

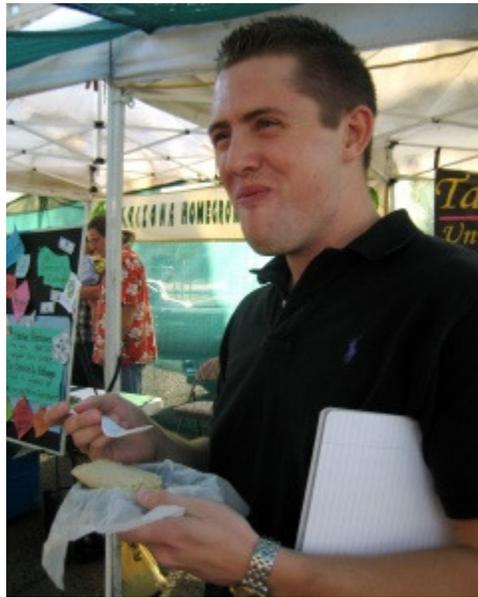
The Finer Things Blog

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The Best Carne Asada



It's difficult to articulate, having lived exclusively in Minnesota and Virginia, just how little I knew about Mexican food before moving to Phoenix this summer. I've eaten at Chipotle at least twice a week for the past couple years, but have never mustered the courage to order anything there beyond a basic chicken burrito. Sometimes, when feeling especially adventurous, I'd substitute barbacoa for chicken. Then I went to a local farmer's market last week, and had a tamale for the first time. Though I had to be told to unwrap the food from its cornhusk shell, I was pleased with what I finally discovered:



Seeking to recreate that apparently euphoric sensation, I headed up 7th Street this afternoon to try the carne asada at America's Taco Shop. The carne asada (or "roast," according to Google's curiously minimalist translator) was recently cited by *Phoenix* magazine as a primary factor in its decision to include America's Taco Shop on its list of the best new restaurants in town. Once my order of an extra-large carne asada burrito arrived, it was easy to see why.

Upon first inspection, my meal didn't look all that different from a Chipotle burrito; it was only after I sliced it in half to more thoroughly examine its contents that I realized what made it so special. The tortilla was thicker and moister than what I'd become accustomed to at Chipotle, and the salsa more fresh and aromatic. What made it a memorable lunch, however, was the carne asada. I learned later that the chefs at America's Taco Shop take choice grade beef, grill and shred it on location, and then marinate it in a citrus mix that not only tenderizes the meat but infuses it with a tangy spice. It was the best "roast" I've ever had, and I can't wait to go back for more.

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