

Best Dishes of 2017

Last updated December 27, 2017

2017 was a great year for Green Chile Cheeseburgers, New Mexico's iconic lunch. Two even made their way onto my coveted Hall of Fame GCCB list. And Dennis Apodaca has resurfaced in a new downtown eatery, Maya Cuisine, which shares a symbiotic relationship with Monk's Corner Taproom.

My favorite lunch of the year? Easily the GCCB with slaw and a glass of Treble Reserve at Maya/Monks. You will probably see me there with some geezer retirees around Noon on most Wednesdays.

Happy eating.

General Recommendations

- Anything at M'Tucci's Italian Market and Pizzeria. I have been there 72 times. Cory Gray and Shawn Cronin are inventive culinary wizards.
- Anything at Maya Cuisine/Monk's Corner Taproom. I eat/drink here a lot.
- Fresh Bistro. Jon Young's family operated restaurant on 4th is truly amazing.

Specific Recommendations



GCCB

Green Chile Cheeseburger at [Ironwood Kitchen](#)

The burger is fashioned from chuck ground at the Rio Rancho Meat Market and is hand formed in the kitchen. 8 oz of juicy, tasty, and tender meat cooked between rare and medium rare. Cheddar and green finish it off, and it is served on a lightly toasted bun. I asked for it to be served competition style (garnish on the side. This is a great burger. I had an excellent coleslaw on the side. Light vinegar-based dressing (no mayo) makes this a light and fresh tasting slaw--the way I make it at home.



Duroc Pork Chop

Duroc Pork Chop at [M'Tucci's Moderno](#)

House Cut 12oz Porterhouse, Artichoke-Parmesan Crust, Rosemary Mustard Butter Sauce, Grilled Garlic Polenta, Sautéed Baby Spinach.

Dry Aged Porterhouse pork chop has superior natural marbling. It's a grill's best friend. Compart Duroc pork contains a higher degree of flavor naturally, without any added water or ingredients.



port wine bread pudding

Bread Pudding at [M'Tucci's Moderno](#)

Brioche Bread Pudding with Port Wine Cherries, Chocolate Ganache, Whipped Mascarpone.

If this dessert gets to the regular menu, it will earn a place near the top of my Hall of Fame Bread Pudding List.



Gnudi

Gnudi at [M'Tucci's Moderno](#)

Fresh Handmade House Ricotta Dumplings, Preserved Lemon, Olive Oil, Sautéed Spinach, Caramelized Onion, Pecorino, Bread Crumbs.

Gnudi is somewhat like Gnocchi, but with the potato replaced by Ricotta Cheese. I still have dreams about this [John Haas](#) creation.



Peaches and Cream French Toast

Peaches and Cream French Toast at [Fresh Bistro](#)

The Dazzler and I shared this Sourdough French toast with peaches and sweetened mascarpone and a brandied syrup.

Unbelievably good.



Pork Cheek Pappardelle

Pork Cheeks on Pappardelle at [M'Tucci's Moderno](#)

This dish is not on the menu, but it should be. The cheeks may be the tastiest part of the pig. Slow cooked and served with an excellent pappardelle.

Beg John Haas to put this on the menu. Tell him that you are a Cubs Fan.



drunken noodles

Drunken Noodles at [Pad Thai Cafe](#)

Drunken Noodles (Thai Hot!). Those Red things are Thai Bird Peppers. Hot 3.

Drunken Noodles Kuai-tiao phat khi mao (?????????????????)

Stir fried wide rice noodles with fish sauce, chili, garlic, basil, baby corn, carrot, and broccoli

Beef, chicken, pork, or shrimp. I had mine with catfish.

The Dazzling Deanell Collins could not stop raving about this fabulous dish. Aces for appearance, taste, and texture. You will not find a better version anywhere else in New Mexico. Pad Tai Cafe consistently prepares some of the very best Thai dishes I have had, The Drunken Noodles are the best Thai noodle dish anywhere.



#4 GCCB

Green Chile Cheeseburger at [Monte Carlo Steak house](#)

The GCCB at Monte Carlo (competition style, of course) ranks #5 on my [Best GCCB List](#) (and best in Albuquerque). The Green has a good burn and is correctly smoky. The beef (medium rare, of course) is hand ground and hand formed and is three-napkin juicy. American cheese for taste and god melting qualities. The Dazzler was dazzled by this magnificent creation.

Get onion rings. perfect.



Pork Shanks

Pork Shanks at [Season's Rotisserie & Grill](#)

For many years, I have had the Lamb Shanks at Season's after attending an Opera Southwest production. Alas, the Lamb Shanks have been discontinued.

Not to worry ? They have been replaced with Braised Pork shanks with creamy Polenta and Garlic Broccoli. The rich, brown braising liquid (a red wine reduction) is among the tastiest I have had in ABQ, and I will return as often as I can specifically for this excellent dish.

Start your meal with a Rye Manhattan (Crater Lake) and have a [1000 Stories Mendocino Zinfandel](#) with your entree. I now keep this delightful Zin in my cabinet at all times.



Maya GCCB. Superb.

Green Chile Cheeseburger at [Maya Cuisine/Monk's Corner Taproom](#)

Dennis Apodaca displays his unique mastery here. Maya and Monk's Corner Taproom are symbiotic and have become close to the

top on my weekly lunch ramble.

The Green chile Cheeseburger has already earned the #4 spot on my [GCCB Hall of Fame](#) (this is a highly selective list). This burger, made from American Kobe Beef (Wagyu), is very tasty and perfectly cooked (which, to me, means three-napkins juicy). The Cole Slaw is Best in Show.

The Monk's Belgian Ales are the very best that I have had. Each brew is Best of Breed, and the Treble Reserve is Best in Show in The Duke City.

This is a perfect lunch.

And finally, no year would be complete without these:



Larry's Maryland Crabcakes

Larry's prizewinning Maryland Crabcakes from [Casa de la Vieja Escuela Mariscos](#)

I created these crabcakes in the kitchens of Casa de la Vieja Escuela Mariscos for a Christmas dinner at Chez Chase in Corrales.

You, too, can make these in your kitchen. Here is [my recipe](#) as it appeared in Albuquerque The Magazine.