

Tucson's Top Restaurants 2013

Written by Shannon North



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For anyone who thinks that the Old Pueblo is simply slingin' tacos and taquitos, our **2013 Top Restaurant List** will set you straight and leave you hungry. This year's list offers a birds-eye view of the delectable downtown dining scene and a gives a satiated knod to those that get it right and stay delicious, meal after meal.

[Five Palms Steak and Seafood](#)



Every good desert deserves some Vegas-style dining and when Five Palms opened in May of 2013, Tucson got just that. This creative culinary concept plates seared steaks, fresh seafood (flown in daily) set amidst rich wood paneling and painted ceilings. Whether you choose the royal-blue decadence of the main dining room or the relaxed vibe of the upstairs patio, make sure you indulge in a bottle of bubbles from their in-house wine store. Sounds unique? It is. However, the old school dessert menu – bananas foster, cherries jubilee prepared table-side - proves that keeping it old-school is always in style.

[Contigo Cocina Latina](#)



Making the list for the second year in a row comes well-earned. Consistently delicious Latin-fusion – calamari tacos, banana-leaf tilapia, chorizo-stuffed dates – keep the place packed nightly. From innovative cocktails - the Azteca marries silver tequila and St. Germaine liqueur! – to indulgent desserts (the sundae is a must), foodies and fans agree that the fare is second only to the warm service, thanks to an owner who greets each and every guest like family.

[Reilly Craft Pizza + Drink](#)

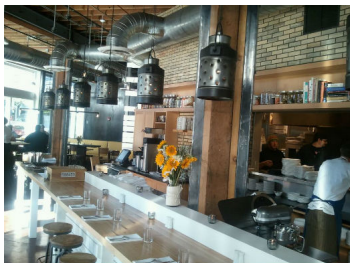
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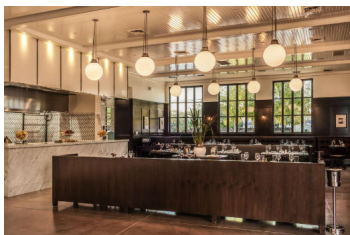
If you think all pizza is created equal, Reilly will set you straight. Perched on a corner in the heart of Downtown's red-hot culinary scene, Reilly's menu tosses fresh, simple ingredients to create some of the best pizzas and pastas in town. The pizza – roasted squash with ricotta and Fresno chile is a favorite – is wood-fired and fabulous. The creamy polenta with ragu is a savory, Old World classic. Indulge but make sure you save room for dessert. The butterscotch budino with fresh whipped cream and sea salt makes the trek – and the often challenge of downtown parking – well worth it.

[Proper](#)



Want more proof the Downtown dining scene is smoldering? Meet Proper. Diverse doesn't begin to define a menu that boasts everything from a savory Sonoran dog or pork belly sliders all the way to a charcuterie platter with rabbit terrine and pickled vegetables. French influence shines with decadent steak frites (ask for extra dipping sauce), while the globetrotting menu features favs like curried lamb stew or a perfectly prepared halibut with a coconut cream sauce and purple Peruvian potatoes.

[Agustin](#)



More Downtown delight fills this chic space, oozing with contemporary French flair and flavor. The menu offers a range of Left-bank cuisine: moules frites, trout meunière, pate and offer authentic bites, but the black and blue burger (crusted in peppercorn and topped with Roquefort and bacon jam) is a warm knod to the West. Sunday brunch offerings like caramel apple French toast and duck hash just solidify their spot on the map.

[Vivace](#)



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This Tucson classic – and local favorite – consistently delivers warm Italian comfort food (cheese manicotti, veal osso bucco) and seafood standards. Return guests cite the cheese and spinach soufflé or salmon with rock shrimp amongst their top reasons as to why reservations at this St. Phillips spot are always needed. Superb service, house-made tiramisu and the best Champagne cocktail in town doesn't hurt either.

[Sullivan's Steakhouse](#)



Proving that not all chains are created equal, this Foothills favorite lures diners back with great jazz, perfect martinis and a happy hour menu to rival any. Sure, the seafood is fresh (the seabass and crab legs are always on point) and steaks are savory and prime, but the burger is unbeatable and the wine list garnishes raves. It's no wonder it's a top special occasion spot and reservations (and cheesecake) are a must.

[The Abbey](#)



Staying current and delicious kept Abby on the list for the second year in a row. The duck tacos, braised chicken thighs and nightly fresh fish headline dinner, but Sunday brunch is the stand-out. Bread pudding French toast, chocolate banana pancakes and jalapeno Bloody Marys are favorites. Innovative week-night dining (think Fried Chicken and Beer Wednesdays) keeps the concept fresh and the place packed.

[ZinBurger](#)



Keeping the burger torch burning brightly – thanks to favorites like the Kobe and the Sam – Zin nabbed a spot on our list this year. Daily shake flavors (how do you say no to salted caramel or cherries jubilee?) are only half the story here. Truffle fries and the best onion rings in town run a close second. No meat? No problem! Their salads are chilled, fresh and chopped to order.

[The Dish](#)

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Snuggled into a quaint space inside one of Tucson's top wine stores, the dish packs big flavors into a small space. Long-stem artichokes, grilled trout, and saffron-steamed mussels give a hint to the menu's French flare. Succulent pan-roasted chicken marries brandied creminis and asparagus, while the rack of lamb remains a long-time indulgent staple. Wander the wine aisles and pair your meal with the perfect bottle of bubbly and make sure to ask about dessert (pssst...anything chocolate here is a must.)