

50 Favorite Restaurants in Phoenix 2017

Written by Melissa Larsen

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It is certainly no big secret that the Valley is brimming with restaurants that make us go “mmm.” Read on for 50 of our local favorites (in no particular order). Plus: Check out a few of our Flagstaff faves.



- **Prado (pictured)**

At Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia, Prado dishes up incredible wood-fired Spanish-inspired eats in a beautiful fine-dining atmosphere. The restaurant brought in fall with a fresh Tapas Bar experience alongside a new menu of signature dishes. For a casual dining experience that allows you to taste a little bit of this and a little bit of that, take a seat at the Tapas Bar and watch the chefs grill lamb chops, and other small bites, on the open flame with a glass of Spanish wine in hand. (The albondigas and shrimp cazuela are other favorites.) For a heartier offering, dig into Prado's new menu of Casablanca lamb tagine with baby vegetables, dried fruits and saffron risotto, and roasted sea bass with fingerling potato, caper berries, spinach and goat cheese cream, among other delicious dishes. omnimontelucia.com.

- **elements**

Super-stylish with innovative cuisine and a Food Network personality at the helm, elements at Sanctuary on Camelback remains one of the top spots in the Valley to see and be seen (when you want the meal of a lifetime, that is). Come dinnertime, enjoy creative dishes like hoisin-braised short ribs and softshell crab steamed buns—with a side of those Camelback Mountain panoramas. Post-meal, grab a drink at the next-door jade bar for an unforgettable nightcap. sanctuaryoncamelback.com.

- **Virtú Honest Craft/Nico Heirloom Kitchen**

Chef Gio Osso has found a winning combination in his two outstanding Valley restaurants: Virtú Honest Craft makes for the ultimate date night with an intimate setting and some of Scottsdale's most remarkable dishes (his charred octopus is what dreams are made of) while Nico serves the same quality eats at a slightly lower price point in a comfortable, more family-friendly setting (it was named after Osso's young son, after all) to accommodate its Gilbert-area crowd. virtuscottsdale.com; nicoaz.com.

- **Different Pointe of View**

The longest-running Four-Diamond restaurant in the state, Different Pointe of View (it's been around for more than 32 years) also proffers some of the most gorgeous mountain and city-light views. Located at Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort, which just completed a multi-million-dollar renovation, the super-romantic spot dishes out such decadent eats as the Valley's best lobster bisque and porcini-crusted pork tenderloin. tapatiocliffshilton.com.

- **Quiessence at the Farm**

One of three restaurants located at Phoenix's The Farm at South Mountain, Quiessence at the Farm comprises a farmhouse among towering trees and a beautiful patio (where you will find dreamy firepits and twinkle lights). Guests gather for a menu of ever-changing farm-fresh eats

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(with ingredients from local purveyors like McClendon's Select, Danzeisen Dairy and Two Wash Ranch), complemented by top Arizona wines. gathefarm.com.



photo: Nicky Hedayatzadeh of Mint Photography

- **Pizzeria Bianco/Tratto**

Renowned chef and pizza maker Chris Bianco created next-door-neighboring restaurants Pizzeria Bianco and Tratto in Phoenix. Pizzeria Bianco, a rustic building of brick and wood with two Phoenix locations, serves what has been called the nation's best wood-fired pizzas like margherita and Biancoverde with smoked mozzarella. A bright and inviting establishment with a white color scheme and colorful jars of foods adorning the shelves, Tratto offers upscale Italian cuisine and cocktails made in collaboration with respected Valley farmers, ranchers, millers and artisans. pizzeriabianco.com; trattophx.com.

- **The Mission (Kierland, pictured)/The House Brasserie/Zinc Bistro/Fat Ox**

Whether your cravings call for impeccable Latin fare, French-inspired eats, cozy, modern American cuisine or homemade pasta, you better believe one of these romantic sister Scottsdale restaurants will deliver. Chef Matt Carter dishes up some of the Valley's most impressive Latin dishes at The Mission (alongside divine cocktails) while Kierland Commons' Zinc Bistro features French faves like onion soup and croque monsieur. At the charming House Brasserie, nibble on a selection of shared plates with friends, including Maine lobster gnocchi and steak tartare. Fat Ox in Scottsdale is Chef Carter's newest addition to the dining scene and boasts handsome digs and remarkable pasta plates. Plus, the restaurants each offer some of the best opportunities for alfresco dining in the Valley. themissionaz.com; zincbistroaz.com; thehousebrasserie.com; ilovefatox.com.

- **Crudo**

Chef Cullen Campbell is the mastermind behind this unique and highly successful Phoenix eatery. Crudo makes waves with its highly inventive Modern Italian fare and cool tasting events, and Micah Olson heads up the bar, crafting some of the Valley's most standout sips. ____

- **Christopher's Restaurant & Crush Lounge**

He's been in the kitchen with Julia Child and made dinner for Martha Stewart. With experiences such as these, it is no shock that even a casual dinner on a random Tuesday night by Chef Christopher Gross is something special. Christopher's Restaurant & Crush Lounge at Biltmore Fashion Park dishes up French-inspired fare, like roasted foie gras, pig's feet and sweetbreads, in a setting that is handsome and elegant, yet far from stuffy and snooty. christophersaz.com.

- **House of Tricks**

Situated in two historic bungalows in Tempe, House of Tricks has been a Valley institution for more than 25 years. Enjoy Contemporary American cuisine, in the form of harissa-spiced mussels or rabbit-and-spinach chorizo terrine, for instance, on the lush, twinkle-light patio or inside the nearly 100-year-old, art-filled cottages. houseoftricks.com.

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- **Clever Koi**

Via Clever Koi's Asian-inspired menu, guests of the Phoenix restaurant are taken on quite the journey of sweet, spicy, savory—often in one delectable dish. Start with a few steamed buns or the Pig Face dumpling before digging into Clever Koi's ever-changing ramen selections, with the seasonal pick always being the favorite. No matter how full of broth-soaked noodles you may be, don't overlook the cocktail menu. thecleverkoi.com.

- **Talavera/Proof, an American Canteen**

One is among the Valley's most spectacular fine-dining destinations while the other is a cool, casual beer-drinker's paradise. One boasts foie gras and Chilean sea bass on its lineup while the other might have the most impressive dessert menu in the Valley (hello, the Cereal Milkshake). Whatever you're craving, date-night-ready Talavera or the family-friendly Proof, an American Canteen has just what you need to meet your hankering—with stellar mountain views, to boot. fourseasons.com/scottsdale.

- **Kai**

Located at Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass in Chandler, Kai remains the only restaurant in the state to be rated Five-Star by Forbes and Five-Diamond by AAA. To create such memorable cuisine, Chef de Cuisine Ryan Swanson incorporates the essence of the Pima and Maricopa tribes and locally farmed ingredients from the Gila River Indian Community. Only at Kai could an appetizer called "Hand-Picked Lettuces" be such a treat. wildhorsepassresort.com/kai.

- **J&G Steakhouse**

Like amazing wine, jaw-dropping views and a stick-to-your-ribs piece of meat? Swing by J&G Steakhouse at The Phoenician for all that—and more. One of the Valley's best-looking steakhouses, the restaurant impresses our sense of sight as much as our taste buds. The menu features steakhouse classics that have been kicked up a notch—or 20—by Executive Chef Jacques Qualin. Try the J&G cheeseburger or any of the cuts of steak paired with the dreamy mac and cheese or potato gratin. jgsteakhousescottsdale.com.

- **Sushi Roku (pictured)**

Located at W Scottsdale, it is easy to believe that Sushi Roku is one of the sexiest dining spots in the Valley. Beautiful interiors and thoughtful presentation make for plenty of eye candy, while diners can't get enough of the creative sushi dishes that even non-seafoodies will want to savor, like the popcorn shrimp roll with jalapeño. Finish your feast with the s'mores dessert—a Zen garden of crushed graham cracker, vanilla cream, chocolate and green tea truffles and a personal fire for warming it all up. innovatedining.com/restaurants/sushiroku.



- **deseo (pictured)**

Nuevo Latino restaurant, deseo at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, has long been a flavorful force to be reckoned with. Don't dare miss a starter of ceviche and a freshly muddled cocktail, though a pick among the menu's South American wines will also keep you satiated. For a meaty main, check out the wagyu hanger steak or Duroc pork belly. kierlandresort.com.

- **Andreoli Italian Grocery**

Part restaurant, part market—all delicious. Locals pop into Andreoli Italian Grocery to pick up sometimes hard-to-find Italian ingredients while also

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snatching up impeccable pasta dishes, sandwiches and salads and eyeing a pastry case filled to the brim with glorious Italian cakes and cookies. Relax with a porchetta sandwich—nibble a sfogiatelle for dessert, naturally—in the charming dining room filled with regulars and mismatched chairs. andreoli-grocer.com.

- **True Food Kitchen**

True Food Kitchen has proven once and for all that you don't have to rely on lean chicken and kale to make a healthy meal (though the restaurant makes poultry and greens enticing, too). At its two Valley locations, the Fox Restaurant Concepts eatery focuses on anti-inflammatory, nutritious eats with great flavor. Favorites include indulgent lasagna Bolognese and rainbow-hued the farmers' market crudité. truefoodkitchen.com.

- **El Chorro**

There are few Valley restaurants more "Arizona" than this historic landmark in Paradise Valley. A picturesque spot with a popular patio and a reputation for hosting beautiful weddings, El Chorro also impresses with its time-honored eats, like shrimp cocktail, bourbon cream corn and beef stroganoff. Just don't fill up on the gratis sticky buns pre-meal—you've been warned. elchorro.com.

- **Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak/La Hacienda by Richard Sandoval**

Found at Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak and La Hacienda by Richard Sandoval have delighted resort guests and locals for years with first-class service and, of course, impressive eats. At Bourbon Steak, dig into both Japanese and American wagyu beef selections (and don't forget the truffled macaroni gratin on the side). From tacos to a guacamole sampler to enchiladas, La Hacienda is home to what might be the best Mexican dining in Scottsdale—with more than 200 tequilas to wash it all down. scottsdaleprincess.com.



- **Marcellino Ristorante**

In October, Marcellino Ristorante celebrated 13 years in the Valley, handcrafting the best pasta in Scottsdale daily (the server may even bring out samples of each featured pasta to view) with one of the area's most affable chefs at the helm, Chef Marcellino Verzino. Toast with him at Chef's Island for a personalized, intimate multi-course feast or enjoy live music on Thursday and Saturday nights and world-class service in the main dining room. marcellinoristorante.com.

- **Twisted Grove Parlor + Bar**

After finding success at its Scottsdale location, a second (and already well-visited) Twisted Grove Parlor + Bar just opened at the corner of Camelback Road and 32nd Street. Patrons love the casual, comfortable atmosphere that is accented by hearty dishes of wild mushroom pappardelle, charred brussels sprouts, flatbreads and the restaurant's famous and tangy Twisted Noodle Salad. twistedgrove.com.

- **Cibo Urban Pizzeria**

In a 1913 bungalow in Downtown Phoenix, Cibo Urban Pizzeria dishes out some of the Valley's most beloved slices and glorious handmade pastas. (The spot with is a charmer too, thanks to exposed brick, a fireplace, hardwood floors, stained glass and a twinkle-light patio.) More than 20 artisanal pizza options fill the menu, so grab some pals and order up a few. cibophoenix.com.

- **The Gladly (pictured)**

From the fresh and delicious raw bar to one of the Valley's best happy hours (every day from 3 to 6 p.m.), The Gladly in Phoenix has been an area favorite since it opened in 2014. The restaurant is home of the OMFG salad, which has its own Facebook page, but the menu's impressive dishes do not stop there. Try the short rib pot roast, duck meatloaf and, for dessert, the banana Nutella jar. thegladly.com.

- **Artizen, Crafted American Kitchen & Bar**

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You can find this wonderful, whimsical eatery at The Camby in Phoenix. Decked in deep blues and rich copper tones, Artizen, Crafted American Kitchen & Bar impresses the eyes before moving onto the taste buds. Kick off your meal with a “snack” of veal cheeks before digging into a hearty main dish. Perhaps honey hot fried chicken or shrimp and grits? artizenaz.com.



- **Bitter & Twisted Cocktail Parlour (pictured)**

Since opening its doors in 2015, Bitter & Twisted Cocktail Parlour has become the top spot in Downtown Phoenix for innovative, sometimes over-the-top cocktails. Its Book O' Cocktails (which is a work of art itself) features dozens of unique and delicious offerings, whether you want something timeless and traditional or outside of the box—or cup, rather—like the colorful Taste the Rainbow, perked-up Déjà Cold Brew or Her Name is Rio, with blackberry compote (pictured). Hungry? You can't go wrong with Chef Bob Tam's ramen “Momo” burger, served on crisp ramen buns. bitterandtwistedaz.com.

- **Ocotillo**

New-ish to the Phoenix dining scene, Ocotillo has already made a good impression thanks to its New American menu—with an Arizona flair—and its too-cool outdoor dining spaces. Though sizable fish, meat and pasta entrees are available, order up several ever-changing small plates and salads and grab a spot at the high-rise community table. Need a pick-me-up? The on-site coffee bar is open until 2 p.m. ocotillophx.com.

- **Nobuo at Teeter House**

From his James Beard Foundation Award to his 30-plus years of experience, Chef Nobuo Fukuda has long been a culinary tour de force in the Valley. At his Modern Japanese restaurant in Phoenix, Nobuo at Teeter House, the gourmet genius dishes up the super-inventive and artful omakase that he has become known for. Keep a close eye on the Web site for special tasting events. nobuofukuda.com.

- **Barrio Café**

Barrio Café, from former Woman Who Moves the Valley, Chef Silvana Salcido Esparza, creates regional Mexican cuisine including sopas (thick tortillas with vegetable and meat toppings), tacos and enchiladas among a variety of other authentic dishes, along with an extensive list of margaritas. With its vibrant, street-style art on the walls and in the parking area, this eatery is always lively and bustling with patrons. barriocafe.com.

- **Tarbell's**

A classy establishment with a modern flare that has hosted many a special-occasion dinner, Tarbell's in Phoenix prides itself on an atmosphere of “refined relaxation” and has for many years. Chef and owner Mark Tarbell's chic spot serves wines from around the world, quality, Contemporary American food, produce from local farmers and hand-selected meats. Have a seat at the expansive bar, and enjoy a glass of French rosé. tarbells.com.

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photo: Debby Wolvos

- **Gertrude's (pictured)**

As it's located at Desert Botanical Garden, diners are guaranteed surroundings that are as beautiful as the dishes in front of them (plus, a few friendly critters might pop in to say hi). Be sure to request a patio seat to enjoy Korean fried chicken thighs, blackened scallops and more on its seasonal menu. For dessert, try the carrot custard for a unique sweet that won't disappoint. gertrudesrestaurant.net.

- **Vincent on Camelback**

Chef Vincent Guerithault brings his training in classic French cuisine to the table at Vincent on Camelback (which has been in around for more than three decades) and pairs it with the unique ingredients only the Southwest can provide. Although set in Phoenix, the restaurant's charming atmosphere and exemplary staff will make guests feel as though they're spending the evening in France. vincentsoncamelback.com.

- **Blue Hound Kitchen + Cocktails**

In the heart of Downtown Phoenix, Blue Hound Kitchen + Cocktails is a relaxed neighborhood joint with a stellar bar program where diners can get comfy and breathe easy amidst the bustling cityscape. Blue Hound Kitchen has dozens of hanging lights, wood floors, wood-slatted ceilings and a bright, welcoming ambience to gather with friends. One of the newest stars on the cocktail menu is Boba Tea, with black tea-infused Titos Vodka, chai vermouth, coconut milk, cinnamon, tapioca pearls and nutmeg. bluehoundkitchen.com.

- **FnB**

A gourmet gastropub in Downtown Scottsdale, FnB employs a mix of modern and classic style interior with elaborate lighting and chandeliers overhead. A farm-to-table experience, many of the ingredients that go into their dishes come from local farms—and FnB prides itself on offering a variety of Arizona-sourced wines by the bottle. FnB's menu changes with the seasons. fnbrestaurant.com.

- **Roka Akor**

Employing the robata Japanese-style cuisine, Roka Akor is a Japanese steakhouse, seafood and sushi restaurant in Scottsdale that exudes energy and sophistication. Food is cooked on a 12-ft. robata grill with mesquite charcoal and almond wood. And it's bound to get hot—this grill, similar to a barbecue, can get up to 1,900 degrees. rokaakor.com.

- **The Parlor**

With gorgeous execution and fresh ingredients, The Parlor offers magnificent Italian fare in a jovial setting. Get your pizza fix, but do it with style and sophistication. The restaurant has its own gardens where produce is freshly harvested, and everything from pastries to pastas are handmade daily. Wood-fired pizzas include varieties like the Smokey pizza (speck, smoked tomato sauce, olive tapenade, ricotta, smoked mozzarella and arugula) and the Spicy Florentine (sautéed spinach, garlic-smoked mozzarella, parmesan, ricotta, Calabrian chile and garlic bread crumbs). theparlor.us.

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- **Mora Italian**

The Valley was a-buzz for months leading up to the arrival of Chef Scott Conant, of “Chopped,” and his restaurant, Mora Italian. In the months since it opened, the Phoenix space has become a see-and-be-seen hot spot that dishes up time-honored classics (like handmade pasta and wood-fired pizza napoletana), modern spins on Italian favorites and a stellar cocktail list for washing it all down. The tasty brunch menu means digging into dishes like the over-the-top granola (pictured). moraitalian.com.

- **Beckett's Table**

Located in the Arcadia neighborhood in Phoenix, Beckett's Table blends elegance with comfort food in an inviting atmosphere. The comfort-food haven itself has a sleek, modern warehouse style to it, with a comfortable rustic feel where guests dine on home-cooked goodness and a killer bacon s'mores dessert. Its summertime Grown-ups Table is always a popular attraction. beckettstable.com.

- **Los Sombreros**

Owner and chef, Azucena Tovar, brings the essence of Mexico to life with authentic dishes like green corn tamales, crepas (Mexican crepes) and mole poblano, a type of sauce typically made with chiles, nuts, spices and a variety of other ingredients. Los Sombreros, a longtime Valley landmark that opened in 1994, serves its food on bright dinnerware and has a lively atmosphere with ambient lighting and Mexican artwork. lossombreros.com.

- **Pomo Pizzeria**

Handcrafted authentic Neapolitan pizza in the true spirit of Napoli, Italy—this is what you get at Pomo Pizzeria, with locations found across the Valley. With wood-burning ovens and an old family recipe, Pomo uses slow-rising sourdough with organic wheat flour imported from Naples (the impeccable lasagna is drool-worthy, too). pomopizzeria.com.

- **St. Francis**

Nestled within uptown Phoenix, St. Francis is a family-owned, family-friendly establishment with an atmosphere that's all about comfort and contemporary vibes. Brick walls, wood-beamed ceilings and a warm glow cater to the restaurant's rustic aesthetic. The wood-burning oven at St. Francis, which uses mesquite for its smokiness and almond for its heat, is what makes this restaurant truly stand out. Nearly every dish incorporates the oven in some way, whether it be roasted meats or roasted vegetables pureed to make sauce. Here, brunch is a standout. stfrancisaz.com.



photo: Debby Wolvos

- **T. Cook's**

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Located at the recently renovated Royal Palms Resort & Spa in Phoenix, T. Cook's serves fresh, seasonal provisions with a Mediterranean flare. Plan a romantic date near one of the restaurant's cozy fireplaces or gather at one of the open-air tables to immerse yourself in the pretty setting. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and the 7-Day brunch menu are offered. tcooksphoenix.com.

- **Postino WineCafe**

Postino Winecafe, with popular locations Valleywide, is known for its delicious and wide selection of bruschetta and expansive wine-by-the-glass program. Paired with a glass of wine and a group of good friends, this is the perfect place to spend a relaxing evening in a modern, lively environment (if you get seated in one of the cozy couch areas, even better). Order the pub board with soft pretzels and aged cheddar to start, and keep an eye on weekday specials. postinowinecafe.com.

- **LON's at the Hermosa**

A part of the Scottsdale luxury boutique hotel, The Hermosa Inn, LON's serves gourmet globally inspired Arizona fare including brunch (on weekends), lunch, dinner, drinks and dessert. The kitchen regularly hosts fun cooking classes and beer and wine dinners, even though a typical weekday night is worth celebrating with Executive Chef Jeremy Pacheco's pecan-grilled filet mignon or sweet corn agnolotti. hermosainn.com/lons.

- **ZuZu**

If the chic, mid-century modern good looks of ZuZu at Hotel Valley Ho don't immediately draw you in, its scrumptious menu will. Start with a small plate of buttery Hokkaido scallops before digging into the Baker's Bacon Chop (you may want to loosen up that belt first), as it's the only dish like it in the Valley. For a real treat at the end of the repast, stick a spoon, fork and straw in the larger-than-life Show Stopper Shake. Heck, it has its own hashtag: #zuzushowstoppershake. hotelvalleyho.com.

- **Tomaso's (pictured)**

Since 1977, Chef Tomaso Maggiore has been dishing up authentic Italian eats (he was born in Italy, after all) along the Camelback Corridor in Central Phoenix. At the recently-revamped restaurant, you'll find regulars who visit week after week, ordering their same favorites each time—many of whom have become like family to Chef. Order any of the pasta dishes, and you won't be disappointed. Plus, Chef Maggiore recently opened Tomaso's When In Rome in North Scottsdale, serving Roman classics, like the simply decadent cacio y pepe. tomasos.com.

- **Binkley's Restaurant**

All-star chef Kevin Binkley is up to his old tricks at Binkley's new location in Phoenix. (He shuttered his original, highly revered outpost in Cave Creek last year.) At the restaurant, guests are treated to a multi-course, three-and-a-half-hour tasting menu. Though the meal runs \$165 per person (not including add-ons or wine pairings), a meal from Chef Binkley is a memory-making experience. Only 24 spots are available each evening, so reservations are a must. binkleysrestaurant.com.



Flagstaff Focus:

- **Pizzicletta**

It might not be much to look at from the outside and the interior is about as big as a living room, but Pizzicletta is making serious waves throughout the state for its impeccable wood-fired pizzas. Start with a beautiful plate of burrata with smoked fruit while the main course gets crisped in the specialized oven. We adore the Bianca with charred kale, almonds and gorgonzola. pizzicletta.com.

- **Coppa Café (pictured)**

Diners can find a dose of European fare in this quaint eatery where you'll find mismatched armchairs, a colorful atmosphere and the likes of foie gras, house-made cheese and lamb belly on the menu. For a taste of all that Coppa Café has to offer, reserve your spot for a tasting menu. coppacafe.net.

- **Diablo Burger**

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Don't fear the line that meanders out the door at this quintessential Flagstaff dining spot (it's a favorite of nearby students and visitors, alike), as a burger from Diablo is worth the wait. Each local, open-range, antibiotic- and growth hormone-free patty has been char-broiled to perfection, resulting in bites that are juicy but with a crisp exterior. The burger is then crowned with locally made English muffins and sided with Belgian-style frites. diabloburger.com.