

Martin Dufwenberg's ESA-Guide to Eating in The Old Pueblo

Mexican: Tucson has many good Sonoran places, but in the northern half of town perhaps only one that is really excellent, namely *Rosa's* (SW corner of Campbell Ave and Ft. Lowell Rd). Anything with carne seca (e.g. chimichanga-carne-seca-enchilada-style) is wonderful. Their chile rellenos are great, and the margaritas too. If you are willing to drive (much) farther, and have time, another classic is *Mi Nidito* (1813 S 4th Ave), famous for its birria. Expect to wait, perhaps hours, for a table, during which time you can enjoy a frozen margarita and admire pictures of Jim Furyk, Julio Iglesias, Adam Richman, and Bill Clinton (who wanted to try everything; they created their "President's plate" in his honor). More touristy, still pretty good, less crowded, and closer (downtown) is *El Charro Cafe* (311 N Court Ave); they also have two other locations in the foothills (7725 N Oracle Rd , 6910 E Sunrise Rd). Their carne seca is drier than *Rosa's*, but still good. I also like their Enchilada Mole Clásico.

Steak: A mile or two east of the ESA venue you find the traditional and fancy steakhouse *Fleming's* (6360 N Campbell Ave; 5-7 PM ⇒ happy hour bar menu where the burger is the stand-out deal!). For more of a Wild West experience, I have three great suggestions: *El Corral* (2201 E River Rd) has unique ambiance and is famous for prime rib. If you are willing to drive for a while, *Li'l Abner's* (8501 N Silverbell Rd) is awesome. Finally, a fun option if you brought family, go to *Pinnacle Peak* in *Trail Dust Town* (6541 E Tanque Verde Rd; a little Wild West town /historical shopping center).

Sonoran Hot Dog: This local favorite (which originated in Hermosillo) is sold by "dogueros" at street carts. It's bacon-wrapped in a bolillo-style bun, with pinto beans, tomatoes, onions, mayonnaise, mustard, and jalapeño salsa. Wow! My favorite: *El Sinaloense Hot Dog Cart* (1526 N Alvernon Way; rhs of the road). Try also their horchata (cinnamon rice milk), or a Mex-made Coke (cane sugar, thick heavy bottle).

Burgers: I already mentioned *Fleming's* deal *Lindy's* (431 N 4th Ave; btw, a fun street to check out more generally) is famous. Adam Richman ate there (+ at *Mi Nidito* + at *El Guero Canelo*) in Man Vs. Food. Finally, if you haven't been to chains *Five Guys* or *In-&-Out* (multiple locations) you missed out (google and find out why!)

Cheese Steak

Don't go to NJ! *Frankie's* (2574 N Campbell Ave; closes at 8:00 PM) ship amoroso rolls from there, then compensate for the haul by using better-grade beef than standard. Go provolone rather than cheese-whiz. Feel adventurous? Try "South Philly" style.

Chinese: Here the top-three: *Jun Dynasty* (2933 E Grant Road; Szechuan), *Kung Fu Noodle* (3122 N Campbell Ave), *China Phoenix* (7090 N Oracle Rd; Cantonese). And for dim-sum, go to *Gee's Garden* (1145 N Alvernon), Sat+Sun 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

Indian: *Saffron* (7607 Oracle Rd) is nice. The owner also offers a smaller/simpler grill option, just off the UofA campus: *Kababeque* (845 E University Blvd 185).

Ethiopian: I've been to Café Desta (758 S Stone Ave; just south of downtown): big plate to share, eat with your hands, some folks love it. For alcohol, byo. Also popular is *Zemam's* (two locations: 2731 E Broadway Blvd; 119 E Speedway Blvd).

Fish-in-the-desert? Sushi Zona (5655 E River Rd) is pretty good.

eegee's: Looking for gelato? Try *Frost* (Encantada shopping; 2905 E Skyline Dr). For a unique alternative, try local favorite *eegee's* (many locations) signature frozen fruit drink.

Breakfast: My favorites are *Frank's & Francisco's* (3843 E Pima St; I get Geoff's Special with a side of chorizo, but you can't go wrong) and *Poco & Mom's* (New Mexico style; two locations; go to the diner, it's far, but worth the drive: 1060 S Kolb Rd; Red or green? Christmas!). For sandwiches+: go to any *Einstein Brothers'* (bagels). For a nice patio/garden experience, go to *Tohono Chul Garden Bistro* (7366 N. Paseo del Norte; close to WWL, west of Oracle Rd; local, organic fresh).

Arizona Inn ... is a historic hotel, close to the university (2200 E Elm St). I wouldn't go mainly for the food, but to walk around, sit in their library, on their patio, by the pool. But if you are hungry, their shrimp quesadilla is enough to share (on the patio!).

Downtown ... has become quite attractive recently, and many new places opened. We often go there with speakers, e.g. to *Penca* or *Cafe Poca Cosa* (both sort-of Mexican inspired), or *Downtown Kitchen* (plays around with some Asian touches). Or drive a little west from there, on Congress St, under the I-10, and try *Augustin Kitchen* in the newly developed Mercado District (100 S Avenida del Convento).

Just off the UofA campus ... on University Blvd, there are many OK eateries: *Wilko* (we often take speakers for lunch), *Kababeque*, *Gentle Ben's*, *Sinbad's*, *Pei Wei*, *Red's Smokehouse*, *Frog & Firkin*,...

What can be found relatively closer to the Westward Look Resort? First, go east (a mile or two) from the WWL, on Ina Rd becomes Skyline Dr, to reach intersection with Campbell Ave, with eateries in every corner. Notables include *Fleming's* (*op. cit.*; SE corner), *Vivace* (Italian place; NE corner), and in the NW corner the *Encantada* shopping center which offers much, e.g. take-away sushi inside the grocery store *AJ's*, and restaurants *North* (Italian style; nice patio for sitting outside) and *Humble Pie*. Second, go west (a ¼ mile or so) from the WWL, on Ina Rd., to reach Oracle Rd. In the SE corner is *China Phoenix* (*op. cit.*). Take a right on Oracle and you come to *Saffron* or *El Charro* (both *op. cit.*). Take a left (after hanging a U-ey) and there is e.g. *Wildflower* (American; 7037 N Oracle Rd) and *Chef Alisa's* (Bosnian; 5931 N Oracle Rd) which some folks like. Further south, *Sushi on* [6449 N] Oracle is good. For non-expensive options, check out *Pei Wei* (633 W Ina Rd; Asian). *Tucson Tamale* (7286 N Oracle Rd), or *Truland Burgers & Greens* (7332 N Oracle Rd).