’t. It’s a primal feeling: the slippery feel of the flesh, the pure tastes of the sea. Crisp. Clean. Perfect.

The menu is actually much larger, but ignore it. Focus on the oyster list. (Okay, you can have a cup of the New England clam chowder.)

If you’re alone or with one other person, get a seat at the actual oyster bar.

The last time we were there, there was an employee strike and we didn’t cross the picket line. That’s been settled and we’re glad to be back. On any visit, you should expect thirty or more types of oysters to choose from, from the small and flavorful Kumamotos to the sweet Wellfleets to the boring Bluepoints. We expect oysters we know and love, and oysters that we’ve never heard of.

What we like to do is order a glass of Sauvignon Blanc and a dozen: three each of four varieties. We generally choose two varieties we know and love, and two varieties we’ve never heard of before. (We are not the people who keep written notes in our Oyster Diary, but we know those people and we like them.)

The amazing thing is how different they are. Often they’re the same species of oyster. The difference in taste is determined by the water in which they lived. This is why oysters are generally named after the bay they’re found in: Imperial Eagle Creek (Washington), Glidden Point (Maine), Stellar Bay (British Columbia), etc.

This isn’t a cheap lunch. The oysters generally run a little more than \$2 each, and 12–18 will fill you up—especially if you couldn’t resist that chowder.

Pagoda Cuisine (Fairmont Hotel)



Chinese

170 S Market St, San José
408-998-3937

D, RR, FB, GG, R, \$\$\$

Pagoda is the “good” restaurant in the Fairmont Hotel. The Fairmont is the premier hotel in downtown San José, so we expected good things out of their premier restaurant. And San José is filled with Chinese, so we expected good things out of their Chinese restaurant. On top of all this, Pagoda has received some good reviews in the past.

Oh, well.

It’s a dramatic room, filled with Chinese antiques and original art. The table is beautiful, decked with fine china and a linen tablecloth. The service is attentive and efficient; the bow-tied waiters move with grace and charm, and there are never any language problems. The menus are large; the dozens of dishes are nicely described. Clearly this is not your typical neighborhood Chinese restaurant.

But it was relatively empty. And there wasn’t an Asian face to be seen, aside from the servers.

If we were to describe the food in one word, it would be “weak.” Everything we were served, while aesthetically interesting, was culinarily boring. On the appetizers menu, the pot stickers and fried prawns were both tasteless. The hot and sour soup was neither hot nor sour, although brimming with ingredients. Even the jasmine tea was weak.

Our entrées were no better. The beef with ginger scallion sauce was bland, nothing like what we’ve come to expect from good Chinese restaurants. The honey walnut prawns were worse than bland; with its sickeningly sweet mayonnaise-like sauce, it pandered to the palate. The Kung Pao shrimp tasted like generic Chinese food. The best thing we ordered was the spicy scallops, but only because the hot chili oil gave the otherwise boring dish some interest.

And the portions were small.

And lukewarm. If there’s one thing about Chinese cooking, it’s that the food comes out of the kitchen hot. We can’t remember another Chinese restaurant that couldn’t manage to serve the food hot. Given how good the servers are, only sheer incompetence in the kitchen could explain food served less than piping hot. And yet two of our four dishes were served lukewarm.

And the fortune cookies were stale.

And it’s expensive. Main dishes run from \$16 to \$20. Even the wonton soup or pot stickers cost \$6. You’re paying for pretty, not for food.

The service, on the other hand, was up to par with the rest of the Fairmont Hotel. We got all the rice we wanted. We always had tea and water. Our luke-warm dishes were promptly removed, and returned a few minutes later piping hot. But good service cannot mask lousy food. There are dozens of Chinese restaurants in Silicon Valley where you can get a far better meal at a third of the price. Unless you've barricaded yourself in the Fairmont, go elsewhere.

Paolo's



Italian

333 W San Carlos St, San José
408-294-2558

L, D, RR, TO, FB, GG, IWL, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.paolosrestaurant.com>

Paolo's is the best classical Italian restaurant in the South Bay. Better yet, it's a block and a half from the convention center. If you're looking for a quiet and classy meal within walking distance, this is your restaurant. If you're looking for good Italian food, and not the American-Italian that is served much too often, this is your restaurant.

Everything is delicious. The simple plates—like the pasta with tomato-basil sauce—are sublime. The complex dishes—like the veal roll stuffed with prosciutto, cheese, sage, roasted mushrooms, kale, and Marsala sauce—are interesting and tasty. The more nouveau dishes, like duck breast with olives and dates, are also delicious. The kitchen serves a wide selection of seafood, pasta, game, and other Italian specialties. And they do it with consistency and flair. Desserts are excellent, too. You can easily have a wonderful four-course meal here.

There's a great wine list, and Paolo's has a full bar with some interesting items: fine ports, cognac, grappa, and single malts. Pity the restaurant closes between lunch and dinner (2:30–5:30); otherwise, it would be a nice place to hide for the afternoon.

Service is old-world: a bit stuffy, but fine once you get used to it. It's not the kind of restaurant where you rush in, grab yourself a plate of pasta and a steak, and then rush back to the conference. Dinner in Italy can last four hours. Service is quicker here, but the kitchen runs on European time.

The dining room is absolutely beautiful.

It's not cheap, though. A bowl of soup costs \$6. On the other hand, duck mousse with white truffle essence on toasted *ciabatta* with fruit poached in mustard syrup, while not a large portion, is only \$9.50. This seems like a relative bargain. Entrées are generally north of \$20, pastas something less. Even lunches are between \$10 and \$20. Put a couple of courses together with a glass of wine, and you've spent a \$50 bill before you know it.

Paolo's has been around since 1958, and has been a San José favorite even before anyone had ever heard of San José. It consistently gets all sorts of awards. We have always had an excellent meal here, and everyone we've taken here has been pleased. This is one of the good ones.

Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)

211 S First St, San José
408-998-3937



American
L, D, RR, FB, OS, \$\$

Did you even know that there was a Montgomery Hotel in downtown San José? We didn't, until we were wandering around near the Fairmont looking for new restaurants.

The Montgomery Hotel looks like one of those trendy urban hip hotels with 1950s and 1960s modern style; we're not actually sure we'd be allowed to book a room there. But we ate at their restaurant: Paragon.

It's a pretty-but-modern restaurant, with cool long lines and dim but sparkling light. The menu is kind of an American bistro theme: burgers, sandwiches, basic entrees.

But everything is interesting, and tasty.

The spinach lasagna, for example, is made with shiitake mushrooms, ricotta, and tomato sauce, and served with basil oil. The halibut is peppered and pan-seared, and served with sautéed pea shoots, morels, and Madeira sauce. The duck *confit*—delicious—comes atop an arugula salad with dried cherries, dressed with a sherry vinaigrette.

Desserts are tasty, too. Try the oven-roasted strawberries.

Prices are at the upscale end of reasonable, especially for lunch—except for the exorbitantly priced \$7 bowl of soup. You can get a grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup for \$9.50, and the sandwich is made with fresh mozzarella, basil, and tomatoes, and comes with local field greens. A honey-sweetened Thomas Kemper root beer costs \$3. The bar is a cool and elegant place for drinks before dinner, too. The wine list is mostly California, but good nonetheless.

Paragon has its share of cool people, but lots of us regular people eat there too. Don't worry about it; just go.



Peggy Sue's



29 N San Pedro St, San José
408-298-6750

American
B, L, D, NR, KF, \$
<http://peg456.addr.com/>

When a television show has reached its point of inevitable decline, it is commonly described as having “jumped the shark.” This is based entirely on the episode of a 1950s-America-based TV program called *Happy Days*, where the rebel bad boy character, Fonzie (he of the indefatigable cool), jumped over a shark on water skis while still wearing his requisite leather jacket. Let the absurdity wash over you for a moment.

Peggy Sue's, a 1950s-styled burger place, a place that even features a diminutive statue of a roller-skating carhop, a place that trades on the nostalgia for that same *Happy Days* era. They have a sign on the sidewalk outside the front door. That sign reads, “Welcome Sharks Fans.” Okay, yes, we know the Sharks are the local ice hockey team and that whole “jumped the shark” thing is Not What They Meant. But we thought it was incongruous and hilarious anyway.

Peggy Sue's burger joint first opened its doors in 1958, and has been serving pretty much the same food ever since.

What's changed is the presentation. In 1958, there was no such thing as California cuisine, and burgers were pretty much just plain burgers, maybe with cheese. Those old-style burgers are still on Peggy Sue's menu, but you'll have to search for them. Today's burgers come with a creative, even dismaying, variety of toppings, and all have silly names. The “Rocky Marciano” comes with black olives and mozzarella. The “Blue Hawaii” comes with bacon and pineapple. The “Karate Burger” comes with mushrooms, teriyaki sauce, and American cheese. You get the idea.

They're pretty good, actually. And you can get any toppings you want, without having to find the cute name on the menu. If you want mushrooms, grilled onions, and tomatoes on your burger, just ask. They'll make it, and it will cost what any of the other burgers cost.

If you don't want a hamburger, there are the odd turkey, chicken, tuna, and other sandwiches to round out the menu. And assorted hot dogs, and Polish and Italian sausages. You can even get breakfast there.

This is 2006 California, so you can have a turkey burger or a veggie burger if you want. This is a traditional burger joint, so you can also have French fries and onion rings. (The onion rings are good.) And there are malts, floats, sundaes, and ice cream creations for dessert. And they're even serving “gourmet coffee,” which doesn't mean they've jumped the shark, at least not yet.

Not much else to say. It's not great—ignore their “just possibly the BEST hamburger in the world” sign—but it's worlds better than fast food. They're quick, and there's outside seating when the weather warrants. Sometimes the music

is a bit too loud, but hey—it's a burger joint. And, no, they don't serve anything called a California burger.

Peggy Sue's II

183 Park Ave, San José
408-294-0252



American
B, L, D, NR, KF, \$

See Peggy Sue's. Same place, different location, much closer to the convention center.

Peking House Restaurant

45 Post St, San José
408-298-7768



Chinese
B, L, D, TO, DL, NA, \$\$

A Chinese restaurant with a so-so menu of standard Chinese entrées in the not-spicy Cantonese style. (They do have some spicy dishes, too.) On the other hand, they're close, they deliver, and their website lists a whole lot of lunch specials (11:30 AM to 2:30 PM). You can get Kung Pao chicken for about \$9, including tax and tip. It might not be the best Kung Pao chicken you've ever had, but there won't be a lot wrong with it, either. And they'll deliver to your hotel room for free.

Peter Luger

178 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY
718-387-7400



Steak
RE, FB, CO, \$\$\$
<http://www.peterluger.com/>

Peter Luger's serves the best steak you've ever eaten, no exception. They're the only restaurant left that dry-ages its beef for more than five weeks. The family hand-selects the meat to be dry-aged, and the aging and butchering are all done in-house. And they cook it hot, fast, and perfectly. All you have to do is eat it.

Ordering is easy. Ask for the porterhouse for *n*, where *n* is the number of people at your table. Order it as rare as you can convince the rest of the table. (And they're serious about rare; it's red inside. If that bothers you, order it medium-rare. Don't bother going here if you want your meat more well-done than that.) The kitchen will do it black-and-blue if you ask them to.

Traditional accompaniments are the tomato and onion salad, creamed spinach, and roast potatoes. The bacon appetizer is also real tasty. You must have the house steak sauce. You can get it in bottles to take home, and you'll want to. And—listen up, because this is important—they only take cash. Well, they take the “Peter Luger Card,” but we're betting that you don't have one in your wallet. Figure \$60 per person, maybe a bit more.

And their website is a hoot:

“The restaurant features a fully-stocked bar. Don't expect any microbrews or trendy drinks... this is a true classical gentleman's bar.” Two fingers of three-cents plain is classic, right?

“Timeless wood furnishings fill out the natural ambience and charm of the Brooklyn Peter Luger Steakhouse.” That's beautiful prose for what are actually beat-up, ancient dining-hall tables and uneven old floors. The meat comes on sizzling trays by waiters even more ancient than the tables. Those waiters aren't there to make friends with you, either.

They also ship steak worldwide; see their website for details.

Final note: If you do mail-order a Peter Luger porterhouse, you have to cook it right. Here's how. Get a cast-iron skillet and stick it in your oven. Heat the oven up to 500 degrees F. Meanwhile, salt your steak on both sides. When the oven is hot, put the steak on the skillet and stick it back in the oven for six minutes. Flip the steak and cook it for another four minutes. Done. Let it rest for ten minutes before cutting into it.

P.F. Chang's China Bistro



98 S Second St, San José
408-961-5250

Chinese

L, D, FB, \$\$

<http://www.pfchangs.com>

As with other chain restaurants, we note that they have “stores” all over the country. If you live in the U.S., there's bound to be one in your city. This means that you already know what to expect, or you already know not to bother going. About P.F. Chang's, we can also say that their website has lots of investor information, but hardly anything about the ingredients in the food. They have a standardized menu with no discernible room for creativity in the kitchen, yet they claim to hire “chefs” and “sous chefs.” Those lettuce wrap things are actually pretty good, and their managers have to take a lesson in cutting the lettuce.

Picasso



French

Bellagio Hotel, Las Vegas, NV
702-693-7223

L, D, RE, FB, IWL, R, \$\$\$\$
http://www.bellagio.com/pages/din_picasso.asp

Las Vegas is the land of fake. Your hotel room can be in fake Venice, fake Paris, fake Rio de Janeiro, or fake New York. It can be in fake ancient Egypt, fake medieval Europe, fake ancient Rome, or fake Arabian Nights. You can party the night away at a fake Studio 54, fake Star Trek bar, or a fake Coyote Ugly. There's a Riverdance show that's not the real one, and a Blue Man Group that's not the real one.

Las Vegas is a cacophony of fakery: the promise of a pleasure planet and the reality of a homogeneous entertainment machine under a veneer of anything you can think of.

The restaurants, too, are fake. The Commander's Palace isn't as good as the New Orleans original, the Nobu isn't as good as the one in New York, and Aqua isn't as good as the San Francisco original. Same with Le Cirque, Michael Mina's Nob Hill (we haven't been to SeaBlue yet, but we're not optimistic), Daniel Boulud's Brasserie, or Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Prime—not as good as the originals. If you've been to Aureole or Craft in New York, their Las Vegas outposts will be a disappointment.

The reasons are complex. Mostly, Las Vegas is never as good as what it copies. But it's also the union rules. The star chefs who open these Las Vegas outposts can't bring in their own guys; they have to rely entirely on the local unions for talent. This makes it harder for the Vegas restaurants to recreate the original experience, especially when the star chef is only there a few days a month.

Picasso is different. Julian Serrano didn't open an outpost of his San Francisco restaurant, Masa's, in Las Vegas. He left Masa's to cook at Picasso full time. And it shows. The experience is real, assuming you can ignore the choreographed fountain show every half-hour outside the restaurant's windows.

We like to show up at six, when the restaurant first opens. (Okay, let's be honest—it's two hours later body time, and we're hungry already.) The vast dining room is empty. You can see the Mediterranean colors on the floors, column, and chairs (which are strikingly ugly, to tell the truth), the blond wood on the walls, the huge windows covered with gossamer drapes, and the brickwork and exposed beams on the high ceiling. It's all fake of course, but the Picassos covering the walls are as real as the huge sprays of flowers. The room is calm, quiet, serene. It's worlds away from the hullabaloo of the Bellagio's casino upstairs.

Slowly, diners trickle in. Mostly twos, threes, and fours, with the occasional large party. The din rises; conversations drift around the room, and the sounds of mixing drinks can be heard from the bar. An occasional flashbulb pops. The waitstaff glides silently through it all, taking orders and bringing food, more

part of the background than the activity. The room never gets noisy, but the restaurant is still a stark counterpoint to the bustling casino.

And that's why we like it.

When Serrano cooked at Masa's, a singular aspect of his tasting menus was that it wasn't too much food. We don't need to be, and we very much don't want to be, stuffed to have a good meal, and Serrano appreciates that. The set dinners had many interesting courses, all smaller than the American norm. At Picasso, he does the same thing.

The menu is Mediterranean, a blend of French and Spanish mostly. Everything is delicious. The "Menu Degustation" seems to be generally the same: a crustacean (either lobster or crab), roasted sea scallops in some interesting preparation, a *foie gras* dish, fish, meat (lamb, whenever we've been there), and then dessert.

The menu changes, but only slightly. On one visit, the first course was roasted lobster with a corn soufflé, and the sautéed *foie gras* came with dried sour cherries. On a third visit, the roasted lobster salad was served with crispy leeks and truffle vinaigrette, and the *foie gras* came with a Madeira sauce. We can wholeheartedly recommend the menu, whatever it is, but we wish there were more options. As good as it is, we'd like a little more range.

There are other dishes: the "Prix Fixe" menu. This is a four-course menu, with lots of choices and no set wine pairings. On one visit—alone—Bruce started with the poached oysters in a vermouth *beurre blanc* sauce and osetra caviar. This was a typically delicious dish, four perfectly balanced bites. The langoustines followed, two tails accented with lemon balsamic vinaigrette and served with diced bell peppers, zucchini, squash, and onions, drizzled with truffle oil—pop. For a main course, Bruce had the slow-roasted short ribs, with mashed yams and a Pinot Noir sauce. Another perfect dish. And the *tarte tatin* that followed came with warm apple *coulis* and apple-pie ice cream. Delicious.

What else can we recommend? The filet of St. Pierre (the fish, not the saint) with roasted artichokes and tomato *coulis*, the veal tenderloin with mushrooms and vegetables, the sautéed deer medallions with caramelized green apples and Zinfandel sauce, and just about anything else on the menu.

Veterans of high-end restaurants might find the Picasso menu a bit boring, but honestly we don't require weird just for the sake of weird. Serrano has a keen sense of balance in his cooking, and that's exactly what we want out of a meal like this.



Picasso's

62 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-298-4400



Spanish
D, BW, \$\$

The idea of nibbling along on small plates of many different dishes really started with dim sum, and it's a popular style of dining these days. The Spanish reinvented the custom of small plates in the 19th century. Today, Picasso's has a cheerful dining room and a long menu of small plates collectively called *tapas*—hot and cold—and five different *paellas*. We recommend going here with a group of people willing to share food. Order a few rounds of *tapas* for the table, and then a large *paella*. Have some sangria. It's all good.

Picholine

35 W 64 St, New York, NY
212-724-8585



French
L, D, RE, FB, IWL, \$\$\$\$

Picholine is Bruce's favorite New York restaurant. It's a little less formal than the ultra-high-end places in the city. And the food is delicious.

We have two pieces of advice for anyone eating there (aside from making a reservation well in advance). One, ask the waiter what game they have in the kitchen that's not on the menu. And two, order the cheese course. Order an adventurous cheese course.

First, the game. One visit, they had woodcock on the menu. Actually, the menu said "partridge." But when the waiter heard that we were here specifically because we wanted game, he said that there were a few woodcocks in the kitchen (although not on the menu). We have never seen woodcock on a menu in the U.S. It came with the head—to prove that it was a woodcock—and feet, served with beets, roasted daikon (they called it "navet"), mustard greens, a piece of *foie gras*, and a fairly standard veal reduction. The bird was very gamey, especially in the legs, and really delicious.

Another visit, they had grouse. Grouse is a surprisingly strongly flavored little bird, and it was served with Chinese artichoke, kale, and *foie gras*. And there's often partridge, and almost always pheasant. These birds come from Scotland, and you should expect them to have a couple pieces of shot in them.

Once we had wild hare, which was much, much gamier than normal rabbit.

If you want game, this is the restaurant for you. Of course, there's a lot more than game on the menu. They do great meats and fish, too.

In season, they offer a white truffle tasting menu for something like \$300. Or you can just order the white-truffle risotto, or shaved white truffles over a poached duck egg. (Duck eggs taste different from chicken eggs. They're more eggy, and less chickeny. Really.)

Other memorable dishes include “chestnut fennel soup with cranberry compote and duck *confit*,” wild boar sirloin, and pheasant *boudin blanc*, served with a celeriac, pistachio, and truffle salad. (We didn't even mind the piece of shot in the sausage.)

Second, the cheese. Max McCalman, the man widely credited with bringing the cheese course to the United States, is the mastermind behind the cheese at Picholine. Although he's rarely serving at the restaurant—you're in for an extra treat if he is—he's the one who selects and buys the cheese. Order a cheese course for the table. Choose a selection of interesting and extra stinky cheeses, or let the server choose for you. Try all sorts of cheese you never thought you'd like. Really; trust us. You may never see some of these cheeses again.

Even if there were no game on the menu, we would come here for the cheese.

Picholine is a great meal and a wonderful restaurant. Service is impeccable, and we leave happy every time we eat here. We don't visit every time we're in New York, but these days we visit it more often than any other New York restaurant.

Piperade



Basque

L, D, RE, FB, \$\$\$

1015 Battery St, San Francisco
415-391-2555

Piperade serves an interesting and tasty array of traditional and modern Basque dishes. Think fish: cod, hake, and squid.

Our advice is to go native and order an array of “Small Plates” to share. You might try some of the specials. Ignore the entrees, which are generally not very Basque.

The “sautéed sea scallops with green apple, capers, and gnocci” was fantastic, as was the “artisan *foie gras* sautéed with Monterey squid, grapes, and verjus.” We also liked the sautéed sea scallops, served with sweet apples and spicy chorizo sausage. And, of course, their namesake *piperade*: a stew of ham, bell peppers, and onions—served with a poached egg.

And if you're lucky enough to go on a Tuesday, be sure to order that day's special: the sautéed squid in ink sauce.

The “seared *ahi* tuna and saffron potato salad ‘*marmitako*’” was the only clunker on the menu.

Chef Gerald Hirigoyen is Basque, and his restaurant is probably the best place in the United States to try that kind of cooking. It's well worth a trip.

Pizz'a Chicago



Pizza

155 W San Fernando St, San José
408-283-9400

L, D, NR, TO, DL, BW, KF, \$
<http://www.pizzachicago.com/>

Everybody but Chicagoans loves this place. Useful in the same manner as kosher-style restaurants, Pizz'a Chicago can introduce the cuisine to the curious without providing the actual and authentic experience. And they play up the Chicago theme, so if you're a little homesick for the Windy City, you might enjoy the pizzas with names like the Air Jordan (fresh Roma tomatoes, basil and garlic) or the Rush Street (pepperoni, Canadian bacon, sausage, *linguiça*—that's a sort of Portuguese sausage—and meatballs). The pizzas come in three sizes; the smallest is around \$15, and the largest around \$22. They also serve pasta dishes (with equally silly names, like the Oprah: a meatball sandwich with red onions and provolone), and calzones and soups and salads, and it's all just fine. Not fabulous, but fine.

Chicago hot dogs are on the menu, which is good. And since our last swing through the place, they've started serving them in the One True Style, and no longer including ketchup. You may defile your dog on your own. Like we said, true Chicagoans scoff. But we like that they'll deliver for a small fee. They'll even deliver wine and beer if you've got proper ID.

If you go, ask them to explain that apostrophe nonsense. We forgot to, and we're curious.

Pizza My Heart



Pizza

117 E San Carlos St, San José
408-279-0555

L, D, TO, DL, NA, OS, \$
<http://www.pizzamyheart.com>

A small local chain, Pizza My Heart used to be Pizza-a-Go-Go, and we liked it then, too. It's the close choice for basic thin-crust pizza by the slice. The slices are large—at \$3 each they'd better be—and they're generous with the toppings. And they're tasty.

It's usually crowded, but the line moves quickly and the pizza is always fresh. And there are tables inside and out, so you'll probably find a seat once you have your food. If that seems like too much work, they deliver.

The salads are premade, so skip those.

Point Loma Seafood



2805 Emerson St, San Diego
619-223-1109

Seafood
L, NR, TO, BW, OS, \$
<http://www.plsf.com/>

This is San Diego's don't-miss seafood restaurant. Except that it closes at 6:30, so you really can't go there for dinner. And it's not really a restaurant, it's a fish counter that serves cooked food along with some tables to sit and eat at.

But it's some of the best squid you've ever eaten. Lightly battered and gently fried, chewy but not rubbery, absolutely perfect.

You can get it as a sandwich for \$6.50, or you can get it on a platter with fries and coleslaw for \$8.50.

We can also recommend the shrimp plate, the crab cake plate, and the fish plate. Oh, and the scallop plate. And the fish tacos. Actually, it's all delicious. If you can't decide, there are two different combination plates. And if you're not that hungry, anything that comes on a plate also comes in a sandwich.

We mentioned the fish tacos, didn't we?

The salads are okay, but not as good as the fish. The chowder is okay. We've never ordered the sushi or sashimi here, but the fish is so fresh we certainly recommend eating it raw.

We wouldn't say that this place has zero ambiance, but it's pretty low affect. The menu is on the wall behind the counter. Decide what you want and then walk up and order. (You'll be sharing the space with people buying fish and seafood to cook at home.) You'll be given a number—near as we can tell, there is no ordering to the numbers—which will be called out when your food is done. Then walk to the next room, or to one of the tables outside, and eat.

Outdoors, the seagulls will be happy to steal anything you don't watch carefully.

Quickly Tea House



140 Paseo De San Antonio, San José

Drinks
NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.quicklyusa.com>

No food here, just a huge variety of smoothies, slushies, juices, milks, teas, and other drinks. Their peanut slush is new; try it.

Quiznos Sandwich Shop



150 S Second St, San José
408-286-4782

Sandwiches
L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.quiznos.com>

143 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-975-0903

L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.quiznos.com>

A sub place with all the right ingredients, where they toast the sandwiches in some sort of oveny appliance. Karen had one once and thought it was weird and not very good, but Your Mileage May Vary, and if you already like Quiznos, you're all set, then. They have something for breakfast called "Fluffy Pancake & Egg Sandwich," which we basically dare you to eat.

Ravioli's Restaurant



185 Park Ave Ste 189, San José
408-287-8194

Italian-American
L, D, NR, TO, DL, NA, KF, \$

A good choice if you're on a budget. They serve uninspired Italian for people who just can't face Old Spaghetti Factory. The lunch special is a \$3 pasta something or other, so it's certainly inexpensive. They'll even deliver for a \$20 minimum and a \$5 surcharge.

If you do go, notice the sign on the soda machine: "Free refills only for the immediate stay following the purchase of drink!!! No refills if you go out and come back later in the day!!!" We bet there's a story behind that sign.

St. John



26 St John St, London, UK
+44-20-7251-848

Compleatist
L, D, RE, FB, \$\$\$
<http://www.stjohnrestaurant.co.uk/>

St. John is an unassuming restaurant. Its décor isn't anything special. The floors are wooden. The walls are brick, painted white, and about twenty feet high. Pegs for coats line the walls. In one corner is the kitchen, open to the rest of the room. This former smokehouse (ham, not cigars) looks like a school lunchroom or a military barracks, or maybe the dining hall at a reform school for naughty meat.

The ambiance also underwhelms. The tables are covered with white paper and the chairs are not very comfortable. The cooks—you can watch them from the

dining room—look like a bunch of prison inmates on a work furlough. Even the maître d', in his ill-fitting suit and sloppy tie, is so unassuming you don't think he actually works there.

The service is no big deal, either. The waitstaff is perfunctory and efficient, not overbearing. There is no crisp attention to detail. The dishes look as if they were handed over a lunch counter: simple white plates with food on them. Presentation is nothing here.

So why would we, with all of London's restaurants to choose from, eat here? Because the food is so good. It's basic food, done perfectly. There's no basil-encrusted lobster-infused polenta here, nothing with half a dozen ingredients and a complex sauce. The menu lists dishes like "oxtail and fennel broth," "langoustines and mayonnaise," "ox heart, beetroot, and horseradish," and "roast bone marrow and parsley salad." If you're looking for crispy pig's tails or a stuffed duck's neck, you've come to the right place.

The ingredients stand out. First came the appetizers. The "*foie gras* and turnips" was simply that: sautéed *foie gras* served with boiled turnips. But the turnips were the tastiest we've ever had. Pickled herring was served warm with a mildly spicy marinade and a small salad of pickled vegetables, and was delicious. Extraordinary smoked eel was served warm with potato salad. The only disappointment was the "potted pig head"—with a name like that, we simply had to order it, but it was a slice of not-very-interesting terrine.

The main courses were just as absurdly simple, and as utterly delicious. "Rabbit and prunes" was a piece of broiled rabbit served with prunes. The "pigeon and radishes" was a piece of broiled pigeon with radishes. (The radishes were served steamed, with the stems and leaves attached, and a flavorful wine vinegar drizzled on top. It was a complete surprise, and a delight.) We also liked the "roast leg of lamb and aioli," a tasty cut of lamb served with a mound of garlic mayonnaise.

Side dishes are available separately. We ordered the potatoes (boiled) and the greens (kale). St. John also serves desserts; we were unimpressed with either of the ones we tried. Nothing bad, but nothing special. If you're a large group and are planning ahead, you can order a roast suckling pig a week in advance. And there's a bar attached to the restaurant, with a similar lack of ambiance.

Chef Fergus Henderson's motto, printed right on the menu, is "nose to tail eating." This kind of thinking will get our business every time, even if it does feel as if we were eating in an institution. We certainly won't bring our vegetarian friends, though.



San José Bar & Grill



85 S Second St, San José
408-286-2397

American
L, D, LL, NR, FB, \$

This is a bar first and a restaurant second. That means you don't care that their sandwiches, burgers, salads, hot dogs, and generic appetizers are, well, average. If you want a good meal, go elsewhere. They describe themselves as "a peerless spectacle in the heart of Downtown San José," which might intrigue some of you, but we expect will disappoint instead. They have various little hamburgers and such on the menu called "sliders." People with actual White Castle hamburger franchises in their towns may freely share our disdain. You locals can get frozen sliders at Safeway or Albertson's. They won't be good, but they're not good fresh off the grill, and they're not what's being served at SJBG.

San José Museum of Art Cafe



110 S Market St, San José
408-993-0765

American
L, NR, TO, NA, \$

There's no admission fee at the San José Museum of Art, so enjoy their 20th century art collection before you head for the cafe. (If you just want to see the collection's highlights, you can get a guided tour. Those run daily at 12:30 PM and 2:30 PM.) The cafe is good. It's one of those operations run by a catering company, this one with the obvious name Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme Caterers. We find these arrangements are common in museums and theaters; and generally, like this one, work well. It's all soups, salads, or sandwiches here, and everything is reliable. The homemade soups are great (they offer three) and the salads are fresh and crisp. Grab a seat on the patio if the weather's nice, or in the large airy dining room if not. The chairs are marvelous to look at. And check out the gift shop before you leave.

Scott's Seafood



185 Park Ave, 6th Fl, San José
408-971-1700

Seafood
L, D, RR, FB, \$\$
<http://www.scottsseafood.com>

Scott's, a small local chain with seven or eight restaurants, is by far the best seafood restaurant you can walk to from the convention center. We're not trying to damn the restaurant with faint praise: it's actually pretty good.

The restaurant is on the sixth floor of an office building. It's a pretty room: soft lighting, subdued colors, and a glass wall looking out on downtown San José. You can have a panoramic view of the roof of the convention center, the Crowne Plaza, the Hilton, and the Marriot.

The menu is unexceptional for a good fish restaurant: various kinds of fresh fish in several expected preparations. Nothing is off-the-charts wonderful here, and mediocre is about as bad as it gets.

For a starter at dinner, the tuna and avocado tartare is probably the best. It's a mixture of *ahi* tuna, avocado, cucumbers, bell peppers, and mango, all served on a pair of crisp wafers. It's a standard dish, and best when the ingredients are fresh. Also good is the scallop and pear salad; the flavors meld well. The clam chowder is quite good and is not the highest priced soup in town at \$6. Scott's crab cakes are perfectly serviceable, and are served over a salad. The fried calamari is probably not worth getting, and they've never managed to have any interesting raw oysters any time we were there.

For entrées, our suggestion is to order what sounds good. We've not seen much of sand dabs on any menu anywhere, so at least one of us would order that. At lunch, Bruce would certainly order the fish tacos. There are a few meat dishes on the menu, but neither we nor anyone we know has ever tried one.

Pay attention to the specials. One night we were there, the special was a parmesan-crusted halibut with sautéed asparagus, potatoes, trumpet mushrooms, peas, and shallots in a herb wine sauce. This was easily the best dish we've ever had at Scott's.

Desserts are standard, too. Again, nothing is actively bad. Our suggestion is to skip the heavy desserts—you just had a light fish meal, after all—and order the trio of sorbets. They've always been interesting—on our most recent visit they were lemon citrus, mango, and plum/pomegranate—and end the meal nicely.

Second Cup & Eatery

21 N Second St, San José
408-971-2287



Coffee Shop
B, L, NR, NA, \$

This coffee shop serves breakfast (omelets, bagels) and lunch (sandwiches, wraps, salads). We wouldn't walk more than half a block out of our way to eat here. And you shouldn't, either.



Senora Emma's Taqueria y Cantina



Mexican

177 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-279-3662

L, DA, NR, NA, \$

Another basic Mexican restaurant. Go on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, when they have homemade corn tortillas. (We didn't ask what they serve on Tuesday and Thursdays.) Various things show up as \$6 lunch specials, which are probably the good deal. They have a nice patio, and very quick service.

The cantina part of things is the salsa dance place upstairs that is apparently quite some scene. Go after 10 PM, and dress up.

Sent Sovi



French

14583 Big Basin Way, Saratoga
408-867-3110

D, RR, BW, IWL, OS, R, \$\$\$
(add \$ for tasting menu)
<http://www.sentsovi.com/>

Sent Sovi is a small, romantic restaurant in the picture-perfect town of Saratoga. The intimate dining room looks somewhat like a French country inn, and only has about a dozen tables. The food is uniformly competent, and occasionally brilliant. If it were a little quieter, it would be a perfect date restaurant.

The food is French in the California tradition, so you may find Asian accents among the dishes. While the website claims that "Chef Josiah Slone uses only the finest ingredients from small farms and specialty purveyors," we rather doubt that the kitchen is exclusively stocked with artisanal products. Nevertheless, Josiah Slone has a deft hand, and in California's mild climate, that affords him a nice broad palette. The menu changes so frequently that any dish we recommend is likely to have rotated out by the time you get there. Two suggestions: first, go early and have the prix fixe menu, a limited selection but at a bargain price (\$35 last time we looked). Or, order the tasting menu (\$65) and have the full-bore tour of the kitchen and Chef Slone's skills. The latter is what we'd suggest, as you can try more things at only a small increase over the price of a starter, entrée, and dessert. There will be a wine pairing available as well, with emphasis on local wineries.



71 Saint Peter



71 N San Pedro St, San José
408-971-8523

Mediterranean
L, D, IWL, RR, BW, R, \$\$\$
<http://www.71saintpeter.com/>

This is one of the most romantic and delightful dining rooms in San José.

Founded by three partners, the last of them, Chef Luis Rodrigues, is now owner. We haven't been here since the ownership change, but the website certainly pays homage to their influence. We suspect Chef Luis is keeping up with past successes.

The menu is culinarily schizophrenic. The ambiance is like a European bistro. The food is Italian with California accents, or maybe New American with French accents. Fresh seasonal cooking with a European flair? The restaurant sidesteps all this by claiming to be a Mediterranean grill, which we think is a bit of an understatement, especially given all the Asian touches on the menu.

We can't tell you what will be on the menu when you sit down, because it changes frequently. But if you love food, we think you'll be pleased. Think starters, pastas, hearty entrées. The tasting menu, as ever, is a fine way to try the depth of the kitchen, and at \$30 is a real bargain. The wine pairing is just \$15 more. Dinner entrées generally hover on either side of the \$20 mark, which is a great price, given how good the food is.

Sandwiches, pastas, and more are available for lunch. We like getting the *foie gras* as a little something to split before lunch arrives.

Prices are surprisingly reasonable, and service is consistently good. So is the wine list. We really do like this place.

71 Saint Peter is a small restaurant. It's not a large room to begin with, and the kitchen takes up a non-trivial amount of space, even if it is tiny. The walls are weathered brick and the ceiling beams are exposed. This all makes the space feel lived-in and adds to the cozy feel, until you're stuck waiting without a reservation. There is an overflow room around the corner and in the back—the ambiance-meter drops about six notches there—but do yourself a favor and make a reservation. If you want a banquet for 15 or more, they can do that, too.

Shalimar Indian Cuisine



167 W San Fernando St, San José
408-971-2200

Indian
L, D, BW, GG, \$\$
<http://shalimarindiancuisine.com>

Shalimar is a nice restaurant. It's clean, bright, and pretty, decorated with hand-painted Mughal Era designs. Service is fast and pleasant. There are cloth nap-

kings and tablecloths, an extravagance we never understand in a restaurant that charges so little. All Indian restaurants seem to do this, however. Entrées, generally between \$10 and \$16, are a little expensive but not unreasonable. (Check the website for the “buy one entrée, get one free” coupon, if you have access to a printer.)

The menu at lunch is just the large buffet, which is \$8 during the week and \$7 on the weekends, plus a \$9 dinner buffet on Sunday and Tuesday if you’re looking for cheaper, and a lunch takeout express where you can get something decent for \$5. The lamb curry is \$1.50 more.

They can handle large parties easily. All in all, an enjoyable meal.

And the food is pretty good. If you don’t know your way around real Indian cuisine, it’s definitely good enough. If you’re a connoisseur (or a native Indian), you’re going to find details to complain about.

This is Northern Indian cuisine—curries, *kofita*, *panir*, *saag*, *tikka*, *tandoori*, *rogan josh*, *biryani*, *vindaloo*—the standard stuff Americans are used to when they think of Indian food. Portions are large, so consider ordering one fewer dish than you have people, especially if you start with appetizers. The *vindaloo* is very good, and the kitchen will make it authentically hot if you ask. We can also recommend a dish called “seafood lovers,” which is salmon, sole, and shrimp served with three kinds of sauces. And chicken *pakovas*.

Shinjuku Saboten



Japanese

L, D, BW, \$\$

<http://www.ghf.co.jp>

Shinjuku Station, Tokyo, Japan

Tonkatsu is breaded pork cutlet; it’s a Japanese salaryman staple. Decades ago, Bruce had written this dish off as unsalvageable; it was awful everywhere he tried it, in America or in Japan. But that was before someone took him to Shinjuku Saboten.

Shinjuku Saboten is a *tonkatsu* restaurant. They sell two different kinds: the *hirekatsu*, which is a filet of lean meat, and the *rosukatsu*: the fattier loin cut. You want the leaner cut. They sell other things—a thin-sliced piece of pork rolled and stuffed with *shiso* leaves and plum paste, fried shrimp, fried oysters, and fried cropped creamed crab—but you’re here for the *tonkatsu*. Order it by how large a piece you want.

The first thing you’ll get, surprisingly enough, is a mortar containing sesame seeds, and a pestle. Start grinding them up. Grind them longer than you think you should; you’re aiming for a fine powder.

We like this step. It’s relaxing, and it nicely passes the time until your food arrives.

What you'll get is a single boneless pork cutlet, fried in pure vegetable oil and then sliced, with a side of *miso* soup, finely shredded cabbage, some rice, and *oshinko*. Ladle two or three scoops of sauce out of the pot on the table into your grinding bowl, and blend it with your chopsticks. (Remember not to use the pestle for this step.) That's your *tonkatsu* sauce, and you can pour it over your pork. There's also dressing on the table for the cabbage; don't be stingy with it.

Your *tonkatsu* will be crisp and crunchy on the outside, but tender and succulent on the inside. The meat and breading will both be flavorful, and the sauce will be delicious.

Tonkatsu sauce is its own thing. We've seen recipes that approximate it with two parts ketchup, one part Worcestershire sauce, and one part sake, with some ginger, garlic, sugar, and rice wine—but that really doesn't do the sauce justice. It's sweet and sour and just the perfect accompaniment to the battered-and-fried pork.

Everything is all-you-can-eat except the *tonkatsu*. You can have more shredded cabbage, more rice, more *miso* soup—more everything except the pork.

Shinjuku Saboten is our favorite *tonkatsu* restaurant in Japan, although we've heard rumors of an even more impressive *tonkatsu-ya-san*, this one in Uneo. The secret ingredient supposedly is a light *miso* marinade before the batter dipping. Bruce is going a week after this conference.

Shiro's Sushi

2401 2nd Ave, Seattle, WA
206-443-9844



Japanese

D, RR, FB, \$\$

<http://www.shiros.com>

Shiro's Sushi is one of the most interesting sushi bars in the United States. The trick is to get there early so you can grab a seat at the sushi bar in front of Shiro-san. Don't order anything specific; just ask him to make interesting stuff for you. And lastly, show that you're interested. You'll get a wonderful meal.

We remember herring roe on pine branches—that's where the fish lay them—albacore tuna, seared black cod, *uni*, and a bunch of others. We remember him taking a live shrimp, saying "I'm sorry for killing you, but I have a customer," serving us the tail as sushi, and then cooking the head and shell in a light tempura batter. We remember a hand roll with soybean paper instead of the traditional *nori*.

Mostly, we remember really fun and interesting meals here.

Skyline Chili



Various locations, Cincinnati, OH
Various phone numbers

L, D, LL, NR, TO, NA, KF, \$
<http://www.skylinechili.com>

Chili

Cincinnati chili is its own thing, and there are three things to know. One, it's more of a meat sauce topping and not really like chili. Two, it's served over spaghetti. And three, you can order it either "three-way" with cheese, "four-way" with cheese and onions or with cheese and beans, or "five-way" with cheese, onions, and beans. (The two universal ingredients are the spaghetti and the chili.)

They only do it this way in Cincinnati. We don't know why.

Skyline Chili is the best place to get Cincinnati chili. The chili is made from beef, plus an interesting collection of seasonings, including cinnamon and chocolate. Their website claims that it is "a secret family recipe that's been handed down for generations," but we think it's tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco sauce, vinegar, garlic, onion, red pepper, chili powder, cloves, allspice, cinnamon, and unsweetened baking chocolate.

You can also get the chili spooned over a hot dog. And there are weird things like salads on the menu. But honestly, if you wanted a salad you wouldn't be here.

There are Skyline Chili restaurants all over southern Ohio, some in nearby states, and a few in odd locations like Florida. Bruce loves this stuff, but Karen's taste in comfort foods doesn't include Skyline.

Slanted Door



1 Ferry Building #3, San Francisco
415.861.8032

Vietnamese
D, RE, FB, IWL, \$\$\$

Hidden in San Francisco's Mission District, Slanted Door is easily one of the best Vietnamese restaurants in the United States. Although it's not really a fair comparison; your average neighborhood Vietnamese restaurant serves *pho* and *bun* and other cultural staples and nothing much fancier. At the Slanted Door, chef/owner Charles Phan uses Vietnamese flavors and ingredients to concoct culinary wonders. Sure, many of the dishes are inspired by traditional Vietnamese street food, but Phan's genius is what he does with that inspiration.

The best way to dine here is to order the prix fixe menu. That way, you'll choose seven dishes—three appetizers, three entrees and a dessert—that will be served family-style. The portions are quite manageable, and vary with the number of people in your party. Just pick what interests you; we haven't tasted a single

clunker, or read about one in a review. The dinner menu changes weekly, but there are some staples. The shaking beef (\$23.50), cubes of filet mignon served with garlic and red onions, is almost always on the menu, though the preparation changes occasionally. There are usually several spring rolls; the crispy Imperial rolls—pork, shrimp, glass noodles, tree-ear mushrooms, and vegetables, served with lettuce, mint, and rice noodles—are the best we've had anywhere.

Uniformly good are the claypot dishes—one we had, a chicken claypot with caramel sauce, chili, and fresh ginger was simply terrific. We also liked the *daikon* rice cakes with shiitake mushrooms and shallots, the grapefruit and jicama salad, and the spinach with garlic and shallots. Other reviewers have raved about the rack of lamb with tamarind sauce, and the sea bass with lily buds, shiitake mushrooms, and fresh ginger. Honestly, we don't get to eat here enough.

Slanted Door has a marvelous wine list. You'll find a deep selection of Rieslings, especially from Germany. These wines are light, a little sweet, and have high acid content that balances the sweet and refreshes the palate. Surprising those of us schooled to drink beer with spicy foods, such wines go beautifully with the Slanted Door menu. California wines are absent from the list. Generally these tend to a high tannic content, which clashes badly with Vietnamese flavors. It's nonetheless daring to skip over the local makers in wine country.

The Slanted Door also serves a few perfectly chosen teas. In fact, their version of afternoon tea sounds great to us. A cup of Phoenix Bird oolong with some green papaya salad and a dish of grilled lemongrass pork...what's not to like about that?

Desserts are good, although not at all Vietnamese. There are several choices, including crème brûlée, usually a fruit tart, and something decadent and chocolate.

Service is generally quite good, although getting a reservation is an ordeal. You may have to dial and redial just to talk with someone. The food is more than worth it.

Smile Sushi

86 S First St, San José
408-293-1640



Japanese
L, NR, TO, FB, \$

Aside from being the best sushi in downtown San José, Smile is a sweet little restaurant. It's friendly, pretty, and has good food.

Smile has an extensive sushi selection. It's a bit pricey by the piece, but various combination plates are available.

The best lunch value on the menu is the build-your-own bento boxes. Items you can choose include chicken, beef, albacore tuna or salmon teriyaki, *yakatori*, *tonkatsu*, *agedashi* tofu, *gyoza*, sushi, sashimi, *shu mai*, California roll, tempura, *saba shioyaki*, and calamari *katsu*. Basically, you have your choice of two items for \$8 and three items for \$10. (For dinner, the prices are \$4 higher.) This comes with rice, salad, and *oshinko*.

You can also order one of several tempura dishes, a variety of *donburi* dishes, teriyaki, *udon*, *soba*, and some other basic Japanese meals. We found everything to be perfectly fine, but the fresh fish is what's best here.

They have a basic, but nice, selection of sakes.

The bathroom is straight through the kitchen. If you've always wanted to see a Japanese restaurant kitchen, go.

Fuji Sushi—down the block and around the corner—is cheaper, and less pretty. We like Smile better.

Sonoma Chicken Coop

31 N Market St, San José
408-287-4098



American
L, D, BW, \$\$

Okay, the look of this place is an intense disappointment. With a name like that, we expected it to look like Tom's Burned Down Café or Duffy's Love Shack. We expected eccentricity. What we got was décor that everyone calls "faux," which is pretty funny when you think about it. This is a sort of cafeteria, a cross between a real restaurant and a fast-food restaurant. Order at a counter. When your number is called, you pick up your tray at another counter, and then go find a seat. Quick and easy.

The Coop is known for its spit-roasted chicken. It's pretty good, and best with the lemon vinaigrette sauce. But there's better and cheaper rotisserie chicken at Muchos! However, if your idea of fast food heaven includes grilled baby artichokes, or duck, or little tiny freebie slices of pizza, you might want to get on over to the Coop. It's not a cooperative, by the way. We asked, just to be sure. We did like seeing the calamari dish called "tubes and tentacles," a moniker not seen on San José menus since the change at Bella Mia.



Spiedo

151 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-971-6096



Italian

L, D, RR, FB, LM, OS, R, \$\$
<http://www.spiedo.com>

San José is notable for jazz, modern art, and Italian restaurants. We're not really sure why these things have converged here, but it is true. Spiedo, with its pretty Italian dining room, is hung with 20th century art and hosts live jazz performances. And as much as we are cultural omnivores, our native environment is more nearly defined by folk music, fine French cuisine, and the Hudson River School. All of which is to say that this isn't a restaurant we tend to seek out.

Nearing its tenth birthday, Spiedo does a fine job with the homemade focaccia, which we love. The pizzas, done in a wood-fired oven, are nice, and so is the Bolognese sauce on homemade pasta. There are black truffles in the polenta, too.

The wine list is weak on Italian wines, and overpriced, too. A bottle of Prosecco is an economical choice at \$27. It all adds up to Spiedo being a good but not great restaurant where you're likely to have a pleasant though unexceptional meal. Pizza or pasta are in the \$10 to \$16 range, with entrees costing about \$17 to \$27. A bowl of soup? \$6.

Their website has an admin log-in page, in case you're looking for something to do.

Splash Bar & Grill / Brothel Restaurant

66 Post St, San José
408-993-0861

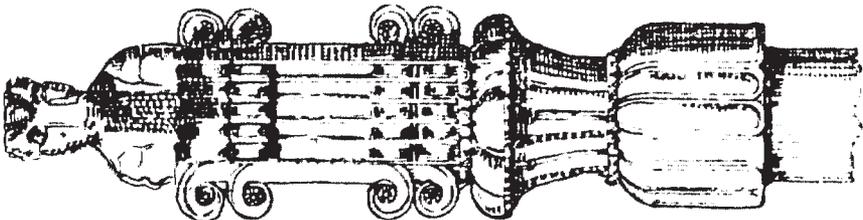


Gay Nightclub

D, DA, FB
<http://www.splashsj.com/>

This is two places in one. Splash is "San José's only gay dance club," with two dance floors, two bars, and thirteen beers on draft. The bar opens at 8 PM.

The Brothel Restaurant wasn't open when we went by, and couldn't find out much it, but according to at least one online resource, it has the second-best brunch in San José.



Starbuck's Coffee

150 S First St, San José
408-293-9945

101 Park Center Plaza, San José
408-293-3274

145 W Santa Clara St, San José
408-288-8803

408 Almaden Blvd, in the Convention Ctr, San José 408-279-3743



Coffee Shop

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$\$
<http://www.starbucks.com>

Starbuck's is to music as Oprah is to books. And you thought this was a coffee place.

Starmar's Café

80 S First St, San José
408-995-0924



Sandwiches

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

It looks like a basic breakfast and sandwiches place, until you notice the Ethiopian dishes on the menu. They're really nice folks who say they'll stay up as late as they have customers. This strikes us as a bit of a challenge. They also sell a lot of tobacco and related things.

But really, Starmar's is a place where you're welcome to hang out.

Stratta Grill and Bar

71 E San Fernando, San José
408-293-1121



Californian

L, D, LL, RR, FB, \$\$\$
<http://www.stratta.com>

The partnership that founded 71 St. Peter refurbished the Stratta a few years back. From the kitchen, Mark Tabak offers a menu of New American dishes with enough whimsy to keep us interested. Smoked chicken and green chili spring rolls sound great, and so does lobster tail with *tobiko* butter sauce. He chooses ingredients from the world's palette, and the food is good. We really liked his cooking at 71 St. Peter.

Stratta offers a late-night menu, which is available Thursday through Saturday evenings until midnight.

Subway



165 W San Fernando St, San José
408-297-8090

Sandwiches
L, D, KF, NR, TO, NA, \$
<http://www.subway.com/>

Since we wrote about San José restaurants four years ago, an additional 9,000 Subways have opened all over the world. You already know what to expect here.

Subway also serves up an important security story. Those of you who ate there some years ago will remember their “free sandwich” program. Every time you bought a sandwich, you would get a small sticker. Collect ten stickers on a card, and you would get a free sandwich—an easy and nice promotion. The problem was that the stickers were too easy to forge, and the minimum-wage sandwich clerks weren’t skilled enough to spot the forgeries. It got really bad when you could buy cards filled with stamps (presumably forgeries) on eBay—and the company pulled the promotion.

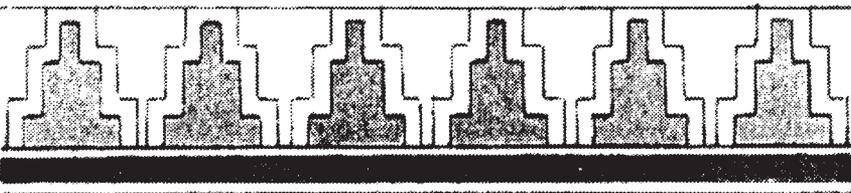
Tandoori Oven



150 S First St, San José
408-292-7222

Indian
L, D, BW, \$
<http://www.thetandoorioven.com>

Tandoori Oven is a small local chain of inexpensive Indian bistros. The menu is Americanized Indian, a lot of common dishes from the north of India. There’s no buffet, but the food is served nice and fast, and it’s all okay. They even serve Indian-flavored wrap sandwiches. The dinner portion of lamb curry is the most expensive item on the menu at \$11. Lunches are in the \$5 to \$8 range. Right now, there are three corporate-owned restaurants in Campbell, Los Gatos, and San José, with a fourth opening in Redwood City this year. The owners plan on turning this into a franchise and taking it national, so maybe it’ll be coming soon to a city near you.



Taqueria La Mordida

86 N Market St, San José
408-298-9357



Mexican

L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

One of those quiet gems with a dedicated following. Everyone seems to like the *burrito al pastor*. We haven't been.

Teddy's (Federal Building)

280 S First St #1158, San José
408-975-0114



Sandwiches

B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

We've never even seen the place; you're on your own.

Tengu Sushi

111 Paseo de San Antonio, San José
408-275-9491



Japanese

L, D, NR, TO, BW, \$\$

This is a small, basic Japanese restaurant. They make a point of offering decent take-away sushi for reasonable prices. A "Super Deluxe Box" will run you \$10.95 and includes two *maguro* (tuna), two *sake* (salmon), two *unagi* (eel), two *ebi* (shrimp) and six to seven *maki* (roll). You can order a variety of noodle dishes, sushi (just the basics, nothing exotic), Japanese-esque entrées like chicken teriyaki, bento boxes, donburi dishes, etc. They consider themselves the fast food equivalent of sushi places: not too pricy, not too fancy. We like the concept.

Teske's Germania

255 N First St, San José
408-292-0291



German

L, D, GG, RR, TO, FB, OS, \$\$
<http://www.teskes-germania.com>

Teske's is a perfect rendition of a hearty German restaurant. It's all there: the food, the beers, the menu, the waitresses, the solid Teutonic building. You may enter the restaurant from the corner of First and Devine, but once inside you're transported to a Gaststätte—maybe in Swabia, or surely somewhere in the

Black Forest. And it's the old Black Forest, where hearty laughter can be heard from the bar and *die Rechnung* must be settled in Deutschmarks. Yes: polkas.

Germany probably has a haute cuisine somewhere in its history, but primarily the food is what's known as *gutbürgerliche Küche*: good home cooking. It's a piece of meat, some starch, a vegetable—simple food. This is what you can get at Teske's, and it's one of the best examples of the art we've found outside of Germany.

The first hint that you're not leaving the restaurant hungry is this statement on the menu: "All dinners include bread and butter, soup, salad with house dressing, and a slice of strudel." And they expect you to eat it all, too. On one visit a waitress admonished Bruce's companion for not finishing his salad: "You won't get dessert if you don't eat all your food." She was joking, of course. We think.

The menu is long, and has all the German favorites. The Wiener schnitzel is tender and tasty. Their *sauerbraten* is delicious. One of our favorite dishes is the paprika goulash, a beef stew made with hot paprika. You'll find lots of beef dishes, pork, veal, and chicken.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

There is one soup each day, and everyone gets a cup. Ask the waitress about substitutions, and you're likely to be told: "You will have the soup, and you will like it." (Noticing a pattern here?) Generally the soup is some kind of vegetable beef soup, although once we had a chicken soup. The salad is, amazingly enough, European in appearance. The lettuce is American, but the rest of the ingredients look as if they had been bought in some European market somewhere. Nothing stellar, but tasty.

You can order an appetizer, but honestly, we can't imagine why you'd want to. It's even more food. (Sample appetizer: a pair of knackwurst, one Polish sausage, one bratwurst. That's *one* appetizer.)

Dinners are generous, and served with at least one side: red cabbage, *spätzle*, sauerkraut, or potato salad. We think the red cabbage and the sauerkraut are so wonderful that we'll actually ask for side orders if these don't come with whatever we've ordered. Sometimes we've managed to accomplish a substitution, but find that really depends on whether we've made friends with our waitress. When the portions are so big, it's practically a crime that they charge *ten dollars* to split a plate.

There are always specials, and they are usually game. We've had venison, wild boar, turkey, and pheasant. One dinner we were amazed to find buffalo *osso buco* on the menu. (And we still kick ourselves for not ordering it.) The key here is to order a meat you like. And we mean meat. There is one token fish dish, and two token vegetarian dishes—mushroom and vegetable crepes and a vegetarian plate—but honestly, if you don't want meat, you'd be happier elsewhere.

Teske's has a good selection of interesting German beers, including a bunch of them on tap. They serve 22 kinds of German schnapps. Their selection of

German wines is pitiful, which is our primary complaint whenever we go there. Bavarians may be fond of their beer, but we are not Bavarians.

It's a lively, fun restaurant. There is a large dining room inside past the bar, and additional seating outside in the backyard. For all their German detail, the waitstaff are friendly and helpful. Prices are good, and it's a great place to take a party of twelve. (They claim they can handle banquets up to 250 people; maybe there's another room upstairs.) And it's close to the Convention Center.

How can you go wrong with that?

Thepthai Thai Cuisine



Thai

23 N Market St, San José
408-292-7515

L, D, RR, TO, BW, R, \$\$

Random decent Thai food: nothing fantastic, but perfectly reasonable. Dinners can be crowded—especially on the weekend—but the lunch buffet is an inexpensive way to sample some interesting curries, as well as steamed mussels and their version of pad Thai, which has more vegetables than most. We'd go to the House of Siam; it's closer to the conference, and the food is better.

Tied House



American

65 N San Pedro St, San José
408-295-2739

L, D, LL, FB, \$\$

<http://www.tiedhouse.com/>

It's a clever and obscure name for a pub. In 19th century England, a "tied house" was a pub selling beer from the brewery that owned it, and none other. The "free houses" could sell anyone's beer. And in 1987, Redwood Coast Brewing Company brought the tied house concept to Northern California. In typically Californian melting-pot fashion, the first and original Master Brewer for Redwood Coast was a Hong Kong Chinese named Cheuck Tom. This is award-winning beer from a guy with nearly 40 years' experience in brewing.

The menu is at its best with good simple food, pub grub that doesn't ask much of the kitchen. You'll want to order burgers, basic entrées, salads, and simple appetizers—nothing too busy. The onion rings are really good, though we don't think blue cheese dressing goes with them. This is one of the places where roasted pork is newly appearing on San José menus, and the barbecue version here is pretty good (we order it without the provolone), and nice with beer. Just plan to order according to the fact that you're drinking beer, and you'll probably be happy.

They have some seasonal specialty beers worth considering. But if you can't decide or are only an occasional beer drinker, the Cascade Amber is their most popular brew. Between us we probably put away two or three beers in a good year, and so we don't have much else to suggest, but the Tied House is a bit of a local destination for serious beer drinkers, and surely someone seated near you can offer suggestions.

Their happy hour includes pints for \$2.75 from 4 to 6 PM, and half-off appetizers, so that might be a nice way to end a conference day. Even better, their late-night special at press time is half-pints for just 89 cents from 9 PM to midnight on Thursday.

Togo's



Sandwiches

125 Paseo de San Antonio, San José
408-297-8646

L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

18 N San Pedro St, San José
408-920-0702

L, D, NR, TO, NA, \$

A homegrown sandwich shop chain founded right here in San José. There are more than 40 of these within a 15-mile drive from the convention center. You local folks probably already know these sandwiches. We like them a little better than Subway. Bruce likes their meatball sandwich, also their Italian.

The place is clean and inviting with lots of wood surfaces. It's nicer than we thought possible for fast food. And we liked their music.

If we have one complaint, it's that they sell Pepsi products instead of Coke.

Tres Gringos



Mexican

83 S Second St, San José
408-278-9888

L, D, LL, NA, \$

Tres Gringos is a loud-music bar with faux Mexican food. You know: teriyaki chicken and pineapple tacos. Owned by the same guy as the San José Bar and Grill, this is your basic Spring Break Emulation bar. It's beachy, they serve huge strong drinks, and the girls and guys are all "cute" and "hot." If this is your thing, you don't need us to help you find it.

Trials Pub



265 N First St, San José
408-947-0497

English
D, LL, FB, GG, \$
<http://www.trialspub.com>

You want to be careful here. Walk in the door and you could end up owning the place. The pub was founded by some ex-pat Brits, but it's changed hands a couple of times since then. Whether passing to regular customer or employee, Trials has very much stayed in the family, if you squint at it right. At any rate, the food's good, and this is the television-free pub in San José. We recommend it on that alone. And they have Strongbow cider on tap. That's always a good sign.

Vigal Coffee / Café Nono



1 N First St, San José
408-288-6477

Sandwiches
B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

A coffee shop with a sandwich bar attached. They make hot and cold sandwiches with a variety of fresh ingredients. We liked the gyros, the tuna melt, and the falafel. Vegetarians will like the roasted bell pepper sandwich with artichoke hearts and feta. And there's smoothies, for you folks who can't take the guilt of having a milk shake for lunch.

Why Café Nono? The owner's little boy named it, of course. It could be worse. We know a guy who let his toddler name his parrot; the bird is known far and wide as "Bawk-Bawk."

White Lotus



80 N Market St, San José
408-977-0540

Asian/Vegetarian
L, D, NA, \$\$

Most Asian cookery uses meat as an ingredient, not as the star of the show. And given what can be done with tofu, TVP, and other meat substitutes, you'll be surprised at how much you don't miss the meat in these Vietnamese and Southeast Asian dishes. Of course, if you're a vegetarian, this is the restaurant for you, and you may already know about it. We haven't eaten here, but we've heard good things recently from people who have. The menu is eggless and meatless, but we don't know if that makes it acceptably vegan for the most stringent of diet watchers.

Honestly, we don't expect you to eat here if you're not a vegetarian, or aren't dining with one. But if you are, this place is probably worth the walk.

Young's Deli

1 N First St, San José
408-295-8075



Chinese/Sandwiches
B, L, NR, TO, NA, \$

This is two restaurants in one. There's your typical sandwich-salad-soup restaurant, and there's your typical Chinese buffet. *Bi bim bap* on Wednesdays.

Zyng Asian Grill

200 S First St, San José
408-971-9909



Asian
L, D, RR, FB, \$\$
<http://www.zyng.com>

"Zyng was conceived and planned with the guest and the franchisee in mind."

"The Zyng customer will enjoy fresh, healthy, nutritious, delicious meals at popular prices. The typical Zyng Asian Grill, on a busy pedestrian street, will be cheerful, bright, spotlessly clean, fun, modern. The experience will be new—noodles have been around for centuries on the other side of the world, but in terms of North American quick-service, casual dining eating out, noodles are new, and the idea of a restaurant serving noodle dishes from many countries is brand-new."

"We associated ourselves with recognized experts in all aspects of the restaurant industry, and with them we considered and optimized every aspect of the project. We factored in the very latest efficiencies—in meal preparation, service, and information technology. We added bright, modern eye-appeal—striking exterior scheme, remarkable interior décor, engaging graphic design, lively menu writing."

—<http://www.zyng.com>

Sounds terrifying.



Indexes

These indexes are designed to help you figure out where to eat. Only restaurants that are either walking distance or a short drive from the convention center are included. Out-of-town restaurants are not listed here.

Listings include the cuisine type, the icon indicating how close the restaurant is (short walk, long walk, short drive), the price indication (one to four \$), and the icon indicating our recommendation (thumbs up, thumbs down, or no recommendation), and the page number.

We include restaurants that we don't recommend because you might want to go there anyway, for other reasons.

The table of contents at the front of this guide is a complete alphabetical index.

Recommended Restaurants for Dinner

Page

A.P. Stump's	American	👍	👍👍	\$\$\$	9
Agenda Restaurant	Californian	👍	👍	\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	Californian	👍	👍	\$\$\$	11
Armadillo Willy's	Barbecue	👍	🚫	\$	12
Bella Mia	Italian	👍	👍	\$\$	13
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	👍	👍👍	\$\$\$	16
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	Chinese	👍	👍	\$	16
Cuccini	Middle Eastern	👍	👍👍	\$\$	25
Dac Phuc	Vietnamese	👍	👍👍	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	👍	👍👍	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	👍	👍👍	\$	32
Emile's	Continental	👍	👍👍	\$\$\$\$	32
Evvia Estiatorio	Greek	👍	🚫	\$\$	35
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	👍	👍	\$	35
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	👍	👍👍	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	👍	👍👍	\$	42
Harry K Ono Café	American	👍	👍👍	\$\$	43
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	👍	🚫	\$\$	44
House of Siam	Thai	👍	👍	\$\$	45
Hukilau	Hawaiian	👍	🚫	\$\$	46
Kitsho	Japanese	👍	🚫	\$\$\$	49
Krung Thai Restaurant	Thai	👍	🚫	\$\$	49
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	👍	👍	\$	50
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	👍	👍👍	\$\$\$	51
La Penita	Mexican	👍	👍👍	\$	52
Le Papillion	French	👍	🚫	\$\$\$	54
Los Cubanos	Cuban	👍	👍👍	\$\$	55
Manresa	French	👍	🚫	\$\$\$	56
Muchos!	Mexican	👍	👍👍	\$	61
19 Market Bistro and Bar	Vietnamese	👍	👍👍	\$\$	62
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	👍	👍	\$\$\$	67

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Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)	American	🍷	🍴	\$\$	68
Peggy Sue's	American	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	🍷	🍴	\$	70
Picasso's	Spanish	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	74
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	76
Scott's Seafood	Seafood	🍷	🍴	\$\$	80
Sent Sovi	French	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	82
71 Saint Peter	Mediterranean	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$\$	83
Shalimar Indian Cuisine	Indian	🍷	🍴	\$\$	83
Teske's Germania	German	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	92

Recommended Restaurants for Lunch

A.P. Stump's	American	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	Californian	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	11
Armadillo Willy's	Barbecue	🍷	🍷	\$	12
Bella Mia	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$	13
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$\$	16
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	Chinese	🍷	🍴	\$	16
Café Primavera at the Tech	Lunch	🍷	🍴	\$	19
Café Primo	Lunch	🍷	🍴	\$	19
Cuccini	Middle Eastern	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	25
Dac Phuc	Vietnamese	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	32
Evvia Estiatorio	Greek	🍷	🍷	\$\$	35
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	🍷	🍴	\$	35
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	🍷	🍷	\$	40
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	42
Harry K Ono Café	American	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	43
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	🍷	🍷	\$\$	44
House of Siam	Thai	🍷	🍴	\$\$	45
Hukilau	Hawaiian	🍷	🍷	\$\$	46
Kitsho	Japanese	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	49
Krung Thai Restaurant	Thai	🍷	🍷	\$\$	49
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	🍷	🍴	\$	50
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$\$	51
La Penita	Mexican	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	52
Laurel's Delights	Sandwiches	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	53
Le Papillion	French	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	54
Los Cubanos	Cuban	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	55
Muchos!	Mexican	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	61
19 Market Bistro and Bar	Vietnamese	🍷	🍴🍴	\$\$	62
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	67
Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)	American	🍷	🍴	\$\$	68
Peggy Sue's	American	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	🍷	🍴	\$	70
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	🍷	🍴🍴	\$	76

					Page
San José Museum of Art Café	American	☺	✶	\$	80
Scott's Seafood	Seafood	☺	✶	\$\$	80
Shalimar Indian Cuisine	Indian	☺	✶	\$\$	83
Smile Sushi	Japanese	☺	✶	\$	87
Teske's Germania	German	☺	✶✶	\$\$	92

Restaurants for Breakfast

Café 1850	Coffee Shop		✶	\$	18
Café Boba	Coffee Shop		✶✶	\$	19
Chacho's Mexican Restaurant	Mexican		✶✶	\$\$	20
City Bar and Grill (Hilton Hotel)	American	☺	✶	\$\$	24
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	☺	✶✶	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	☺	✶✶	\$	32
Flames	American		✶✶	\$\$	39
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	☺	☺	\$	40
Fountain Restaurant (Fairmont)	American	☺	✶	\$\$	41
Fresh and Natural Café	American/Vietnamese	☺	✶	\$	41
Harry K Ono Café	American	☺	✶✶	\$\$	43
Il Fornaio (Hyatt St. Claire)	Italian		✶	\$\$\$\$	47
Jack in the Box	Burgers	☺	✶✶	\$	48
La Penita	Mexican	☺	✶✶	\$	52
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		✶✶	\$	53
Laurel's Delights	Sandwiches	☺	✶✶	\$	53
Le Boulanger	Bakery/Cafe		✶	\$\$	54
McDonald's	Burgers	☺	✶✶	\$	58
Mexico Bakery	Mexican		✶✶	\$	59
Miro's (Crowne Plaza)	Mediterranean		✶	\$\$	59
New Island Café	Hawaiian		✶✶	\$\$	61
On Fourth: A Novel Café	Sandwiches		✶✶	\$	63
Original Joe's	Italian	☺	✶	\$\$	64
Peggy Sue's	American	☺	✶✶	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	☺	✶	\$	70
Peking House Restaurant	Chinese		✶	\$\$	70
Second Cup & Eatery	Coffee Shop		✶✶	\$	81
Starbuck's Coffee	Coffee Shop	☺	✶	\$\$	90
Starmar's Café	Sandwiches		✶	\$	90
Teddy's (Federal Building)	Sandwiches		✶	\$	92
Vigal Coffee/Café Nono	Sandwiches		✶✶	\$	96
Young's Deli	Chinese/Sandwiches	☺	✶✶	\$	97

Restaurants Open Until 11 PM

Blue Monkey Taco Lounge	Mexican		✶	\$	16
Britannia Arms	English	☺	✶✶	\$\$	17
Bucca de Beppo	Italian		☺	\$\$	18
E&O Trading Company	Pan-Asian		✶	\$\$\$	33
Fahrenheit Ultra Lounge	Trendy	☺	✶✶	\$\$	36
Flying Martini Brothers	American		✶	\$	40
Gordon Biersch	American	☺	✶	\$\$	42

Page

Grill on the Alley (Fairmont)	American	☞	♣	\$\$	42
Hukilau	Hawaiian	☞	☞	\$\$	46
Hydration Co	Japanese		♣♣	\$	47
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	☞	♣	\$	50
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		♣♣	\$	53
McDonald's	Burgers	☞	♣♣	\$	58
Mission Ale House & Deli	American	☞	♣♣	\$	60
My Burger Place	Burgers		♣♣	\$	61
O'Flaherty's Irish Pub	Irish		♣♣	\$\$	62
Original Joe's	Italian	☞	♣	\$\$	64
San José Bar & Grill	American		♣♣	\$	80
Stratta	Californian		♣♣	\$\$\$	90
Tied House	American		♣♣	\$\$	94
Tres Gringos	Mexican		♣♣	\$	95
Trials Pub	English		♣♣	\$	96

Restaurants Open Until 12:30 AM

Blue Monkey Taco Lounge	Mexican		♣	\$	16
Flying Martini Brothers	American			\$	40
Gordon Biersch	American	☞	♣	\$\$	42
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		♣♣	\$	53
O'Flaherty's Irish Pub	Irish		♣♣	\$\$	62
Original Joe's	Italian	☞	♣	\$\$	64

Cheap Restaurants for Breakfast (\$)

Café 1850	Coffee Shop		♣	\$	18
Café Boba	Coffee Shop		♣♣	\$	19
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	☞	♣♣	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	☞	♣♣	\$	32
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	☞	☞	\$	40
Fresh and Natural Café	American/Vietnamese	☞	♣	\$	41
Jack in the Box	Burgers	☞	♣♣	\$	48
La Penita	Mexican	☞	♣♣	\$	52
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		♣♣	\$	53
Laurel's Delights	Sandwiches	☞	♣♣	\$	53
McDonald's	Burgers	☞	♣♣	\$	58
Mexico Bakery	Mexican		♣♣	\$	59
On Fourth: A Novel Café	Sandwiches		♣♣	\$	63
Peggy Sue's	American	☞	♣♣	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	☞	♣	\$	70
Second Cup & Eatery	Coffee Shop		♣♣	\$	81
Starmar's Café	Sandwiches		♣	\$	90
Teddy's (Federal Building)	Sandwiches		♣	\$	92
Vigal Coffee/Café Nono	Sandwiches		♣♣	\$	96
Young's Deli	Chinese/Sandwiches	☞	♣♣	\$	97

Cheap Recommended Restaurants for Lunch (\$)					Page
Armadillo Willy's	Barbecue	☺	☺	\$	12
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	Chinese	☺	☺	\$	16
Café Primavera at the Tech	Lunch	☺	☺	\$	19
Café Primo	Lunch	☺	☺	\$	19
Dac Phuc	Vietnamese	☺	☺☺	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	☺	☺☺	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	32
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	☺	☺	\$	35
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	☺	☺	\$	40
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	☺	☺☺	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$	42
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	☺	☺	\$	50
La Penita	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	52
Laurel's Delights	Sandwiches	☺	☺☺	\$	53
Muchos!	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	61
Peggy Sue's	American	☺	☺☺	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	☺	☺	\$	70
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$	76
San José Museum of Art Café	American	☺	☺	\$	80
Smile Sushi	Japanese	☺	☺	\$	87

Cheap Recommended Restaurants for Dinner (\$)					
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	☺	☺☺	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	32
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	☺	☺	\$	35
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	☺	☺☺	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$	42
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	☺	☺	\$	50
La Penita	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	52
Muchos!	Mexican	☺	☺☺	\$	61
Peggy Sue's	American	☺	☺☺	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	American	☺	☺	\$	70
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$	76

Recommended Moderate Restaurants (\$\$)					
Agenda Restaurant	Californian	☺	☺	\$\$	9
Bella Mia	Italian	☺	☺	\$\$	13
Cuccini	Middle Eastern	☺	☺☺	\$\$	25
Evvia Estiatorio	Greek	☺	☺	\$\$	35
Harry K Ono Café	American	☺	☺☺	\$\$	43
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	☺	☺	\$\$	44
House of Siam	Thai	☺	☺	\$\$	45
Hukilau	Hawaiian	☺	☺	\$\$	46
Krung Thai Restaurant	Thai	☺	☺	\$\$	49
Los Cubanos	Cuban	☺	☺☺	\$\$	55
19 Market Bistro and Bar	Vietnamese	☺	☺☺	\$\$	62
Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)	American	☺	☺	\$\$	68
Picasso's	Spanish	☺	☺☺	\$\$	74

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Scott's Seafood	Seafood	🍷	🍷	\$\$	80
Shalimar Indian Cuisine	Indian	🍷	🍷	\$\$	83
Teske's Germania	German	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$	92

Recommended Expensive and Very Expensive Restaurants (\$\$\$ and \$\$\$\$)

A.P. Stump's	American	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	Californian	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	11
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	16
Emile's	Continental	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$\$	32
Kitsho	Japanese	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	49
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	51
Le Papillon	French	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	54
Manresa	French	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	56
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	67
Sent Sovi	French	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	82
71 Saint Peter	Mediterranean	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	83

Closest Recommended Restaurants

Agenda Restaurant	Californian	🍷	🍷	\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	Californian	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	11
Bella Mia	Italian	🍷	🍷	\$\$	13
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	Chinese	🍷	🍷	\$	16
Café Primavera at the Tech	Lunch	🍷	🍷	\$	19
Café Primo	Lunch	🍷	🍷	\$	19
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	🍷	🍷	\$	35
House of Siam	Thai	🍷	🍷	\$\$	45
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	🍷	🍷	\$	50
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🍷	\$\$\$	67
Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)	American	🍷	🍷	\$\$	68
Peggy Sue's II	American	🍷	🍷	\$	70
San José Museum of Art Café	American	🍷	🍷	\$	80
Scott's Seafood	Seafood	🍷	🍷	\$\$	80
Shalimar Indian Cuisine	Indian	🍷	🍷	\$\$	83
Smile Sushi	Japanese	🍷	🍷	\$	87

Recommended Restaurants a Little Further Away

A.P. Stump's	American	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	9
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$	16
Cuccini	Middle Eastern	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$	25
Dac Phuc	Vietnamese	🍷	🍷🍷	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	🍷	🍷🍷	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	🍷	🍷🍷	\$	32
Emile's	Continental	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$\$\$	32
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	🍷	🍷🍷	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	🍷	🍷🍷	\$	42
Harry K Ono Café	American	🍷	🍷🍷	\$\$	43

La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	51
La Penita	Mexican	🍷	🍴	\$	52
Los Cubanos	Cuban	🍷	🍴	\$\$	55
Muchos!	Mexican	🍷	🍴	\$	61
19 Market Bistro and Bar	Vietnamese	🍷	🍴	\$\$	62
Peggy Sue's	American	🍷	🍴	\$	69
Picasso's	Spanish	🍷	🍴	\$\$	74
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	🍷	🍴	\$	76
71 Saint Peter	Mediterranean	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	83
Teske's Germania	German	🍷	🍴	\$\$	92

Recommended Restaurants that Require a Car

Armadillo Willy's	Barbecue	🍷	🚗	\$	12
Evvia Estiatorio	Greek	🍷	🚗	\$\$	35
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	🍷	🚗	\$	40
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	🍷	🚗	\$\$	44
Hukilau	Hawaiian	🍷	🚗	\$\$	46
Kitsho	Japanese	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	49
Krung Thai Restaurant	Thai	🍷	🚗	\$\$	49
Le Papillon	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	54
Manresa	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	56
Sent Sovi	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	82

Romantic Restaurants

A.P. Stump's	American	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	9
Bella Mia	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$	13
Emile's	Continental	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$\$	32
Eulipia	Californian		🍴	\$\$\$	34
House of Siam	Thai	🍷	🍴	\$\$	45
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	51
Melting Pot	Fondue		🍴	\$\$\$	58
Original Joe's	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$	64
Pagoda Cuisine (Fairmont Hotel)	Chinese	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	66
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	67
Sent Sovi	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	82
71 Saint Peter	Mediterranean	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	83
Spiedo	Italian		🍴	\$\$	89
Thepthai Thai Cuisine	Thai		🍴	\$\$	94

Kid-Friendly Restaurants

Bella Mia	Italian	🍷	🍴	\$\$	13
Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shop	Ice Cream		🍴	\$	14
Ben's Fast Food Restaurant	Chinese	🍷	🍴	\$	15
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	🍷	🍴	\$\$\$	16
Bucca de Beppo	Italian		🚗	\$\$	18
Chacho's Mexican Restaurant	Mexican		🍴	\$\$	20
Fountain Restaurant (Fairmont)	American	🍷	🍴	\$\$	41
Gordon Biersch	American	🍷	🍴	\$\$	42

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Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$ 42
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	☺	☺	\$\$ 44
Hip Pop	Popcorn		☺	\$ 45
House of Siam	Thai	☺	☺	\$\$ 45
Hukilau	Hawaiian	☺	☺	\$\$ 46
Hydration Co	Japanese		☺☺	\$ 47
Il Fornaio (Hyatt St. Claire)	Italian		☺	\$\$\$\$ 47
Jack in the Box	Burgers	☹	☺☺	\$ 48
Johnny Rockets Restaurant	American		☺	\$ 48
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		☺☺	\$ 53
McDonald's	Burgers	☹	☺☺	\$ 58
Old Spaghetti Factory	Italian	☹	☺☺	\$ 63
Original Joe's	Italian	☹	☺	\$\$ 64
Peggy Sue's	American	☺	☺☺	\$ 69
Peggy Sue's II	American	☺	☺	\$ 70
Pizz'a Chicago	Pizza		☺	\$ 76
Ravioli's Restaurant	Italian	☹	☺	\$ 78
Subway	Sandwiches	☺	\$	91

Restaurants that are Good for Groups

Britannia Arms	English	☹	☺☺	\$\$ 17
Bucca de Beppo	Italian		☺	\$\$ 18
Cuccini	Middle Eastern	☺	☺☺	\$\$ 25
E&O Trading Company	Pan-Asian		☺	\$\$\$ 33
Evvia Estiatorio	Greek	☺	☺	\$\$ 35
Gordon Biersch	American	☹	☺	\$\$ 42
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	☺	☺	\$\$ 44
House of Siam	Thai	☺	☺	\$\$ 45
Il Fornaio (Hyatt St. Claire)	Italian		☺	\$\$\$\$ 47
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	☺	☺	\$ 50
La Victoria Taqueria	Mexican		☺☺	\$ 53
Old Spaghetti Factory	Italian	☹	☺☺	\$ 63
Pagoda Cuisine (Fairmont)	Chinese	☹	☺	\$\$\$ 66
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	☺	☺	\$\$\$ 67
Shalimar Indian Cuisine	Indian	☺	☺	\$\$ 83
Teske's Germania	German	☺	☺☺	\$\$ 92
Trials Pub	English		☺☺	\$ 96

Restaurants that Deliver

La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	☺	☺☺	\$\$\$ 51
Peking House Restaurant	Chinese		☺	\$\$ 70
Pizz'a Chicago	Pizza		☺	\$ 76
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	☺	☺☺	\$ 76
Ravioli's Restaurant	Italian	☹	☺	\$ 78

Recommended Restaurants that Offer Takeout					Page
Armadillo Willy's	Barbecue	🍷	🚗	\$	12
Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	Steak	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	16
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	Chinese	🍷	🚚	\$	16
Café Primavera at the Tech	Lunch	🍷	🚚	\$	19
Café Primo	Lunch	🍷	🚚	\$	19
Dac Phuc	Vietnamese	🍷	🚚	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	Vietnamese	🍷	🚚	\$	26
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	Mexican	🍷	🚚	\$	32
Express Deli Cafe	Sandwiches	🍷	🚚	\$	35
Fleur de Cocoa	French Pastries	🍷	🚗	\$	40
Fuji Sushi	Japanese	🍷	🚚	\$	41
Grande Pizzeria	Pizza	🍷	🚚	\$	42
Harry K Ono Café	American	🍷	🚚	\$\$	43
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	Barbecue	🍷	🚗	\$\$	44
House of Siam	Thai	🍷	🚚	\$\$	45
Kitsho	Japanese	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	49
Krung Thai Restaurant	Thai	🍷	🚗	\$\$	49
Kukar's House of Pizza	Pizza	🍷	🚚	\$	50
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	Italian	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	51
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	67
Pizza My Heart	Pizza	🍷	🚚	\$	76
San José Museum of Art Café	American	🍷	🚚	\$	80
Smile Sushi	Japanese	🍷	🚚	\$	87
Teske's Germania	German	🍷	🚚	\$\$	92

Restaurants with Impressive Wine Lists

A.P. Stump's	American	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	Californian	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	11
Emile's	Continental	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$\$	32
Le Papillon	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	54
Manresa	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	56
Paolo's Restaurant	Italian	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	67
Sent Sovi	French	🍷	🚗	\$\$\$	82

Restaurants by Cuisine

American

A.P. Stump's	🍷	🚚	\$\$\$	9
City Bar and Grill (Hilton Hotel)	🍷	🚚	\$	24
Deep		🚚		27
Flames		🚚	\$	39
Flying Martini Brothers			\$	40
Fountain Restaurant (Fairmont)	🍷	🚚	\$	41
Fresh and Natural Café	🍷	🚚	\$	41
Gordon Biersch	🍷	🚚	\$	42
Grill on the Alley (Fairmont)	🍷	🚚	\$	42
Harry K Ono Café	🍷	🚚	\$	43

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Johnny Rockets Restaurant		✕	\$	48
Mission Ale House & Deli	☞	✕✕	\$	60
Paragon (Montgomery Hotel)	☞	✕	\$\$	68
Peggy Sue's	☞	✕✕	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	☞	✕	\$	70
San José Bar & Grill		✕✕	\$	80
San José Museum of Art Café	☞	✕	\$	80
Sonoma Chicken Coop		✕✕	\$\$	88
Tied House		✕✕	\$\$	94

Asian

E&O Trading Company		✕	\$\$\$	33
Zyng Asian Grill	☞	✕	\$\$	97
White Lotus		✕✕	\$\$	96

Barbecue

Armadillo Willy's	☞	☞	\$	12
Henry's World Famous Hi-life	☞	☞	\$\$	44

Burgers

Jack in the Box	☞	✕✕	\$	48
Johnny Rockets Restaurant		✕	\$	48
McDonald's	☞	✕✕	\$	58
My Burger Place		✕✕	\$	61
Peggy Sue's	☞	✕✕	\$	69
Peggy Sue's II	☞	✕	\$	70

Californian

Agenda Restaurant	☞	✕	\$\$	9
Arcadia (Marriott Hotel)	☞	✕	\$\$\$	11
Eulipia		✕	\$\$\$	34
Stratta Grill and Bar		✕✕	\$\$\$	90

Chinese

Ben's Fast Food Restaurant	☞	✕✕	\$	15
Bo Town Chinese Restaurant	☞	✕	\$	16
China Wok	☞	✕✕	\$	21
Chinese Gourmet Express	☞	✕	\$	21
Downtown Chinese Fast Food	☞	✕✕	\$	28
Pagoda Cuisine (Fairmont Hotel)	☞	✕	\$\$\$	66
Peking House Restaurant		✕	\$\$	70
P.F. Chang's China Bistro	☞	✕✕	\$\$	71
Young's Deli	☞	✕✕	\$	97

Coffee Shops**Page**

Café 1850		✶	\$	18
Café Boba		✶✶	\$	19
Second Cup & Eatery		✶✶	\$	81
Starbuck's Coffee	☞	✶	\$\$	90

Continental

Emile's	☞	✶✶	\$\$\$\$	32
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Cuban

Los Cubanos	☞	✶✶	\$\$	55
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English

Britannia Arms	☞	✶✶	\$\$	17
Trials Pub		✶✶	\$	96

Fondue

Melting Pot		✶	\$\$\$	58
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French

Le Papillion	☞	🚗	\$\$\$	54
Manresa	☞	🚗	\$\$\$	56
Sent Sovi	☞	🚗	\$\$\$	82
Fleur de Cocoa	☞	🚗	\$	40

German

Teske's Germania	☞	✶✶	\$\$	92
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Greek

Evvia Estiatorio	☞	🚗	\$\$	35
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Hawaiian

Hukilau	☞	🚗	\$\$	46
New Island Café		✶✶	\$\$	61

Indian

Shalimar Indian Cuisine	☞	✶	\$\$	83
Tandoori Oven		✶	\$	91

Irish

O'Flaherty's Irish Pub		✶✶	\$\$	62
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Italian

Bella Mia	☞	✶	\$\$	13
Bucca de Beppo		🚗	\$\$	18
Il Fornaio (Hyatt St. Claire)		✶	\$\$\$\$	47
La Pastaia (Hotel de Anza)	☞	✶✶	\$\$\$	51

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Old Spaghetti Factory	☎	AA	\$	63
Original Joe's	☎	A	\$\$	64
Paolo's Restaurant	☎	A	\$\$\$	67
Ravioli's Restaurant	☎	A	\$	78
Spiedo		AA	\$\$	89
Japanese				
Fuji Sushi	☎	AA	\$	41
Hydration Co		AA	\$	47
Kitsho	☎	AB	\$\$\$	49
Smile Sushi	☎	A	\$	87
Tengu Sushi		AA	\$\$	92
Mediterranean				
Miro's (Crowne Plaza)		A	\$\$	59
71 Saint Peter		AA	\$\$\$	83
Mexican				
Blue Monkey Taco Lounge		A	\$	16
Chacho's Mexican Restaurant		AA	\$\$	20
Don Pedro's	☎	AA	\$	27
El Sabroso Mexican Grill	☎	AA	\$	32
La Penita	☎	AA	\$	52
La Taqueria	☎	AA	\$	52
La Victoria Taqueria		AA	\$	53
Mexico Bakery		AA	\$	59
Muchos!	☎	AA	\$	61
Senora Emma's Taqueria & Cantina		AA	\$	82
Taqueria La Mordida		AA	\$	92
Tres Gringos		AA	\$	95
Middle Eastern				
Cuccini	☎	AA	\$\$	25
Pizza				
Grande Pizzeria	☎	AA	\$	42
Kukar's House of Pizza	☎	A	\$	50
Pizz'a Chicago		A	\$	76
Pizza My Heart	☎	AA	\$	76
Popcorn				
Hip Pop		A	\$	45
Sandwiches				
Express Deli Café	☎	A	\$	35
Laurel's Delights	☎	AA	\$	53
On Fourth: A Novel Café		AA	\$	63

Quiznos Sandwich Shop	✕	\$	78
Starmar's Café	✕	\$	90
Subway	✕	\$	91
Teddy's (Federal Building)	✕	\$	92
Togo's	✕✕	\$	95
Vigal Coffee/Café Nono	✕✕	\$	96

Seafood

Hawgs Seafood Bar	☞	✕	\$\$	43
McCormick & Schmick's	☞	✕	\$\$\$	57
Scott's Seafood	☞	✕	\$\$	80

Spanish

Picasso's	☞	✕✕	\$\$	74
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Steak

Blake's Steakhouse and Bar	☞	✕✕	\$\$\$	16
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Thai

House of Siam	☞	✕	\$\$	45
Krung Thai Restaurant	☞	☞	\$\$	49
Thepthai Thai Cuisine		✕✕	\$\$	94

Vegetarian

White Lotus		✕✕	\$\$	96
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Vietnamese

Dac Phuc	☞	✕✕	\$	26
Dakao Sandwiches	☞	✕✕	\$	26
19 Market Bistro and Bar	☞	✕✕	\$\$	62

