

HOWARD SEFTEL'S 20 FAVORITE PLACES FOR TACOS

The Arizona Republic

Here's a list of some of our readers' favorite places for tasty tacos. Join the conversation and tell the world about your favorite at dining.azcentral.com.

1 AJO AL'S

Besides the tacos, specialties at Ajo Al's include pollo con queso, a fried chicken burrito topped with melted cheese and spiced cream cheese.

Details: 5101 N. 16th St., Phoenix, 602-222-9902; 6990 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale, 480-998-1734; 9393 N. 90th St., Scottsdale, 480-860-2611; 7458 W. Bell Road, Glendale, 623-334-9899. ajoals.com.

2 AMERICA'S TACO SHOP

This fun spot is the go-to place for tacos made with their specialty carne asada. The tacos al pastor are "amazing," too, according to a reader who nominated America's. **Details:** 2041 N. Seventh St., Phoenix, 602-682-5627; 4447 N. Seventh Ave., Phoenix, 602-515-0856; 735 E. University Drive, Tempe, 480-751-6250. americastacoshop.net.

3 ASADERO TORO

If you've been to the State Fair, you've spotted this place across from the main gate. Its neon-painted windows advertise the carne asada, which at least one azcentral.com viewer cited as a reason

to check this place out. **Details:** 1715 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix. 602-340-9310.

4 AUNT CHILADA'S

The shrimp tacos at the Phoenix standby are the reason to go, readers say. There's nothing better than hanging out on the restaurant's patio, listening to music and sipping on a margarita **Details:** 7330 N. Dreamy Draw Drive, Phoenix. 602-944-1286, auntchiladas.com.

5 CIEN AGAVES

The menu features a large selection of authentic tacos and specialty tacos including lobster, salmon and carne asada. Bonus: More than 90 blue-agave tequilas are available.

Details: 7228 E. First Ave., Scottsdale. 480-970-9002, cienagaves.com.

6 EL ENCANTO

In the fall, this Cave Creek garden spot sets up a street taco bar on a back patio. Fresh corn tortillas wrap everything from shrimp to carne asada.

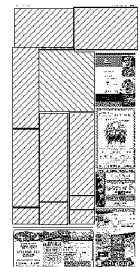
Details: 6248 E. Cave Creek Road, Cave Creek, 480-488-1752; 1112 E. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, 623-780-5948. elencantorestaurant.com.

7 ELMER'S TACOS

Family-owned and operated, Elmer's specializes in Mexican cuisine and offers a taco special daily. Other popular menu items include bean and cheese and breakfast burritos. Pair the meal with horchata or one of the aguas frescas.

Details: 355 N. Arizona Ave., Chandler. 480-963-6763.

8 GALLO BLANCO



CAFE & BAR

Republic critics have proclaimed the tacos at that this midcity hot spot "masterful." Readers cited the ahi tacos and pork belly when they're available. Chef Doug Robson grew up south of the border.

Details: Clarendon Hotel, 401 W. Clarendon Ave., Phoenix. 602-274-4774, galblancocafe.com.

9 GUEDO'S TACO SHOP

Try the pan-seared fish or shrimp tacos with shredded purple cabbage, a creamy chipotle crema and a squeeze of lime. Warning: Cash only. **Details:** 71 E. Chandler Blvd., Chandler. 480-899-7841.

10 HABANEROS MEXICAN GRILL

This mom-and-pop restaurant serves Mexican food made with house-made ingredients. Readers recommend the fish tacos and the carnitas burrito.

Details: 14780 N. Northsight Blvd., Scottsdale. 480-991-2997.

11 LA CONDESA

The upscale taco shop offers an affordable menu built on specialty tacos. Try the crunchy, beer-battered shrimp taco or the exotic yet familiar classic carne asada taco. The slow roasted pork aliso came highly recommended.

Details: 1919 N. 16th St., Phoenix. 602-254-6330, lacondesatacoshop.com.

12 LA PERLA

Harry Truman was in the White House when the Pompa family launched this West Valley landmark. Tacos top the menu, but it continues to turn out shrimp enchiladas, red-beef tamales and green-chile cheese crisps.

Details: 5912 W. Glendale Ave., Glendale. 623-939-7561, laperlacafe.net.

13 LAS GLORIAS

Ten dollars spent at this seafood-heavy family restaurant will get you three shrimp or fish tacos, a healthy serving of rice and a salad. **Details:** 5220 S. Central Ave., Phoenix. 602-268-3053, lasglorias.aquiestas.com.

14 LITO'S FINE MEXICAN FOOD

Readers love the beef and chicken tacos served at this small West Valley shop — there's room

for just 12 inside at a time. **Details:** 4720 W. Olive Ave., Glendale. 623-930-0458.

15 LOS GRINGOS LOCOS

We can't put it any better than the reader who recommended the soft pork tacos with green chile and tomatillos or the grilled mahi mahi soft corn tortillas. Top either one off with the fresh salsa.

Details: 280 S. Phelps Drive, Apache Junction. 480-288-5626.

16 LOS TAQUITOS GRILL

Owned and operated by the five Ochoa sisters, this spot may be best known for its homemade habanero sauce and a feature on Food Network's "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives." From carne asada to shrimp, corn to flour, readers said tacos here are super tasty. A new location at 16th Street and Glendale Avenue is scheduled to open Thursday., Oct. 7, Reservations are recommended.

Details: 4747 E. Elliot Road, Phoenix. 480-753-4370, ltgrill.com.

17 MI CASITA TACO SHOPPE

Readers said the food here is very authentic. The shop serves four kinds of tacos: carne asada, chicken, lengua (tongue) and cabeza (head meat).

Details: 44480 W. Honeycutt Ave., Maricopa. 520-494-2489.

18 THE MISSION

Latin American fare goes upscale at this energetic place, where chicken tacos come with oregano and lemon, and a two-person pork shoulder taco plate comes with pineapple glaze and cilantro. If these aren't the most expensive tacos on the list, they're up there. But the difference is striking.

Details: 3815 N. Brown Ave., Scottsdale. 480-636-5005, themissionaz.com.

19 MORENO'S

Azcentral.com viewers cited the grilled pork tacos on corn tortillas and the carne asada. Fish and shrimp tacos are also good. Moreno's is also known for its Mexican-style hot dogs

wrapped in bacon.

Details: 829 S. Rural Road, Tempe.
480-966-9444; 760 E. Broadway
Road, Mesa, 480-844-0030; 601 N.
Arizona Ave., Chandler, 480-782-1988.
morenosmexicangrill.com.

20 PAPI CHULO'S

This Old Town spot features home-style Mexican food with Sonoran specialties. Readers cited the arrachera steak street tacos as "unbelievable." The meat is covered in grilled onions, nopales and cilantro.

Details: 5101 N. Scottsdale Road,
Scottsdale. 480-543-1043.



Los Taquitos Grill
CHAEI MCNAMARA/THE
ARIZONA REPUBLIC



The shrimp tacos
at Barrio Cafe.
MICHAEL MCNAMARA/
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

ARIZONA TACO FESTIVAL

What: The inaugural event will feature more than 30 taco teams competing for the title of best taco in four different categories. Guests will get to sample the tacos, watch a chile-pepper eating contest, try a variety of tequilas, listen to live music and see bartenders face off in a margarita competition.

When: 10 a.m.-
5 p.m. , Oct. 9.

Where: Scottsdale
Waterfront, 7025 E.
Via Soleri Drive.

Admission:
\$10-\$50.

Details:
480-347-0304,
aztacofestival.com.