

The Top Ten

Introduction

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I am often asked “What is the best restaurant in Albuquerque?” This is not a well-posed question — it has no definitive answer. Best what? New Mexican? Fine dining? Greek? Seafood? Best according to whom? You get the idea.

This, then, is a list of my top ten *favorite* restaurants in the Albuquerque area. I think that they are among the best that Albuquerque has to offer. Perhaps the best unknown restaurant in Albuquerque is Los Equipales, a superb mariscos place. Go there quickly before it shuts down. This list represents just my opinion, and therefore not subject to argument. It is difficult to choose just ten, and many great places do not make the list. For example, anything by Denis Apodaca is among my favorites, but they don't make the list. Sophia's Place comes really close.



Mary & Tito's: Antoinette Knight & Mary Gonzales wearing their James Beard Medals.

The numbers on the Urbanspoon image are a measure of a restaurant's popularity among the readers who care to vote “I like it” on the place's Urbanspoon data page. Mary & Tito's, for instance, is ranked number 87 (today) according to this scheme. I rank it number 1 because it is my favorite restaurant in New Mexico. If you look at the Urbanspoon Albuquerque page, you will notice that Frontier is ranked number 1, reflecting its huge following. I like it a lot, but it doesn't have a snowball's chance of cracking my list. Does being Urbanspoon's number 1 make it better than, say, Jennifer James 101? In a pig's eye. Oh yeah, I almost forgot: Don't trust the reader's polls

published annually by Alibi and Local-iQ. The source of the data does not seem to be trustworthy.

All of the places on my list are great, and many gastronome and foodie friends agree with me to some extent. Don't bother to tell me that El Pinto and Sadies are great. They are not; they are tourist places and for this trade, deservedly popular. I live here and I eat here and I know better. So should you.

1. [Mary & Tito's Cafe](#)
2. [Jennifer James 101](#)
3. [Corn Maiden \(Tamaya\)](#)
4. [Torinos' @ Home](#)
5. [M'Tucci's Italian Market and Deli](#) and [M'Tucci's Italian](#)
6. [Piatanzi](#)
7. [Budai Gourmet Chinese](#)
8. [Blade's Bistro](#)
9. [Namaste](#)
10. [Nicky V's Neighborhood Pizzeria](#)

Honorable Mention (in no particular order)

Were I to write an **ABQ Honorable Mention List**, it would contain such favorites as (in no particular order):

- [Street Food Asia](#)
- [Pad Thai Cafe](#),
- [Ariraga Oriental Market \(Korean\)](#),
- [Farina Pizzeria & Wine Bar](#),
- [St Clair Winery & Bistro](#),
- [Nexus Brewery](#),
- [Artichoke Caf](#),

- [El Bruno's Restaurante y Cantina](#),
- [Cafe Bella Coffee](#)
- [Eli's Place \(new name for Sophia's Place\)](#),
- [Joe's Pasta House](#),
- [Turtle Mountain Brewing Co.](#),
- [Perea's Tijuana Bar](#),
- [Indigo Crow Cafe](#),
- [Guava Tree Cafe](#),
- [Annapurna's World Vegetarian Cafe](#),
- [Siam Cafe](#), and
- [Two Fools Tavern](#),

all of which I have reviewed on Urbanspoon. Most are also reviewed here on this blog.

New Mexico Top Ten

Were I to list my **Top Ten from outside the Albuquerque area**, it would contain (in order):

1. [Sparky's Burgers & BBQ \(Hatch\)](#),
2. [Plaza Cafe Downtown \(Santa Fe\)](#),
3. [Lambert's Restaurant and Bar \(Taos\)](#),
4. [Dragonfly Cafe & Bakery \(Taos\)](#) (Closed),
5. [ACEQ \(Arroyo Seco\)](#),
6. [Rancho de Chimayó Restauranté \(Chimayó\)](#),
7. [Owl Bar & Cafe \(San Antonio\)](#),
8. [Pink Adobe \(Santa Fe\)](#),
9. [The Artesian Restaurant \(Ojo Caliente\)](#), and
10. [Cafe Pasqual's \(Santa Fe\)](#).

The [No Scum Allowed Saloon](#) would surely make the list if they served food.

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