

Dining Guide

PHOENIX

America's Taco Shop

MEXICAN

2041 N. Seventh St.

602-682-5627, americastacoshop.net

You won't see many options on this menu. That's because it's all about the carne asada and flavorful beef at this quaint Mexican food joint. Choose the signature carne asada burrito, ceviche or flan. Don't miss the chips topped with homemade salsa. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. \$

The Arrogant Butcher **BNR**

AMERICAN

2 E. Jefferson St., Ste. 150 (CityScape)

602-324-8502, foxrc.com

This Fox Restaurant Concept launched in Downtown's new CityScape in February, promising a laid-back approach to upscale comfort food. Meat lovers will delight in much of the menu, which features BBQ pork loin sandwiches and beef short rib stew. Lunch and dinner M-Sa. \$-\$\$\$

Aunt Chilada's Squaw Peak

MEXICAN

7330 N. Dreamy Draw Dr.

602-944-1286, auntchiladas.com

The historic building that now houses this romantic Old World restaurant was built in the 1880s and serves Sonoran-style Mexican food including everything from *fideo* to fried ice cream. Go for Sunday breakfast and you'll be treated to a complimentary chocolate fountain, served with fruit and cream puffs. Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Su. \$-\$\$\$

Barrio Café

MEXICAN

2814 N. 16th St.

602-636-0240, barriocafe.com

Funky, crowded and tons of fun - that's the low-down on this popular Mexican restaurant, located in the barrio and specializing in food from central and southern Mexico. Don't miss the tableside guacamole, the *cochinita pibil* or the churros for dessert. Lunch Tu-F, dinner Tu-Sa, lunch and dinner Su. \$-\$\$\$

Beckett's Table **BNR**

AMERICAN

3717 E. Indian School Rd.

602-954-1700, beckettstable.com

Chef Justin Beckett doesn't disappoint with his seasonal American cooking and classic comfort food. Don't miss the creamy grits and spicy andouille sausage with mustard *jus*, wood-fired mussels with shallot-fennel broth, short ribs with mashed potatoes and lobster and boursin enchiladas with truffled leeks and guajillo chile sauce. Dinner Tu-Su. \$\$

Bliss **BNR**

AMERICAN

901 N. Fourth St.

602-795-1792, blissonfourth.com

With a mix of friendly employees and equally friendly patrons, this cozy haunt - and tree-shaded patio - could give even first-timers a *Cheers*-esque feeling. Meanwhile, the food is as comforting as the atmosphere. Start with a sriracha Caesar salad, then move on to a mac-and-cheese dish loaded with chicken, bacon and onions. 11 a.m.-midnight M-F; 10 a.m.-midnight Sa-Su; late-night until 2 a.m. F-Sa. \$\$

Bluewater Grill

SUSHI/SEAFOOD

1720 E. Camelback Rd., 602-277-3474,

bluewatergrill.com/locations/phoenix.php

Surf's up at this sprawling, relaxed seafood restaurant in central Phoenix. The menu is printed daily and features more than 40 varieties of fresh seafood and shellfish annually. Check out the oyster bar, intimate patio dining, the vibrant photos of life aquatic and the separate sushi bar. Fresh seasonal seafood is also sold by the pound for takeaway. Lunch and dinner daily; happy hours 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 to close M-F, and noon to 5 p.m., Sa-Su. Retail market, 10 a.m. daily. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bobby-Q Great Steaks & Real BBQ

AMERICAN

8501 N. 27th Ave.

602-995-5982, bobbyq.net

Bob Sikora (of Bobby McGee's fame) has created a good-looking but eminently comfortable steak and barbecue restaurant that's comfortably priced, too. Try the chicken quesadilla, the pulled pork, the smokehouse burger and the ribeye. Lunch and dinner daily. \$-\$\$\$

Bombay Spice Grill & Wine

INDIAN

10810 N. Tatum Blvd.

602-795-0020, bombayspice.com

This sleek yet comfortable setting includes a cool wine bar featuring a wall decorated with horizontally placed wine bottles. Executive Chef Sunil Kumar uses olive oil instead of butter and dairy, and favors house-made hot sauces instead of chiles, giving a healthy but tasty spin to Indian cuisine. Don't miss the addictive chickpea ceviche. Entrées are extremely versatile, featuring a "choose two" method from a variety of meats and veggies. Great 20-bottle wine list all sold for \$20 too. Lunch and dinner daily. \$\$

Capital Grille

STEAK

2502 E. Camelback Rd. (Biltmore Fashion Park), 602-952-8900, thecapitalgrille.com

It's power dining at this stylish corporate steakhouse, popular for its dry-aged steaks, award-winning wine list and professional service. Lunch M-F, dinner nightly. Other location: Scottsdale (480-348-1700). \$\$-\$\$\$

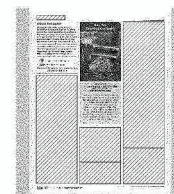
Carmel's Coffee & Bakery **BNR**

AMERICAN, BAKERY

4233 E. Camelback Rd.

480-251-8888, carmelcoffee.com

The menu is as simple and comforting as the atmosphere at this little 1940s cottage. The baked-goods menu switches things up regularly,



sometimes featuring warm blueberry muffins or honey crêpes, while the lunch menu features some professionally-done classics, like a BLT on homemade buttermilk bread or spinach quiche. While you're enjoying that, grab some coffee sourced from Tempe's Cartel Coffee Lab. 6 a.m.-3 p.m. daily. \$

Carolina's Mexican Food

MEXICAN

1202 E. Mohave St.

602-252-1503, carolinasmex.com

By 11 a.m., this bare-bones south Phoenix stalwart is knee-deep in customers, lined up for homey, straightforward tacos, tamales, burritos and enchiladas. The smart ones take home a few packages of Carolina's huge and amazing tortillas, made fresh daily. Breakfast, lunch and dinner M-Sa. Other location: north Phoenix (602-275-8231). \$

Chakra 4 Café and Apothecary

VEGETARIAN

4773 N. 20th St.

(Town & Country Shopping Center)

602-283-1210, chakra4herbs.com

This haven for health nuts is half store, half café and sells thousands of teas and herbs. The café offers organic vegetarian dishes and brews 11 different flavors of ice chai tea each morning. Nibble on the nutty "rawvocado" dip with veggie sticks or the "kaleidoscope" salad, chock-full of kale and veggies. Sip on seasonal soups like magic bean or ginger red lentil, each paired with a slice of Sicilian green olive bread. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Su-W, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Th-Sa. \$-\$\$\$

Crush Lounge

FRENCH

2502 E. Camelback Rd. (Biltmore Fashion

Park), 602-522-2344, christophersaz.com

Christopher Gross' French bistro in Biltmore Fashion Park may be small on space, but it's big on flavor. There isn't much room for food on the short, nightstand-size tables at Crush Lounge, the chic bar that's tucked off the foyer of Christopher's in Biltmore Fashion Park. This makes eating dinner a bit difficult, because even if these plates are titled "petite bouche" (French slang for "small bites"), they're larger than typical appetizers. 4 p.m.-2 a.m. nightly (food service until midnight). \$-\$\$\$

District American Kitchen & Wine Bar

AMERICAN

320 N. Third St.

602-817-5400, districtrestaurant.com

Located in the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel, District American Kitchen and Wine Bar modernizes classic American favorites like sloppy Joes, fried chicken and tomato soup. Similarly, the bar pours all-American spirits and an impressive list of homegrown microbrews. Stop by Thursday through Saturday nights for live music, ranging from indie/electro to "Mosoulfunk." Lunch and dinner daily. \$-\$\$\$

Durant's

AMERICAN

2611 N. Central Ave.

602-264-5967, durantsaz.com

This midtown institution has been serving beef,

booze and other relics of the good old days for the past 50 years. Phoenix's movers and shakers come for Florida stone crabs, excellent lunchtime sandwiches and classic martinis. Lunch M-F, dinner nightly. \$-\$\$\$

Eden's Grill

MIDDLE EASTERN

13843 N. Tatum Blvd.

602-996-5149, edensgrill.com

Housed in a strip mall, this small Middle Eastern restaurant is far prettier than you'd imagine. And the made-from-scratch food is wonderful. Try dolmeh, baba ghanouj, excellent kebabs, catfish you won't believe, and the best baklava in town. Lunch M-F, dinner M-Sa. \$-\$\$

Frank & Albert's

AMERICAN

2400 E. Missouri Ave. (Arizona Biltmore)

602-381-7632, frankandalberts.com

Inspired by the passion of two famed architects, Frank Lloyd Wright and Albert Chase McArthur, Frank & Albert's features a contemporary version

of comfortable classics. Using a host of ingredients from local growers, the chefs have infused a healthier element to some very nostalgic dishes. Dinner specialties such as Coca-Cola pork chop and organic apples and a selection of Desert Flats (flatbreads topped with creative combinations of ingredients) share billing with classic comfort food like ketchup-glazed meatloaf. Open daily: breakfast 6-11 a.m.; lunch 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; dinner 5-10 p.m.; bar 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; High Five happy hour daily 5-7 p.m. \$\$\$

Fuego Tacos **BNR**

MEXICAN, AMERICAN

2501 E. Camelback Rd. (Camelback Esplanade)

602-441-5728, fuegotaco.com

If you're looking for what exemplifies a Mexican-American food restaurant, try this joint's *barbacoa*, featuring a braise of pineapple, soy, chipotle and Dr. Pepper, with a pineapple-habanero hot sauce to add some spice. Not that Dr. Pepper is your only drink option - a full bar boasts more than 30 mixed drinks. But the real winners on the menu here are the tacos, of course, and you'll have a wide selection, all of which come with sugar-cured cabbage, house-made pico and Oaxacan cheeses. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. F-Sa. \$

Gallo Blanco

MEXICAN

401 W. Clarendon Ave. (Clarendon Hotel)

602-327-0880, galloblancocafe.com

The bright orange, red and green walls of Gallo Blanco look as fresh as its zesty tomato salsa served atop the corn-tortilla tacos. The exposed ceiling and concrete floor create a funky urban atmosphere. Try seasoned street tacos, fresh *ceviche* and mouthwatering *carne asada*. The chef's secret? Chef/co-owner Doug Robson uses ingredients not typically found in Mexican cuisine, like soy sauce or quince paste to add bold, unusual flavors to traditional dishes. Quench your thirst with *horchata*, a milky rice drink spiced with cin-

namon. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. \$

The Grind

AMERICAN

3961 E. Camelback Rd.
 602-954-7463, thegrindaz.com

Step into this swanky neighborhood bar for a delectable mesquite-grilled burger or solid old school cocktail. The tall, curvy booths and lipstick-red lighting create an intimate setting for diners to relax and enjoy the evening. The menu features three to-die-for burgers that are worth a try. Classic standbys like the BLT or chicken wings are equally delicious. Save room for fried donut rings drizzled with butterscotch sauce for dessert. Profits from marked menu items are donated to the Boys and Girls Club of Metropolitan Phoenix. Lunch and dinner daily. \$-\$\$

Havana Café

CUBAN

4225 E. Camelback Rd.
 602-952-1991, havanacafe-az.com

Here's a tiny but contemporary-looking Cuban restaurant offering mojitos and great appetizers, as well as plenty of traditional entrées. Thumbs-up for the *papa rellena*, shrimp pancakes, *pastelitos* and ceviche. Lunch M-Sa, dinner nightly. Other location: Scottsdale (480-991-1496). \$\$

Hillside Spot

AMERICAN

4740 E. Warner Rd.,
 480-705-7768, hillsidepot.com

An intoxicatingly smoky smell from the specially prepared pulled pork will have your mouth watering as you enter the door of this Ahwatukee eatery. Once inside, watch the chefs prepare each meal in an open kitchen in the center of the restaurant. Start your day off right with Mia's homemade pancakes or the El Jefe omelet. If you're stopping in for a quick lunch, go for the pulled pork and coleslaw sandwich or Tunisian grilled salad. Dinner diners should try chicken cacciatore or rib eye - both are delicious and comfortably priced. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. \$-\$\$

The Keg Steakhouse & Bar

STEAK

21001 N. Tatum Blvd.
 480-419-7772, kegsteakhouse.com

Positioned between Morton's and Outback, these casual, contemporary corporate steakhouses, decorated with wood and stone, are easy on the eyes and the wallet. Try the baked garlic shrimp appetizer, the prime rib or the unique 12-ounce baseball sirloin. Lunch and dinner daily. Other locations: Chandler (480-899-7500), Tempe (480-557-5552) and Gilbert (480-821-1500). \$\$\$

Kincaid's Fish Chop & Steakhouse

SEAFOOD/STEAK

2 S. Third St., 602-340-0000, kincaids.com

One of Downtown's best dress-up options, this plush steak and seafood restaurant sports a wonderful bar and an appealing menu. Don't miss the signature grilled chipotle tiger prawns with barbecue hollandaise. Lunch and dinner daily; happy hour 4-6 p.m. and 9 p.m.-close M-F, plus

all day Sa and Su. \$\$\$

La Condesa Gourmet Taco Shop **BNR**

MEXICAN

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

This rustic, colorful Phoenix restaurant is an ideal stop for salsa connoisseurs, with about a dozen freshly made varieties, from mild to extra hot, and some more exotic seasonal choices, like a strawberry salsa. (Make sure to down one of their fruit-and pecan-studded horchatas to quell the burn of a particularly fiery flavor.) Despite the restaurant's name, tacos aren't the only delicious part of the menu: The fried Guadalajara-style corn quesadillas might be even better, and a fat burro is another classic, solid choice. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Sa; 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Su. \$

La Grande Orange Grocery & Pizzeria

AMERICAN

4410 N. 40th St.
 602-840-7777, lagrandeorangegrocery.com

This upscale market and deli serves a few simple but elegant breakfast selections, good sandwiches, great pizza (dinner only) and fanciful desserts baked by Tammie Coe. The kid-friendly pizzeria makes wonderful (and often trendy) pies. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. \$-\$\$

Lo-Lo's Chicken & Waffles

SOUL FOOD

10 W. Yuma St., 602-340-1304
 loloschickenandwaffles.com

Ensclosed in a tiny house in south Phoenix, Lo-Lo's is the friendliest and hippest place for soul food in the Valley. Naturally, the fried chicken and waffles (so good together) are outstanding,

but so are the greens, the mac and cheese, the cornbread and the outrageous red velvet cake. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Th; 9 a.m.-9 p.m. F-Sa (open until midnight at Scottsdale location); 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Su. Other location: Scottsdale (480-945-1920). \$

Lon's at the Hermosa Inn

AMERICAN

5532 N. Palo Cristi Rd.
 602-955-7878, lons.com

Thanks to its Territorial décor and fabulous patios, Lon's is a romantic favorite that oozes Old Arizona charm. Executive Chef Jeremy Pacheco adds Southwestern touches to his Contemporary American menu. Breakfast 7-10 a.m. daily; lunch 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F; dinner 5-10 p.m. nightly; brunch 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sa-Su; bar 11 a.m.-10 p.m. daily. \$\$\$

Macayo's Mexican Kitchen

MEXICAN

4001 N. Central Ave.
 602-264-6141, macayo.com

A family-run operation that's been going strong since the '40s. The food's average, but fans keep all eight locations hopping day and night. Lunch and dinner daily. Check online for other Valley locations. \$-\$\$

McCormick & Schmick's

SEAFOOD

2575 E. Camelback Rd.
 602-468-1200, mccormickandschmicks.com

A swanky Portland-based corporate seafood restaurant sporting Tiffany lamps, beveled glass, velvet and fresh fish flown in daily. Lunch M-F, dinner nightly. Other location: Scottsdale (480-998-2026). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Noca

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN

3118 E. Camelback Rd.

602-956-6622 (NOCA), restaurantnoca.com

This long-anticipated invention of restaurateur Eliot Wexler is a prime example of what makes a great restaurant: energy and the fearlessness to shake things up. The menu changes with the seasons, sourcing ingredients from the best purveyors in the world to bring you the freshest seafood and oddball fruits and vegetables. Don't miss Sunday Simple Dinner – a multi-course feast for \$35 per person. Reservations recommended. Dinner Tu-Su. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Pizzeria Bianco

PIZZA

623 E. Adams St.

602-258-8300, pizzeriabianco.com

Located in a beautiful old building in Heritage Square, this tiny place offers exquisitely simple but sophisticated food with an Italian slant. The house-baked bread, focaccia and handmade mozzarella are fabulous, while the wood-fired pizzas are the best in town. Dinner Tu-Sa. \$\$-\$\$\$ all day Su. \$

Seasons 52 BNR

AMERICAN

2502 E. Camelback Rd.

(Biltmore Fashion Park)

602-840-5252, seasons52.com

Nothing on this seasonally inspired menu is over 475 calories, but don't be fooled – low numbers don't equal low quality or nonexistent flavor here. From crisp flatbreads and farmers' market-fresh salads to juicy salmon and silky filet mignon, there's something for everyone, and it's all bound to please your taste buds and your conscience. Custom menus also cater to vegetarians, vegans and those on a low-sodium, gluten-free or garlic-free diet. Lunch and dinner daily. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Spasso Pizza & Mozzarella Bar BNR

Pizza/Italian

4743 N. 20th St. (Town & Country Village)

602-441-0030, spassospizza.com

A leafy patio complete with umbrella-shaded tables fronts this charming eatery. Inside, it replicates the look of an Italian street scene. Take a cue from the name and try the house-made cheeses with roasted veggies and/or the thin, crisp-crust pizzas. Don't stop there – panini are sturdy, pasta is honored and there are some interesting starters and sides, such as grilled calamari, eggplant fritters and, for a kicky change, Italian fries. Finish up with tiny, toothsome cannoli. It's the next best thing to an afternoon on the Amalfi Coast. M-Sa 11 a.m. to 9:50 p.m. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

St. Francis

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN

111 E. Camelback Rd.

602-200-8111, stfrancisaz.com

This is one cool-looking restaurant with a great, big city loft vibe and a slew of clever architectural details. A brisk, young staff handles the front of the house. The kitchen is helmed by Chef/owner Aaron Chamberlin, and his food is very much in a class by itself. Seasonality is honored, but in ways that are genuinely fresh and unusual, such as hot protein served on salads and offbeat vegetarian options. There's a nice balance of light snacky choices (fig and goat cheese-topped flatbread) and more serious stuff (peppered flat iron steak). The menu changes frequently. Lunch and dinner Tu-F; dinner Sa; brunch Su. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

T. Cook's

MEDITERRANEAN

5200 E. Camelback Rd.

(Royal Palms Resort and Spa)

602-808-0766, royalpalmshotel.com

Under the direction of Executive Chef Lee Hillson, T. Cook's offers a robust Mediterranean-inspired cuisine in an estate-like setting, reflective of the resort's Spanish Colonial architecture and décor. Known as one of Phoenix's most romantic restaurants, the dining room is swathed in sun-washed tangerines, accented by original tile murals from various parts of the world, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views of Camelback Mountain. Live piano in T. Cook's lounge Wednesday through Sunday. Reservations are recommended. Breakfast daily 6-11 a.m.; lunch M-Sa, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; dinner nightly 5:30-10 p.m.; Su brunch 10 a.m.-2 p.m. \$\$

TEXAZ Grill

STEAK

6003 N. 16th St.

602-248-7827, texazgrill.com

This is the best example of a down-home Texas bar and steakhouse in Arizona. The reasonably priced food is basic but delicious. Best bets are steaks, burgers and chicken-fried steak. Lunch M-Sa, dinner nightly. \$\$

True Food Kitchen

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN

2502 E. Camelback Rd.

602-774-3488, truefoodkitchen.com

Restaurant wizard Sam Fox (in collaboration with natural health guru Andrew Weil) makes health food hip with a bustling, bright, modern setting at Biltmore Fashion Park. Starters like lemony herb-flecked hummus chockablock with toppings or a flatbread of caramelized onions, plump dried figs and blue cheese reveal a passion for produce. Salad standouts include a chopped Tuscan kale and a butternut squash, apple and goat cheese combo. Try the ricotta ravioli or the gluten-free spaghetti squash casserole, and don't forget the creative elixirs, like the fizzy Red Moon, with grapefruit and *yuzu*. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. M-Th, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. F, 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Sa, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Su. Other location: north Scottsdale (480-265-4500). \$\$

Tryst Café BNR

MEDITERRANEAN/INTERNATIONAL

21050 N. Tatum Blvd., Ste. 108

480-585-7978, trystcafe.com

Here's a fun spot to dine out that takes health-

ful eating seriously – seriously enough to magically conjure up healthy sweet potato tater tots. Almost everything, in fact, comes in a healthy, organic version, and the menu's full of vegetarian and vegan options. Try the open-faced portabella sandwich or the Hawaiian breakfast, a huge bowl of fried eggs and house-smoked kalua pork. 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. daily. \$\$

Viet Kitchen *BNR*

VIETNAMESE

114 W. Adams St.

602-262-5535, vietkitchenaz.com

The Downtown lunch rush shows just how popular this place is with the locals, even if the décor seems basic at a glance. The menu includes entry-level entrées for Asian food freshmen, plus serious victuals for Vietnamese cuisine veterans. Start with the spring rolls or papaya salad, then move on to the stir fry or *ca ry banh mi*. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. M-F (summer); 8 a.m.-8:30 p.m. M-F starting in October. Other location: north Phoenix (602-788-5535). \$

Vitamin T *BNR*

MEXICAN

1 E. Washington St., Ste. 175 (CityScape)

602-688-8168, eatmoretacos.com

A solid choice for takeout (seating gets a little limited), this bright Downtown place features all the “vitamins” you need: tacos, tortas, tamales, etc. Try the *barbacoa* or *queso fundido* tacos, or the Sonoran dog if you're not into the whole “T” theme. Then refresh yourself with a frozen margarita as you're bulking up on those vitamins. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Sa; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Su. \$