

Austin Dining Recommendations

(from Brian Coon, local foodie and colleague of Amy Daly-Donovan)

Uchi www.uchiaustin.com

Uchi is frankly the BEST dining experience I have ever had. Period. It is currently considered one of the best restaurants in the U.S. and it is well-deserved. Ingredients are fresh and flown in every day but that isn't what makes this place special. It is the INCREDIBLY creative combinations, presentation and flavors. It's expensive but you should really do your best to not miss this. NOTE: Uchiko is a satellite restaurant owned by the same chef but Uchi is the better option of the two. Reservations are almost a requirement unless you show up right at 5:00pm.

La Condesa www.lacondesa.com

This is a great place with excellent cocktails and amazing food. They make the tortillas and the guacamole and tacos are really amazing. La Condesa is a step above your average Mexican restaurant and it's worth paying just a little more for the creativity and quality.

Trace www.traceaustin.com

Sustainable, organic dining at its finest. The majority of ingredients are locally sourced and of great quality. The menu is refreshed according to the available ingredients. Trace has been featured on a number of television food shows and they take their local flavor seriously. The restaurant is located in the W hotel and they have bee hives on the roof where they harvest local honey which is included in the desserts and entrees.

Barley Swine www.barleyswine.com

The chef here will push your limits in terms of being adventurous, but it is HIGHLY worth it. Anthony Bourdain recently visited and has listed it as one of his favorite restaurants in the US! They feature small plates and do not take reservations AND you will likely sit with other people at your table. BUT this is what makes the experience. While you are waiting, there is an amazing wine, cheese and charcuterie bar called Henri's connected to the restaurant. We usually grab a glass and some cheese while we wait. There is also a great little ice creamery aptly named "Lick" right next door. So if you manage to save room, you can stop in there for some incredibly delicious and creative flavors.

The Odd Duck www.oddduckaustin.com

See Barley Swine above (same executive chef) but with a more tame set of ingredients. The creativity and presentation of the dishes still is highly comparable.

The Blue Ox www.blueoxbarbecue.com

Everyone will tell you that Franklin's barbecue is the best in Austin and they are right. It is considered by many (including Bourdain) to be the best in the world. The problem with Franklin's is that you'll have to stand in line all day (or pay someone to stand in line) just to eat there. What most don't know is that the Blue Ox uses the old smoker from Franklin's and that the pit master at Blue Ox learned at Franklin's. This is a food cart located in the back of a cute little pub near downtown. If you want good Texas barbecue, don't miss this place.

Llamas Peruvian www.llamasfoodtrailer.happytables.com

This little food trailer in downtown Austin is a GEM. It's just plain amazing! Peru is an up-and-coming country in gastronomy and this place will convince you of that.

Via313 www.via313.com

Detroit-style pizza? Who knew? But this place will rock your world. Also a food cart with a couple of locations convenient to downtown. It's incredible!