



Where to Eat Now

A QUICK LOOK AT OUR GUIDE TO THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN TEXAS, PLUS THIS MONTH'S NOTEWORTHY NEW ARRIVALS.

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▲ EL CHIPIRÓN, AUSTIN

New **SPANISH** | People are sidling up to the spare white bar in this bright South Austin space, no doubt lured by an entire menu dedicated to gin and tonics served with a veritable garden of garnishes. Bite-size pinchos mean you can flit from dish to dish without having to commit; be sure to have a nibble of the requisite leg of jamón ibérico on the counter, the nutty pork best alongside traditional Manchego cheese with a tiny cube of guava paste. The savory oxtail terrine had great flavor (and a few tiny cartilaginous bits to remind you of the source). A special of inky black paella studded with morsels of the restaurant's namesake chipirón (baby squid) was muy auténtico, while ribeye medallions with confit potatoes and pimientos de padrón were a little tamer but still resolutely Iberian. *Bar, 2717 S. Lamar Blvd (512-518-3618). D Mon–Sat. B Sun.* \$\$

Amarillo

BEST IN TOWN: This place is most definitely a joint, but the burgers are works of art at tiny **COYOTE BLUFF CAFE**.

Austin

BEST IN TOWN: Expect imaginative food and Texas-themed cocktails at faux rustic **BARLEY SWINE**. At modern **EMMER & RYE**, light-filled rooms and house-milled grains bolster an ambitious kitchen. **FONDA SAN MIGUEL** carries the torch for interior Mexican. The city's best brisket (and the world's longest line) is at **FRANKLIN BARBECUE**. Tony **JEFFREY'S** makes all occasions special. The lighting's moody, the food modern at **JUNIPER**. A Mediterranean-oriented kitchen supplies casual **LAUNDERETTE**. Mix and match three courses in **LENOIR'S** all-white setting. The biscuits are fluffy, the dining room formal at **OLAMAIÉ**. Modern Japanese is the ticket at **UCHI** and **UCHIKO**.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: **PITCHFORK PRETTY** serves gorgeously plated "Hill Country fare" in an understated but elegant room.

Beaumont—Port Arthur

BEST IN TOWN: In Beaumont, **THE GRILL** does steaks and seafood to a T. Steaks are lustworthy at **JERRY NELSON'S** gallery of taxidermy. **J WILSON'S** keeps it real with fried chicken and red beans and rice.

Bryan—College Station

BEST IN TOWN: **CHRISTOPHER'S WORLD GRILLE** offers global flavors in a pleasant setting in Bryan. "Eclectic" defines **MADDEN'S CASUAL GOURMET**, in Bryan. In College Station, **THE REPUBLIC** stakes its reputation on steaks.

Corpus Christi

BEST IN TOWN: At **AKA SUSHI AND SAKE BAR**, feast on the likes of king salmon with Japanese mint. Unassuming **BLUE CLOVE** turns out superlative seafood. The fare is eclectic and French(ish) at playful **DRAGONFLY**. Gastropub grub emerges from hip **POST AT LAMAR PARK**. Heaps of fried seafood define casual **SNOOPY'S PIER**. At bayside cottage **YARDARM**, fresh fish visit frequently.

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Dallas

BEST IN TOWN: Giant glazed carrots are as famous as the beef at **BOB'S STEAK & CHOP HOUSE**. **CATTLEACK BARBEQUE** made this magazine's top ten barbecue list. Elegant, lively **FEARING'S** rules the Ritz Carlton. At lovely **FLORA STREET CAFE**, the food's as artful as the setting. New American fare and well-worn brick walls define **GEMMA**. **LUCIA**'s intimate, homey space is as appealing as its Italian fare. In a cheery house, **MIA'S TEX-MEX** turns out Texas's signature cuisine. **NONNA** crafts creative pastas and pizzas in not-too-casual dining rooms. Japanese **TEI-AN SOBA HOUSE** defines "serene."

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: Guadalajara-style fare goes upscale at hot spot **JOSÉ**.

El Paso

BEST IN TOWN: For a steak with street tacos on the side, try **CAFÉ CENTRAL**. There's often live music at neighborhood favorite **PELICAN'S**.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: Go for the elk at industrial-hip **PARK TAVERN**.

Fort Worth

BEST IN TOWN: Dark woods and nice linens welcome boots and jeans to **BONNELL'S**. The Modern Art Museum's **CAFÉ MODERN** is a blockbuster. Old brick walls embrace an eclectic menu at **CLAY PIGEON**. Casual **ELLERBE FINE FOODS** speaks with a Southern accent. **GRACE** lives up to its name.

Galveston

BEST IN TOWN: Deliberately untrendy **GAIDO'S** keeps seafood real. Combine bay watching with Greek eats at **OLYMPIA GRILL AT PIER 21**. Latin flair with steaks and seafood—only at **RUDY & PACO**.

Houston

BEST IN TOWN: The Italian kitchen is regional and formal at **DA MARCO**. It's Greek to them at **HELEN**. **KATA ROBATA** helped jump-start modern Japanese in Houston. Drive a few miles to Pearland for crazy-good barbecued beef ribs at **KILLEN'S BARBECUE**. **THE PASS**'s gallery-like space showcases playful tasting menus. Nontraditional Indian keeps **PONDICHERI** busy from morning to night. **UCHI** knows what Americans crave in contemporary Japanese food. Mexican guru Hugo Ortega aces Oaxacan food at **XOCHI**.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: Szechuan flavors are bold at Los Angeles import **CHENGDU TASTE**. Trendsetters like handsome **OHN KOREAN EATERY**.

Laredo

BEST IN TOWN: **TABERNILLA BAR DE TAPAS**'s chef drew his inspiration from Spain.

Lubbock

BEST IN TOWN: Go Latin with a modern twist at **COCINA DE LA SIRENA**, lovingly run by a mother and daughter. **EVIE MAE'S PIT BARBEQUE**'s food truck did so well that they graduated to a building.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: Texas flair defines the mid-day fare at **BRUNCH AT STONEGATE**.

Rio Grande Valley

BEST IN TOWN: In McAllen, **THE CENTENNIAL CLUB**'s motto—"South Texas Gourmet Soul Food"—says it all. The menu is New American, the technique exceptional at McAllen's classy modern bistro **SALT**.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: The barbecue is spot-on at **JETHRO**. "Not fancy, just good" is the motto at **THE VERMILLION**'s second location, in Harlingen.

San Antonio

BEST IN TOWN: Business dinners and romantic trysts call for **BIGA ON THE BANKS**. Both fare and decor are modern in the converted gas station housing aptly named **BLISS**. **DOUGH PIZZERIA NAPOLETANA** does pizza and so much more. Peer through glass walls at the happy people at eclectic, extraordinary **FEAST**. **MIXTLI**'s modern Mexican tasting menus are garnering national attention. Intimate, craft-oriented **RESTAURANT GWENDOLYN** is old-school all the way. Robust Italian fare draws a crowd to **TRE TRATTORIA**.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY: **CAJUN CRAWFISH** offers the Texas coast's unique fusion fare: Cajun-Vietnamese vittles. The Valencia Hotel's revamped and renamed restaurant, **DORREGO'S**, has gone Argentinian. Mediterranean meets Southern coastal America at hip **PERIPHERY**.

Tyler—Longview

BEST IN TOWN: A nice surprise is finding fine dining at **CAFÉ BARRON'S** in a boutique in Longview. Tyler's **CORK** is part corner bar, part upscale restaurant. **GOUNG ZHOU ASIAN BISTRO** is our favorite sushi spot in Longview.

Central Texas

BEST IN TOWN: A half-timbered room showcases steaks and seafood (perfectly paired with Texas wines) at Fredericksburg's **CABERNET GRILL**.

West Texas

BEST IN TOWN: Evenings are for steaks, lunches for light fare at the Hotel Limpia's **BLUE MOUNTAIN BISTRO**, in Fort Davis. Housed in a historic hotel in Marathon, **12 GAGE** draws travelers and regional residents from miles around for oyster "nachos" and elk-and-bison meat loaf. 🍴

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