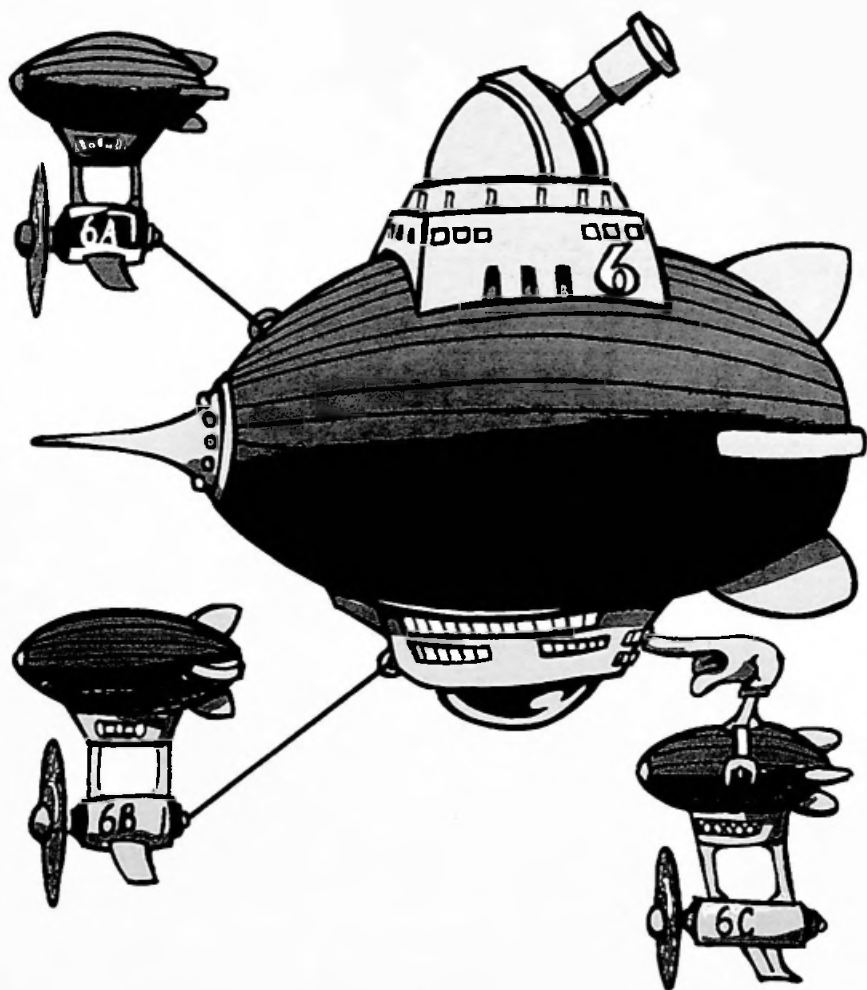


# Local Color and Dining Guide



Welcome to Westercon and San Jose: The Capitol of Silicon Valley! San Jose isn't known as a culinary Mecca, not like San Francisco, aka site of the first Top Chef, but it's got some amazing food available in every price range. I've spent most of my life examining them, wandering from one restaurant to another, watching the ebb-and-flow of the great eateries, fine chefs and excellent nightlife that help define San Jose's dining world.

This guide will do several things. First, it'll give you an idea of what's out there within a mile or so of the Fairmont. We're also including a list of fast food places that you might wanna consider that are a bit of a ways off, but worth the trip!

There's a lot to see and do, and those of you who will be throwing parties and such will also find a handy guide to the nearest grocery, liquor and other locations for supplies. You'll also find a few of our favorite places to spend a day away from the con, if you've got some time before or after our marvelous convention.

And, of course, these are fluid times. Places may have closed, chefs gone on to greener pastures, and so on and so on... A check of [YELP.com](http://YELP.com) or [Metroactive.com](http://Metroactive.com) can be useful to find up-to-the-minute reports.

### Rating System

Nom - Tasty, basic, dependable, but maybe not the kind of place you'll make a special trip out to.

Nom Nom - Good enough to suggest to friends from out of town.

Nom Nom Nom - The BOMB-DIGGITY!

### Price Ranges

\$ - You can eat here for less than 20 bucks a couple

\$\$ - Expect a tab in the 30s if you're not having cocktails

\$\$\$ - Get your agent to take you there.

### Directions

All sites have walkign directions included, mostly from Google Maps Walkign Directions. You may want to double-check them in case of construction or other new problems. We'll also have a handy map of Downtown with the restaurants available.

## American

### **1 Arcadia Restaurant**

100 W San Carlos St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 278-4555

[www.michaelmina.net/restaurant.p...](http://www.michaelmina.net/restaurant.p...)

Hours- Tuesday-Saturday: 6:30am-11:30am, 5:30pm-10pm; Sunday-Monday: 6:30am-11:30am

This is a Michael Mina joint that lives in the Marriott. The Head Chef, Daniel Patino, has a long history in the South Bay for his food, and Arcadia ain't bad. I usually go for the lobster in any form. The Lobster Corn Dogs are pretty much the best single appetizer you can find in the Bay Area. The Lobster Pot Pie is right up there too. DO NOT MISS THE DUCK FAT FRIES!!! I'm sorry to yell, but they're that good.

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$ OMG!!!

Directions- Head south on S Market Street, turn right on West San Carlos. 0.2 miles

### **2 Billy Berk's**

99 S 1st St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 292-4300

[www.maxsworld.com/billyberks](http://www.maxsworld.com/billyberks)

Hours- Mon-Wed. 11:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.; Thu. 11:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.; Fri. 11:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.; Sat. 4:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.; Sun. 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

I don't think of it as much of a restaurant, but that's my problem. I think of it as a bar that happens to have great food. The best value you'll find in all of Downtown is the Mac 'n Cheese appetizer. It's awesome, just the right size and delicious! The desert menu is good too, especially if you've come for drinks, which is the real highlight of the joint.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Walk down South First Street, cross San Fernando and it's on your let. 0.15 miles

### **3 The Blue Chip**

[www.thebluechipsj.com](http://www.thebluechipsj.com)

325 S 1st St

Bottom Floor

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 971-2898

Mon-Thu 11 am - 9 pm; Fri 11 am - 11 pm; Sat 9 am - 11 pm

Sun 11 am - 5 pm

The Blue Chip is pretty much a sports bar eatery, and it's not bad. You can't go wrong with anything off of their burger and cheesesteak menus. Not wheelchair accessible.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$

Directions: Exit onto First Street, turn right, cross San Carlos and walk about half-a-block. It'll be on your right, down a flight of stairs. .15 miles

### **4 Eulipia**

[www.eulipia.com](http://www.eulipia.com)

374 S 1st St

San Jose, CA 95113

408 280 6161

Hours- Tuesday-Saturday: 5:30-10pm; Sunday: 4:30-9pm

This place has been around forever and was the linchpin in the revitalization of South First Street in the 1980s. Recently things seem to be on an upswing as far as food goes. it's above average food with some exceptional meats. The service tends to be fantastic, though. I actually got dumped by a girl here once and the staff was very nice, even comping me a couple of glasses of wine. Nice folks.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Take North First Street South about 2 blocks. It's on the right hand side. 0.35 miles

### **5 Firehouse No. 1**

[www.firehouse1.com/](http://www.firehouse1.com/)

69 N San Pedro St  
San Jose, CA 95110  
(408) 287-6969

Mon-Fri 11:30 am - 2 am, Sat  
3:30 pm - 2 am, Sun 6 pm - 2 am

Recent visits to this palce have been hit-or-miss, though one thing is still tops: the Santa Barbara Burger. The Jalapeno Poppers are also pretty good. The real draw here should be the bartenders. They mix a good drink and they're not stingy on their portions.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Take Market Street North to Santa Clara, turn left and then right onto San Pedro. It'll be on the left hand side.

Distance: .3 miles

### **6 Flames Coffee Shoppe & Bakery**

[www.flamescoffeeshop.com](http://www.flamescoffeeshop.com)

150 S 4th St  
San Jose, CA 95112

Hours- 7am to Midnight, 7 Days  
a Week

Flames is the place you go to for giant portions. The food's solid, unspectacular, but solid...until you get to the breakfast part of the menu where you see how huge the Waffle selection is. Then

### **Downtown Fast Food**

Baja Fresh- 150 S. First Street,  
San Jose, CA

Ben & Jerry's- 115 San Carlos  
Street, San Jose, CA

Chinese Gournet Express- 150  
South First St. Suite 111, San  
Jose, CA

Chipotle- 975 The Alameda, San  
Jose, CA

Denny's- 1390 South First  
Street, San Jose, CA

Happi House- 695 North Fourth  
Street, San Jose, CA

Jack in the Box- 1558 West San  
Carlos St., San Jose, CA

Johnny Rockets- 105 South First  
Street, San Jose, CA

McDonald's- 1398 West San Car-  
los St., San Jose, CA

Pinkberry- 368 Santana Row, San  
Jose, CA

Pizza My Heart- 117 East San  
Carlos St., San Jose, CA

Quiznos- 150 South First Street  
Suite 181, San Jose, CA

Quiznos- 754 The Alameda, San  
Jose, CA

Subway- 475 East San Carlos St.,  
San Jose, CA

Subway- 165 San Fernando St.,  
San Jose, CA

Subway- 103 East Santa Clara  
St., San Jose, CA

you turn the page and there's a section for their versions of Eggs Benedict. They have Potato Skins Benedict. I'm not lying. You ain't gonna find anything as rad as that anywhere else in Downtown!

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take South First Street north to San Fernando, turn right, then right onto Fourth Street. It's on the right hand side. 0.4 miles

### **7 Gordon Biersch Brewery**

33 E San Fernando St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 294-6785

[www.gordonbiersch.com/restaurant...](http://www.gordonbiersch.com/restaurant...)

Mon-Wed, Sun 11:30 am - 11 pm

Thu 11:30 am - 12 am

Fri-Sat 11:30 am - 2 am

The best thing about Gordon Biersch has to be the Garlic Fries, though I find most of their food dependable, if over-priced. The beer is the real attract here and I would give the darkest thing they have at the moment a try. Is very good for groups, though service can be slower than you'd like.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$\$

Directions: Take First Street exit, head North up First to San Fernando, turn right and it'll be on your left.

Distance - .1 miles

### **8 The Grill on the Alley**

[www.thegrill.com/](http://www.thegrill.com/)

Fairmont Hotel

172 S Market St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 294-2244

Hours - Mon-Thu 11:30 am - 10 pm; Fri 11:30 am - 11 pm; Sat 5 pm - 11 pm

Sun 5 pm - 9 pm

Business-y types love this place, and I enjoy their steaks and especially their Scallops. The service is OK, but the bartenders are Amazing! Try a Manhattan. Go on, do it!

Rating - Nom Nom

Price - \$\$\$

Directions - It's in the freakin' Fairmont!

### **9 Johnny Rockets**

The Pavillion

105 S 1st St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 977-1414

[www.johnnyrockets.com](http://www.johnnyrockets.com)

This chain is a step-above fast food in every way: food quality, grease amount, price and waittime. Still, their burgers can hit the spot and I really enjoy their onion rings.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions: Exit first street doors and cross first. It's like right there!

Distance: Spittin'

### **10 Mission Ale House**

[www.missionalehouse.com](http://www.missionalehouse.com)

97 E. Santa Clara St. San Jose, 95113

408 292 4058

Hours- Mon-Sat 11am-2am

This is a place where you wanna go to get a beer. It's not the best place around for food, but the drinks are darn good. I love to visit and get the Mission Fries with Melted Cheese, Bacon and Fresh Garlic. Those are all add-ons, like the extended warrantee on that Blu-Ray you just bought. The burgers aren't bad either. The bartenders are some of the best in the state.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take South First Street north, turn right at Santa Clara Street. It's on the Left. 0.45 miles

## **11 Morton's Steakhouse**

www.mortons.com

177 Park Avenue, Suite 100

San Jose, CA 95113

408-947-7000

Hours- Monday - Thursday: 5:30pm - 10:00pm; Friday 5:30pm - 11:00pm; Saturday: 5:00pm - 11:00pm

This is the San Jose edition of the Morton's chain. Get a steak. Honestly, it doesn't matter which one. They're all magical. I love coming to Morton's, and when I come on the weekends, I get myself the Double-cut Prime Rib. It's pert-near perfect. You'll want reservations and probably wanna look pretty nice.

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$+++

Directions- Exit Fairmont onto Plaza de Caeser Chavez, cross Market Street and then the park, cross Market again and get onto Park Avenue. Morton's will be on your right. 0.2 Miles

## **12 Naglee Park Garage**

505 E San Carlos St

San Jose, CA 95112

(408) 286-1100

www.nagleeparkgarage.com

Tue-Thu 5 pm - 9:30 pm

Fri-Sat 5 pm - 10 pm

Sun 9 am - 1 pm

This place does a lot of business with college kids. They do a lot of events from films to live music. You order at a counter and then find yourself a table. The portions are so-so, but the food is really tasty, especially the Angus Burger with the AMAZING Steak Fries. It's da bomb. Isn't that what all the kids are saying these days? Or is it jiggy? I can't keep up anymore..

Rating - Nom Nom Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions: Exit the Fairmont on to First and turn right. Turn left on to San Carlos and just keep going straight through San Jose State. It's a really pretty walk. A couple of blocks after you emerge



from SJSU, it'll be on your left. 1.0 Miles

### **13 San Jose Museum of Art Cafe Too!**

<http://www.sjmusart.org/content/visitUs/cafe/cafe.phtml>

110 South Market Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 277 0557

Hours- Tuesday-Sunday: 11am to 3pm

Soup, salads and sandwiches are what you get here. The Chef Salad isn't bad, and the Fire-Roasted Vegetable Sandwich is also worthy of above-the-title billing. It's actually pretty good for Art Museum Food.

Rating - Nom

Cost - \$\$

Directions- Take Market street down about 100 yards. It's on the right hand side.

### **14 Sonoma Chicken Coop**

[www.sonomachickencoop.com](http://www.sonomachickencoop.com)

31 N. Market St.

San Jose, CA, 95113

408 287 4098

Hours-Sun-Thu: 11 AM - 9 PM; Fri-Sat: 11 AM - 10 PM

This is a family favorite around these parts. The portions are big, the food is reliable and the for-the-dollar value is pretty high. The roast chicken is tasty, but if you pass up the deserts, you're a fool. The Banana Phyllo Sundae has at least two epic poems written about it, while the Bourbon Bread Pudding leads its own religion. You must!

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Head North on Market Street to Santa Clara, Turn left then left onto San Pedro, it's on the right hand side. 0.35 miles

## **BBQ**

### **15 Henry's World Famous Hi-Life**

[www.henryshilife.com](http://www.henryshilife.com)

301 W St John St  
San Jose, CA 95110  
408 295 5414

Hours- 4pm to 9pm

This is a legendary joint around San Jose. Everyone's eaten here, or at least they say they have. The ribs are why you come here. They're tasty and sloppy and worth the trip. The place gets crowded, is kinda dim, and you're not going to find a lot of over-the-top service. It's an SJ landmark, and if you wanna say you did the whole San Jose thing, you should take a trip.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Head north on South Market then turn left onto San Fernando. Take that to Almaden Blvd., where you'll turn right. It turns into San Teresa, but keep going until you get to N. Almaden, where you turn left. Keep on going and you'll end up at St. John St. It's on the left. 0.6 miles

## **Brazilian**

### ***16 Maceio Brazilian Steakhouse***

[www.maceio-restaurant.com](http://www.maceio-restaurant.com)

72 S 1st St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 293-1215

Mon-Wed, Sun 5 pm - 10 pm; Thu 5 pm - 11 pm; Fri-Sat 5 pm - 12 am

If you've got a group, of carnivores and a bit of extra cash, I'd say set a date to head over to Maceio's and enjoy the beef. It's wonderful food and wonderful service. Not only are the meats awesome, but the salad bar is exceptional, perhaps the best in Downtown!

Rating - Nom Nom Nom

Price - \$\$\$

Directions: Exit hotel onto First street, turn left and go a block and a half. It'll be on your right hand side. .2 Miles

## **British**

## **San Jose's 6 Best Downtown Happy Hours**

**Billy Berk's- 99 South First Street, Discounted Appetizers and drinks.**

**Cinnabar- 69 East San Fernando Street, 2 Dollar Draft Pabst Blue Ribbons. That's right...Pabst, baby!**

**Johnny V's- 31 East Santa Clara Street, 2-for-1 Kamikazes, Cosmos and Sake Bombs**

**The Loft Bar & Bistro- 86 South Second Street, An affordable Happy Hour Menu and Drink Specials served by the nicest bartenders in town**

**McCormick & Schmick's- 170 South Market Street, Large affordable Happy Hour Menu**

**Tied House Brewery- 65 North San Pedro Street, Half-off Appetizers, 3.25 Draft Beers**

## **17 Britannia Arms Downtown**

[britanniaarmsdowntown.com](http://britanniaarmsdowntown.com)  
173 West Santa Clara Street  
San Jose, CA 95113  
408 278 1400

Hours- 11am – 1:30am

The Brit has a few locations around San Jose, and the Downtown version is probably the loudest. There's nothing fancy on the menu, the mushy peas are mushy, the Fish & Chips are decent, but mostly, it's a bar that draws sports fans and karaoke-types. You know Karaoke types, don't you? They're the ones who sing Wild Horses quietly to themselves throughout the week only to butcher it when they get in front of the mic!

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions - Take Market Street Exit, turn right. Walk to Santa Clara Street and make a left, it'll be on your right hand side.  
.3 miles

## **Cajun / Creole**

### **18 The Poor House Bistro**

[www.poorhousebistro.com](http://www.poorhousebistro.com)  
91 Autumn Street San Jose, CA  
95110 408 292 5837  
Mon-Thu 11 am - 9 pm; Fri-Sat  
11 am - 10 pm; Sun 10 am - 8  
pm

Fried Oyster Po Boy. You call to me. Across time. Across space. I must have you again. The menu is large and full of wonderful po boys and Cajun faves. You can also get a Muffaletta at Poor House Bistro. But none of them fill the need for Fried Oyster Po Boy. There is also a Sunday brunch, from open until 2pm.

Rating - Nom Nom Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions - Exit out Market Street and the turn left onto San Fernando and then a long way down to Autumn Street, turn right and it'll be on your left

Distance - .7 miles

## **Chinese**

### **19 Bo Town**

409 S 2nd St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 295-2125

[www.botownsj.com](http://www.botownsj.com)

Mon-Sun 11 am - 10 pm

At first, I thought that this was a Bo Jackson-themed restaurant, which would have been cool. I mean, the guy was a two sport superstar! The food here is OK. Hot 'n Sour Soup is pretty good. The 6 dollar Lunch deals are pretty good if you stick to the fried stuff. It would have been better with Bo Jackson memorabilia all over the walls. Or maybe Bo Derek. Yeah, just a continuing loop of her running to Balero playing on a TV.

Rating - Nom Nom

Price - \$

Directions: Exit onto First street and turn right. Head up to San Salvador and turn left, it'll be a block up on your right hand side.

Distance - .15 miles

### **20 Cathay Restaurant**

1339 North First Street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 453 8148

Hours- 4:30-10pm

Another place without a website. That may be a way to disguise the menu. It's a bit simple, and it's a bit one-note, but it's food and it's available. Sometimes, you only need food, and this is certainly matter which can be processed by your human digestive system.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take First Street north about half-a-mile. 0.5 miles

### **21 China Chen**

400 S 3rd St

San Jose, CA 95112

(408) 294-2525

Mon-Sun 9 am - 8 pm

Do you like early morning Chinese? China Chen is just about the only Chinese place open at 9am. There are Chinese restaurants in the Mountain time zone that aren't open then! Personally, I like the noodle dishes, especially when they're combined with their seafood. It's not a super menu, but it's dependable for lunch.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions: Exit the Fairmont onto First, turn right, head up to San Carlos, turn left. Go to 3rd Street, turn right. It's on the left.

Distance - .5 miles

### **22 Hunan Taste**

[www.hunantaste.net](http://www.hunantaste.net)

998 N 4th Street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 295 1186

Hours- Monday – Saturday: 11am-8:30pm

San Jose lacks a truly awesome Chinese joint Downtown. Hunan Taste is probably the best of the non-fusion types in this part of town. Start with the Onion Cake. It's really a nice start to a meal. Follow that up with the Hunan Spicy Lamb and you're on your way. The seafood menu is diverse and people rave about it. Also, can you think of another place that does Polish Sausage Hu-

nan-style?

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost-\$\$

Directions- take South First Street north to San Fernando, turn right and head to Fourth street and turn left. It's on the left. 0.5 miles

### **23 Pagoda Restaurant**

170 S Market St

Fairmont Hotel

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 998-3937

<http://www.fairmont.com/sanjose/GuestServices/Restaurants/PagodaRestaurantBambooLounge.htm>

The service here is great, and I rather enjoyed the food on my last visit. The Schezwan Chicken is really good, and other folks have raved about the Salmon. There's a Bar Piano Bar in here too, which is a lot of fun.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$\$

Directions - It's on the other side of the Lobby. Nope, a little over... right there!

### **24 P.F.Chang's China Bistro**

98 S 2nd St

San Jose, CA 95113

(408) 961-5250

[www.pfchangs.com](http://www.pfchangs.com)

You've got a P.F.Chang's in your hometown, I know you do, and you've been there once or twice. This one is exactly as good as all the others, and gets just as crowded on Friday and Saturday nights. I still say their lettuce wraps are worth the trip at least once.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions: Exit out the First Street side, walk down to San Fernando. Turn Left and head up a block. It's on the left hand side.

Distance - .15 miles

### **25 Ton Tho Tuong BBQ & Restaurant**

505 E Santa Clara St

San Jose, CA 95112

(408) 298-2257

[www.chinesebbq.net](http://www.chinesebbq.net)

Mon-Sun 10 am - 8 pm

Good stuff. That's what I think about when I think of Ton Tho Tuong and especially their duck dishes. Getting a half a roast duck will do you no wrong. The Suckling Pig, hard to find around these parts these days, is a nice touch. A brief warning if you're MSG sensitive: they use it and liberally.

Rating - Nom Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions - Take the First street exit out of the Fairmont and turn left. Turn right at Santa Clara and go for about 8 tenths of a mile. It's on your right.

### **26 Ume Chinese Restaurant**

2595 North First Street

San Jose, CA 95131

408 433 3333

Basic Chinese food.

01 print average menu

10 order average food

11 eat and find yourself bored

100 wonder why you came

101 goto 100

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take South First Street north for about half-a-mile. 0.5 miles

**SJ Attractions Nearby with Food Available!**

**Camera 12 Theatres-**  
201 South Second Street  
featuring Movie Food!

**ComedySportz San Jose  
at the Camera 3-** 288  
South Second Street featur-  
ing Cafe Too! [www.comedysportzsanjose.com](http://www.comedysportzsanjose.com)

**History San Jose-** 1650  
Senter Road featur- ing The  
Museum Cafe in O-Brien's  
Candy Shop. [www.history-sanjose.org](http://www.history-sanjose.org)

**San Jose Museum of  
Art-** 110 South Market  
Street, San Jose. Fine Art  
Mu- seum featuring San  
Jose Museum of Art Cafe  
Too! [www.sjmusart.org](http://www.sjmusart.org)

**The Tech Museum of  
In- novation -** 201 South  
Market Street featuring The  
Cafe. [www.thetech.org](http://www.thetech.org)

**The Winchester Mys-  
tery House-** 525 South  
Win- chester Blvd. featuring  
Sarah's Cafe. [winchester-mysteryhouse.com](http://winchester-mysteryhouse.com)

**Cuban**

**27 Los Cubanos**

San Pedro Sq  
22 N Almaden Ave  
San Jose, CA 95110  
(408) 279-0134  
[www.loscubanosrestaurant.com](http://www.loscubanosrestaurant.com)  
Mon-Fri 11 am - 2:30 pm; Tue-  
Thu 5 pm - 9 pm; Fri 5 pm - 10  
pm  
Sat 3 pm - 10 pm; Sun 3 pm  
- 8:30 pm

Los Cubanos is tasty,  
home-style Cuban cookin'. If  
you're there, it doesn't matter  
when, order the Vaca Frita. It's  
dry-friend beef and it's spec-  
tacular. Don't miss out on some  
of the other dishes either. THE  
Lechon Asado is probably the  
most transcendant of them all.  
Rating - Nom Nom Nom  
Pricae - \$\$  
Directions - Take the Market  
Street Exit and turn right. HEad  
to Santa Clara Street and turn  
left. Get to North Almaden and  
turn Right, it's three shopfronts  
down on your right.

**Diner**

**28 Peggy Sue's**

185 Park Ave  
San Jose, CA 95113  
(408) 294-0252  
[www.peggysues.com](http://www.peggysues.com)

This is a diner, a greasy



spoon, a chowshack and a fun one. I say if you're going to be eating here, try the breakfasts. The Chicken Fried Steak is my best.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$

Directions - Exit the Fairmont on the Market Street Side and walk straight ahead, crossign Market twice with the Tech Museum on your left. You'll end up on Park Ave., where you'll find Peggy Sue's on the right!

Dlstance - .15 Miles

## **French**

### **29 A Taste of Paris**

116 Pase De San Antonio

San Jose, CA 95112

(408) 292-2070

atasteofparis.net

A good French lunch place? Mai ouis! The croissants are what you come for. They are buttery, flaky and spectacular. I'd say get one of the sanwiches on the Croissant. Those are, by far, the best things on the menu.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$

Directions - Exit the Fairmont on the First Street side, head to the Paseo and cross first, second and third streets. When you get to Fourth, turn left. It's about half a block down on your left.

Distance - .25 miles.

## **German**

### **30 Teske's Germania Restaurant, Bar and Beer Garden**

www.teskes-germania.com

255 N. 1st Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 292 0291

Hours- Tues-Fri: 11am-2pm, 5pm-9:30pm, Sat: 5pm-9:30pm

The atmosphere, she is delightful. The beer? Wonderful, and reasonably priced, for the most part. The food? Solid, if not spectacular. The Jagerschnitzel with Spatzle is probably the best I've had

outside of Wisconsin, and Rindsrolade is very tasty. You get a lot with your entree, soup, salad and dessert, and for ten bucks extra, you get an extra and two can split an entree. And the portions are big enough that you can easily make that a full meal for two with leftovers.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take First Street north several blocks. It's on the left. 0.6

## **Greek**

### **31 The Castle Greek Cafe**

[thecastlegreekcafe.com](http://thecastlegreekcafe.com)

3730 North 1st Street Suite 150

San Jose, CA 95134

408 456 0346

Hours-

This place gets crowded at lunch. I'm talking opening night of Twilight at a cinema next to a Girl's Middle School crowded. The weird thing is they use ranch dressing instead of tziki in some of their wraps, which is odd, but actually pretty tasty.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take First Street north for a few blocks. It's on your right. 0.4 miles

### **32 The Pita Pit**

[www.getpitas.com](http://www.getpitas.com)

151 S. Second Street, Suite 185

San Jose, CA 95113

408 694 3200

Hours Mon-Wed. 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 a.m., Thu-Fri. 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 a.m., Sat. 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m., Sun. 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Let no man stand in the way of your Pita Enjoyment. Why should times, such as the twelve stations of the night, prevent you from going somewhere and buying a pita to eat and at least somewhat enjoy. Yes, you can get a pita at 2:30 in the morning, after

you've closed out The Cinnebar or had your last round at Billy Berk's. You can head over, get a decent pita and that's that. Do not accept that you can not both close out a bar and get an exceptional pita! Both are possible!

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Exit onto Paseo de San Antonio, cross first street, pass through the Paseo de San Antonio, turn left on Second Street. It's on the left hand side. 0.2 miles

### **33 Taza Bistro**

tazabistro.com

1 N. First Street

San Jose, CA 95106

408 292 8292

Hours-

Prices are good. Food's good. The atmosphere's nice. What else do you need to know? I mean, is it that important that I tell you that the Falafel Supremo is filling and managed to make me, against 33 years of conditioning, enjoy falafel? Is it significant that that the Pita Pizza is my favorite dish in the North Side of Downtown? Am I required to tell you that the Mediterranean Platter is cheap and a wonderful sampler of this place? Well, am I!!!!!!

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take First Street north until you cross Santa Clara Street. It's on the right side. 0.2 Miles

## **Indian**

### **34 Haveli**

www.haveliindiacuisine.com

167 W. San Fernando street

San Jose, CA 95110

408 971 2200

Hours- 11am – 10pm Daily

I'm not the biggest fan of Indian Food, so I have, in a strangely appropriate form of revenge, out-sourced my review of

Heveli to my buddy Neil Hopkins, an ex-pat Brit.

*You know, Haveli isn't bad. It's slightly too greasy for the wife and me, but it has a lovely Chana Masala. I would avoid trying to eat there in the hours leading up to Shark's games or any other major downtown event.*

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take Market Street north to San Fernando, turn left.  
0.2 miles

### **35 Tandoori Oven**

[www.thetandoorioven.com](http://www.thetandoorioven.com)

150 South First Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 292-7222

Hours- 11:30am – 9:30pm Daily

This is the one Indian place in the world that I can stand, though I'll let Neil, who took me there the first time, have a couple of words-

*That's the place I take my Indian friends when they visit.*

That should say something. The Seekh Kabob is very tasty, but the king here is the Chicken Biryani. It's got lovely spice and delicious flavor. It's incredibly close to the Fairmont, but does crowd up quite a bit around noon and five.

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Direction- Go out the First Street doors and walk across the street. You're there! Stones Throw

## **Irish**

### **36 O'Flaherty's Irish Pub**

[www.oflahertypub.com](http://www.oflahertypub.com)

25 N San Pedro St

San Jose, CA 95110

(408) 947-8007

Hours - Mon-Fri 11 am - 2 am; Sat-Sun 4 pm - 2 am

I went here and made a joke about Finnegans Wake and

the waitress got it. A good sign. The service here can be spotty, and the food is far from magical, but it's a solid place to come for a drink and a bite. It can get loud and crowded in the evenings.

Rating - Nom

Price - \$\$

Directions - Take Market Street North out of the Fairmont, then turn left on to San Fernando down one street and then turn right onto San Pedro, cross Santa Clara and it'll be on your left side. .3 miles.

## Italian

### **37 Antonella Ristorante**

[www.antonellasristorante.com/](http://www.antonellasristorante.com/)  
1701 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95126  
408 279 4922

Hours- Monday – Friday: 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Saturday – Sunday: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

If you're walking down the street and find yourself thinking of that song from the movie *Ghost*, "Unchained Melody" I think it was called, and you happen to be near Antonella's, you're in luck because you can't eat there without that song fitting your mood. The food matches it perfectly, and the am-

## Need Supplies?

Costco - 1601 Coleman Ave, Santa Clara, CA 95050  
(408) 961-3900

Marketplace by Safeway-  
100 S 2nd St  
San Jose, CA 95113  
(408) 292-4010

Mi Pueblo - 235 E Julian St.,  
San Jose, CA 95112  
(408) 292-3177

Safeway - 1300 W San Carlos St. San Jose, CA 95126  
(408) 882-0999

Trader Joes - 635 Coleman Ave  
San Jose, CA 95110  
(408) 298-9731

Zanotto's Downtown Market - 38 S 2nd St., San Jose, CA 95113  
(408) 977-1333

biance too! It's good food, not over the top, but you can practically hear the violins in the background as you're enjoying your Chicken Marsala. I would get reservations on the Weekends.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Exit the Market Street doors, proceed across the street, across the plaza and up Park Street. It's on the left. 0.15 miles

### **38 *Bella Mia***

[www.bellamia.com](http://www.bellamia.com)

58 South First Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 280 1993

Hours- Monday-Thursday: 11:30am-9pm; Friday: 11:30am-10pm; Sat: 4pm-10pm; Sunday: 4:30pm-8pm

I love being taken to Bella Mia. I love it when someone says to me "Hey, let me take you to dinner. How's Bella Mia sound?" and I love it when the check comes and they pay it. It's not too pricey, but the tab gets fat quickly because of all the great stuff. The Cioppino is the best thing on the menu (and of all the places on First street, it's among the best of all dishes!) and they mix seafood with pasta very nicely. Lunch is good, dinner is better. Good for groups, though I'd say get reservations.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Head north up First Street a couple of blocks. It's on the right. 0.1 miles

### **39 *Il Fornaio***

[ilfornaio.com](http://ilfornaio.com)

302 South Market Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 271 3366

Hours- Monday-Thursday: 7am-10:30am and 11:30am-11pm, Friday: 7am- 10:30am and 11:30am – Midnight. Saturday 8am-Midnight, Sunday 8am- 11pm.

She was sitting at a table at the window, alone, enjoying the Turtei con Aragosta where the lobster was delightfully dense and fluffy and the leeks added a note that brightened everything. She saw him walking by, alone, carrying a briefcase and staying close to the building, hiding from the mid-day October sun. She watched him walk by, enjoying her wine and noticing the others around with their pastas and pizzas, all smiling at the quality of food and the attention paid to the design of the restaurant itself. She wondered what he was thinking and why she cared. The delivery and first bite of the delicious zabaione washed the image of the lone man with his briefcase away.

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Walk south down Market Street a couple of blocks. It's on the left hand corner. 0.2 miles

#### **40 La Pastaia Ristorante**

[www.lapastaia.com](http://www.lapastaia.com)

Hotel De Anza

233 West Santa Clara Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 286 8686

Hours- Monday-Thursday: 11am – 9pm; Friday: 11am – 10pm; Saturday: Noon – 10pm; Sunday: Noon – 9pm.

I love the hotel De Anza, which is where La Pastaia lives. The service is exceptional, though they do find themselves swamped once in a while and that can make waits slightly longer than you'd like. The carpaccio is delicious with lovely fried shallots as a marvelous counter-point. I'm not a big fan of their pizzas, but the pasta is good. Of course, you should try their desserts. The chocolate crème brulee is really delicious.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost-\$\$\$

Directions- Take Market Street north to Santa Clara, turn left and head down a few blocks. It's on the left in the Hotel DeAnza. 0.4 miles

#### **41 Original Joe's**

www.originaljoes.com

301 South First Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 292 7030

Hours- 11am-1am Daily

How many meals have I enjoyed nestled in the comfy, high-backed booths of Original Joe's? At least once a week for a couple of years I'd put myself into one of those seats and enjoy an Italian meal that was neither ideal nor awful. It's dependably average, though you'll get a miracle once in a while. The service here is the real treat. It's like those restaurants you see in movies made in the 1990s about the 1950s! It also feels like the type of place where you might have to worry about Luca Brazi coming in and garroting you from behind. Don't worry though, the Ravioli makes for a fine final meal. Gets crowded during prime time.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$\$.

Diresctions: take South First street south. It's on the corner of San Carlos and First on the right. 0.1 miles.

#### **42 Paolo's Restaurant**

www.paolos.com

333 W. San Carlos Street Suite 150

San Jose, CA 95110

Hours- Mon-Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m., Sat. 5:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

This place has some decent food, and they've been around in one form or another for 50 years. The Prawns in White Wine Sauce I had the last time I was there was fantastic. I mean truly fantastic. It was as if it'd been designed to give me a sense of somewhere else that never existed, could never exist, but for that moment, in the flavors that mingled in my mouth, I was there. I came back to reality when I got the check.

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Distance- Take South Market to San Carlos, turn right and on towards morning. 0.5 miles.



## **Japanese**

### **43 *Godzilla Express***

www.godzillaexpress.com

130 East Santa Clara Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 297 0568

Hours- Monday-Saturday: 11am-9:30pm

Ok, this should be easy. There are hundreds of Godzilla jokes to be made. I've seen every Godzilla movie, so a gag on Toho shouldn't be difficult. I mean, the Godzilla Roll they have here is wonderful, and there should be something there. Something funny... Maybe I could make a joke about the fantastic Ramen with Tonkatsu., which I have 3 out of 4 visits here. No, doesn't fit the theme. Maybe I should note that the place is tasty, can get quite crowded and loud. Man, why isn't a joke coming to me?

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions: take South Market to Santa Clara street and turn right. It's a few blocks down on the left. 0.5 miles.

## **Latin American**

### **44 *Nazca Peruvian Cuisine***

nazcaperuviancuisine.com

167 West San Fernando Street

San Jose, CA 95113 408 295 2828

Hours- Tues-Wed 11am – 3pm and 5pm – 9pm; Thursday – Saturday 11am-3pm and 5pm to 10pm

Alas, no guinea pig on the menu, but what you will find is some of the most unique and delicious food in San Jose. It's tasty seafood and wonderful meat. The ceviche is especially good, but the real highlight is the Pastel de Choclo appetizer which features corn bread stuffing with ground meat, raisins and onions. I've never had anything like it and once started out a meal with two orders!

Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Take South Market street north to San Fernando street, turn left and it's a couple of blocks on the right. 0.2 miles.

## **Mexican**

### **45 Bakery Mexico No. 2**

87 East Santa Clara Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 920 2518

Hours- 5am – 3pm

This place is a little gem. The Torta Cubana is the highlight. It's a semi-traditional Cuban sandwich, but it's also amazingly awesome sauce. I mean really, it's great. I've enjoyed it several times and it plays wonderfully on the palate. The Tortas are big and tasty, and the bread is exceptional. Plus, you gotta love long hours.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take South First street north to Santa Clara and turn right. It's a few blocks on the left. 0.4 miles

### **46 La Victoria Taqueria**

[www.lavicsj.com](http://www.lavicsj.com)

140 East San Carlos Street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 298 5335

Hours- Mon-Fri. 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.; Sat. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.; Sun. 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

La Victoria, better known as La Vic, is the college eatery to end all college eateries. Anytime during the school year, this place is crawling with kids either taking care of the bodies as they improve their mind or merely settling the munchies. The food is OK, though it's probably been genetically enhanced so that San Jose State students must eat it at least once a week. The quesadillas are good, and the carnitas are very tasty, if a bit too greasy. In fact, you can say that about almost everything in this place. The sauce, available on every table in the joint, is pretty magnificent! Sadly, it's not wheelchair accessible.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Head south down South First Street and then turn left at San Carlos. It's about 3 blocks down in a walk-up Victorian.

### **47 Taqueria San Jose**

235 East Santa Clara Street

San Jose, CA 95109

Hours- 8:30am-10pm Daily

This is the kind of Taqueria that you're friends who are always saying how much better real Taquerias are than the Taco Bell you dragged them to. I love it like Christmas in Connecticut. GO and get an horchata and a burrito. It's a massive victory, the pair of them. They wrap their burritos perfectly, which is the immediate sign of a good taqueria. The nachos are very good too, and I've even done Carne Asada Fries, which is nachos replacing the chips with fries, or as the Brits call them, chips. It's delicious...and may turn you into a believer of some sort.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Distance- take South First Street North and turn right at Santa Clara. It's a few blocks up on your left.

### **Moroccan**

#### **48 Morocco's**

[www.moroccosrestaurant.com](http://www.moroccosrestaurant.com)

86 N. Market Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 998 1509

Hours- Mon. 11:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.; Tue-Fri. 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. ;

Sat- Sun. 5:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Tagine. It's a funny word. The various tagines they serve at Morocco's aren't bad, they're the best things on the menu, probably. I just never leave satisfied and find my mind wandering about all sorts of things as my stomach asks for some more. What will I do without the twenty bucks I just spent to get myself only half-full? The lunch menu is cheaper and they have this special for about 6 bucks that allows you to choose three items from their lunch menu. It's a deal and it's OK.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$\$, save for \$ Lunch Special

Distance- Take South Market Street north. It'll be on your left.

## **Pizza**

### **49 La Nostra Pizza Ristorante**

[www.lanostrapizza.com](http://www.lanostrapizza.com)

80 South First Street,

San Jose, CA 95173

408 995 0924

Hours- Monday-Thursday: 9am to 10:30pm; Friday-Saturday: 9am-12am

Pizza is good. I've always thought so. I'm not as big a fan of La Nostra as many of the other folks I know, it's never struck me as particularly anything. I mean, if it was bad, that'd be something to write about, but it's really just OK. It's thin-style New York pizza, though it's not nearly New York enough for the tastes of someone who really enjoys New York style pizza... and there is no other type of pizza! Still, the sandwiches are decent enough and it's an OK to go for lunch. Just don't expect much.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take 1st Street north about three blocks. It's on your right. 0.2 miles

### **50 Nick's Pizza and Italian Restaurant**

[www.nickspizzaitalian.com](http://www.nickspizzaitalian.com)

354 East Santa Clara street San Jose, CA 95113 408 286 9710

Nick's is a tasty joint where you can get a really good pizza and some decent pasta at a price that ain't bad. I love the Chicken Parm in a way that might be unhealthy. I have a photo of it that hangs in my bedroom. I include it in my prayers to it every night. While taking off from San Jose Airport, I look wistfully out the window at Downtown thinking 'good-bye, Nick's...I shall return to you soon.'

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Distance- Take First Street north to Santa Clara, turn right and go about 3/4 of a mile. It's on the left. 0.8 miles.

### **51 Pizz'a Chicago**

[www.pizzachicago.com](http://www.pizzachicago.com)

155 West San Fernando street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 283 9400

Hours- 11am-9pm Daily

I love Chicago-style pizza. Everything I said about New York pizza...I lied. The best things that you'll find on the menu are the calzone. They are delicious and the choose-your-own style is the way to go. The pizzas are big, kinda costfull and awesomely filling. Do not expect to go home without a take-home box. It can get pretty busy, especially at lunch, but it's really worth a visit.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take Market street north to San Fernando, turn left. It's .2 miles on your right.

### **52 McCormick & Schmick's**

[www.mccormickandschmick.com](http://www.mccormickandschmick.com)

170 South Market Street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 283 7200

Hours- Sunday – Thursday: 11:30am – 11pm; Fri-Sat: 11:30am - Midnight

This is a chain of higher-end seafood places, but it has some drawbacks. It's expensive, especially for what you get, and the food ranges from very tasty to pretty bland, but if they have the mussels, get them and love them. The Curry sauce they use is remarkable. The rest of the food's pretty decent, but it won't knock your socks off. The Tuna is high quality, but they do too much to it in preparations like Ahi Poke Martinis.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Distance- It's right across the plaza. Don't have to cross a street or anything. Less than 100 yards.

## **Spanish/Tapas**

### **53 Picasso's Tapas Restaurant**

www.picassostapas.com

62 West Santa Clara street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 298 4400 Hours: Lunch- Tuesday to Friday- 11:30am to 2pm;

Dinner 5:30pm to 10pm 7 Days a Week

I brought a six year old here. Some would say that bringing a kid to a Tapas bar would be a bad idea, but she loved it. I did too. She enjoyed the scallops and we both dug into the paella as if there was a copy of Scott Pilgrim vs. The World showing at the bottom of the pan. I love the tapas, and it's a decent place to take a date...as long as you both don't mind a strong hit of garlic.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions: Take South First street North, turn left at Santa Clara street and head about a block. It's about .25 miles down

## **Thai Cuisine**

### **54 Fantazia Thai Cuisine**

1100 North First Street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 294 8424

Hours- Mon-Fri: 11am-3pm, 5pm-10pm; Saturday-Sunday: 11am-10pm

I just watched the film version of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone again. I was enjoying a take-home box of the Appetizer Combo. The Corn Cakes are a gift, much like Harry's gift of flying brooms. The Prawns in Tapioca Wrappers manage to make me forget my troubles, much like the evangelical performance of Robbie Coltrane in the first film. The Green Curry is tasty, and the Garlic Chicken makes me happy...much like imagining someone letting that know-it-all-furball Hermione understand the meaning of the word pain!

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- 2.2 miles by car

### **55 House of Siam**

www.houseofsiamsanjose.com

151 South 2nd Street

San Jose, CA 95113

Hours- Mon-Fri: Noon to 3pm, 5pm to 10pm; Saturday-Sunday:  
Noon to 10pm

House of Siam is a bit of a legendary place for Thai food. The ghosts of hundreds of high school prom dates linger here with the delightful scents of Angry Prawns, Pineapple Fried Rice and Sticky Rice with Mango. They do a lovely Thai Iced Tea, and there's a traditional Thai seating section that's worth copping a squat at if you've got a crew with ya.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Exit onto Paseo de San Antonio, cross First street, then turn left at Second. It's about a hundred years down on your left.

### **56 Hanuman Thai Cuisine**

hanumanthaicuisine.com

1 E San Fernando street

San Jose, CA 95113

408 286 2482

Hours- Sunday-Wednesday: 11am-10pm; Thursday-Saturday: 11am-11pm;

Tom Ka Gai is a delicious soup with chicken. I love chicken. I love soup. The two together? Who'd ever have thought of that? The Roast Duck Curry was the favorite of everyone at the table, but I didn't have any. The sounds the rest of the folks at the table were making were pretty amazing. It really was something to behold. The staff is really nice, some of the nicest folks you'll ever meet. Sadly, there can be extremely long waits here on the weekends. Rating- Nom Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$\$

Directions- Take South First street north and it's at the corner with San Fernando on the right.

## **Vietnamese**

### **57 Bihn Mihn Restaurant**

1006 East Santa Clara street

San Jose, CA 95116

408 297 9868

Hours- Mon-Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Sun. 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Surprisingly, there ain't a lot of places to get goat in San Jose. Bihn Mihn is one of the places you can get it, and of all the places, it has the best goat you'll find. You'll also locate some lovely rabbit dishes and the entire atmosphere is very nice, better than most of the Vietnamese joints you'll find in San Jose. Lunch is the most popular meal, but you'll discover that goat is best enjoyed in the evening.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Distance- 1.6 miles by car.

### **58 Dalat Restaurant**

408 East William Street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 294 6989

Hours- 7am - 8pm Daily

Dalat's ancient when it comes to American Vietnamese restaurants. It was founded sometime in the 1970s and as gained a loyal following. The Glass Noodles (rice vermicelli) is just about the best you'll ever find. The place ain't immaculate, but you'll be well taken care of while you're dining on delicious Vietnamese food.

Rating- Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take South First Street south to William street. Turn left and continue down several blocks. It's on the left 0.9 miles

### **59 Pho Lan Noodle House**

255 East Santa Clara street

San Jose, CA 95113

Hours- 9am - 9pm

Pho is wonderful noodle soup and you're not going to find



## Liquor Stores

**Willow Glen Liquors & Wine Shop** 1110 Lincoln Ave. San Jose, CA 95127 (408) 926-8180

Mon-Thu: 10 am - 10 pm Fri-Sat: 10 am - 11 pm Sun: 10 am - 9 pm

### Wine Galleria

377 South First Street San Jose, CA 95113 (408) 298-1386

## News Stand

**Saint Claire News Stand** 311 South First Street San Jose, CA 95113 (408) 275-0242

## Post Offices

**USPS Downtown San Jose Collonade**

200 South 3rd Street San Jose, CA 95112 (408) 292-0487

Mon-Fri: 9:00am-4:00pm

**USPS Downtown Saint James Park**

105 North 1st Street. San Jose, CA 95113-9998 Mon-Fri: 8:30am-5:00pm

## Tobacconist

**Mission Pipe Shop**

1205 The Alameda San Jose, CA 95126 (408) 293-5144 Mon-Fri 10 am - 7 pm Sat 10 am - 5:30 pm Sun 12 pm - 5 pm

better Pho in all of San Jose. Pho Lan's noodles are great, and the broth, oh the broth!, has a deep flavor that mingles with the noodles. If you've never had pho, watch the folks around you for the best way to enjoy this magical

combination of broth, noodles and add-ons.

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$

Directions- Take South First street north to Santa Clara street, turn right. It's several blocks down on the left. 0.6 miles

## 60 Tofoo Com Chay

[www.tofoocomchay.com](http://www.tofoocomchay.com)

388 East Santa Clara street San Jose, CA 95113  
408 286 6335

Hours- Monday-Friday: 9am-9pm; Saturday: 10am-6pm

Vegetarianism is spreading like whatever the disease was that gave rise to the Resident Evil movies. Tofoo Com Chay isn't perfect, but even without meat to make it great, it's still a decent place to stop for some fine food. The taste of their tofu is pretty darn good, and the tofu drumsticks are wonderful. I appreciate the service more than anything. They

are super-nice. I kept thinking they might be buttering me up to ask for a loan, but no...they're just that cool!

Rating- Nom Nom

Cost- \$\$

Directions- Take South First street north to Santa Clara street and turn right. It's a couple of blocks down on the left. 0.4 miles

### **61 Vung Tau Restaurant**

[www.Vungtaurestaurant.com](http://www.Vungtaurestaurant.com)

535 East Santa Clara street

San Jose, CA 95112

408 288 9055

Hours- Mon-Thu. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Fri-Sun. 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Vung Tau Restaurant is the kind of place that I tend to frequent and no one understands why. It's got a lovely little space, the food is delicious and I can pack a book along, read a dozen or so pages while enjoying the Beef-wrapped onions plate. It's got good service and the prices, while high for a Pho place, ain't bad overall.

Rating- Nom

Cost - \$\$

Directions- Take South First street north to Santa Clara Street and turn right. It's several blocks down on your left. 0.85 miles.

## San Jose's Japantown

San Jose's Japantown (aka J-Town, Nihonmachi) has been a cultural and culinary touchstone for the city for more than a century. Originally, Japantown was an off-shoot of San Jose's Chinatown, which is now lost to history. Japantown has had its up-and-downs, but over the last thirty years has become a vibrant part of San Jose's cultural development.

It's also home to some of the best food in Silicon Valley!

Gombei Restaurant (193 Jackson Street, (408) 279-4311) is a delightful Japanese restaurant that is an exceptionally good introduction to the tradition of J-Town eatin'. The Udon is fantastic and the Katsu is muy spectacular! It gets crowded, so you might wanna come early! No sushi, just great Japanese food. The same can be said for the excellent Okayama (565 N 6th St Ste A, (408) 289-9508) which specialises in teriyaki and does it oh-so-well!

If you're looking for sushi, I've got a couple of great places for sushi enjoyment. If you're in a group and some aren't quite sushi fans, you might want to give Kobuta (593 N. 5th Street, (408) 279-8440) a try. The surroundings are nice, they've got a full sushi bar and you can order a variety of Japanese favorites. You can also double-dip at Kaita (215 Jackson Street, (408) 287-5551) where the sushi is good and the Udon and teriyaki is even better. Also a good bet for multi-faceted food groups is Kazoo (250 E. Jackson, (408) 288-9611) which has wonderful sushi and a good menu besides that. It gets crowded, but it's still a great place, especially for luncheon.

For straight susho fans, you gotta try Sushi Maru (262 Jackson Street, (408) 998-8170) which does some exceptional rolls. I've been eating here since I was in high school and it's a good value and the service is fantastic! Minato Sushi (617 N. 6th Street, (408) 998-9711) does some lovely rolls, and some great croquets that are not ot be missed. I've had trouble getting a seat at lunch because it's pretty darn popular, but it's never been too much of a problem at dinner.

Ramen? Yes, please! The best ramen you'll find in the San Jose area is at Kumako Ramen (211 Jackson Street (408) 286-

2111). Kumako does some great Roasted Duck with Shitake Mushrooms. It's what's kept me coming back again and again.

Shabu-Shabu hasn't caught on in the US as well as it should. It's a lot of fun and what's better than swishing meat in delicious liquid to cook it? It's fonduesque at it's best! The only real Shabu-Shabu joint in San Jose is Shaburi (171 Jackson Street), which has some of the freshest Kobe Beef around. It's delicious and a great place to bring a group of friends.

Not in the mood for Japanese? How about Hawaiian? Hukilau is a lot of fun, with friendly bartenders slinging slightly expensive, but **STRONG**, drinks. The food is fun Hawaiian and Hawaiian-inspired dishes. The Kalua Pork french fries are very tasty, if highly sloppy. The place is especially fun in the evening when bringing a group to hear the ukelele music in the back can be fun. Call ahead!

All in all, you can't go wrong with Japantown! For walking around during the day or dining at night, it's a lot of fun!

You can find Japantown by taking First Street north to Jackson, then turning right. You'll find yourself smack in the middle of everything just a few blocks down.

## **For Those with Extra Time and a Car!**

*The Bay Area is legendary for being a great place to visit, and so if you're gonna be around for a little extra time, well, we figured we'd give you a look at a few places that you might want to take a little side trip off to visit.*

*Thankfully, we're lucky enough to have some experts to give us a look at some places that you might wanna spend an afternoon, evening or even a full day hanging around!*

### **Berkeley Introduced by David Bratman**

Berkeley! Named in 1866 by a founder of the University of California who stood on a hillside rock looking out over the Golden Gate and quoted a line from Bishop George Berkeley, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," it's been famous ever since for the university and all the cultural amenities that go with being one of the most famous college towns in the world: bookstores, restaurants, theatre and museums, and of course the history of protests and the colorful street life. Berkeley is also famous for its fantasy literature. I've arranged a short selection of sights by neighborhood. All phone numbers are area code 510.

A little guide like this must omit much. If you've been to Berkeley before but not very recently, you may find its booklife sadly diminished. Cody's is no more, and Black Oak has gone into hibernation, we hope to re-emerge some day. But many others remain. In most cities the list of bookstores is quickly told. In Berkeley I have space to mention only half of them. And this doesn't even pretend to be a serious restaurant guide. I'm listing one personal favorite restaurant for each neighborhood of the city. If you want more, the online newspaper listings at [www.eastbay-express.com/ebx/Restaurants](http://www.eastbay-express.com/ebx/Restaurants) and [www.sfgate.com/restaurants](http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants) are good, and there's useful advice at [chowhound.chow.com](http://chowhound.chow.com) and even the health plan town hall of food websites, [yelp.com](http://yelp.com).

### **Claremont/Elmwood**

The easiest drive to Berkeley from San José is to take I-880 north to downtown Oakland (about 42 miles from the Fairmont),

then east on I-980 and Highway 24, off at the Claremont Avenue exit, and turn left. This will take you uphill directly towards the Claremont Hotel, the huge white wedding cake of a building that was host to, among other things, the 1968 Worldcon. In the hills just to the south is Greyhaven, the only private home to have given birth to an entire school of fantasy writers and its own anthology (DAW, 1983; the back cover blurb says its "exact location is known to a very special few" – actually, it's in the phone book).

**Shops:** On the way uphill you'll pass the Groove Yard (5555 Claremont, at Forest St., 655-8400), a used record store specializing in jazz LPs – yes, around here such places still exist – and then, on the left between Woolsey and Prince, at the Uplands traffic light, are no fewer than three book stores in one block. First is Dark Carnival (3086 Claremont, 654-7323), Jack Rems' rabbit-warren of a fantasy/SF/mystery store, filled with colorful knickknacks as well as new and used books in endless surprising alcoves. Also on the block are Afikomen (3042 Claremont, 655-1977), Jewish books and gifts, and Turtle Island (3032 Claremont, 655-3413, limited hours), a collectors' used book store specializing in modern mainstream literature and art books.

**Food:** Turn left on the side streets here, or at the next light at Ashby, and immediately downhill on College Avenue around Ashby you'll find the Elmwood shopping district. Among the restaurants here is Shen Hua (2914 College Ave., 883-1777), northern Chinese cuisine, noisy but clean with minimalist decor, with some of the best shrimp dishes I've ever had in a Chinese restaurant.

**Theater:** A couple blocks north of Elmwood is the Julia Morgan Theater (2640 College Ave., 845-8542), a gem of a small performing space, named for its architect. South Campus

You can get here from state 24 by turning right instead of left on Claremont and then a hard right on Telegraph Avenue, or from Elmwood by continuing north on College Avenue to campus and turning left. Parking is challenging here. There's a public lot just east (uphill) of Telegraph between Channing Way and Haste Street that costs \$1/hour in machines that take bills only, and the Sather

Gate Garage just west of Telegraph between Channing and Durant Avenue where you pay at a counter before leaving, and which costs more but gives discounts through validation cards from local businesses.

The last stretch of Telegraph Avenue immediately south of campus is the soul of Berkeley, with colorful shops and all the street life you can imagine, from vendors selling tie-dye to the more exotic and less licit. Most Berkeley fiction, including fantasy, is set in and around here. The House Between the Worlds in Marion Zimmer Bradley's 1980 novel of that title, for instance, is somewhere on this part of Telegraph, and The Folk of the Air in Peter Beagle's 1986 novel of that title make their first appearance on the equivalent of this street.

Everywhere else in the city displays characteristic Berkeley qualities in direct proportion to its closeness to Telegraph. It's the Withywindle, the center from which all the strangeness comes.

A tour of historic Sixties Berkeley would begin on the chunk of brick sidewalk at the edge of campus on Bancroft Way at Telegraph. A dispute over the right of students to set up tables supporting political causes here gave rise to the Free Speech Movement of 1964. Just beyond it, on campus, is Sproul Plaza. Here and on the front steps of Sproul Hall (the administration building to the right, also home to a famous sit-in) were the famous rallies and speeches. Turn around and walk three blocks to Haste Street. Across the street on the left is a mural depicting the events of the era, and just up the street beyond that is People's Park, the university-owned vacant lot that was liberated into a park in 1969. Much of the subsequent police-student battle took place around the intersection of Telegraph and Dwight Way. On the far corner was the shop where Robert Anton Wilson's daughter worked and was killed in a robbery in 1976. Also near that corner (but before the road was widened) was the Garden Library, where Anthony Boucher and other members of the Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society met in the 1950s. Boucher lived four blocks south of here, and set some of his stories in the neighborhood.

Shops: Moe's, between Haste and Dwight (2476 Telegraph, 849-2087) is four floors of Berkeley's flagship used bookstore, with a separate antiquarian shop on the top floor. Jonathan Lettlem used to work here. Across the street is Shakespeare & Co. (2499 Telegraph, 841-8916), also used and also good. At the Haste St. corner is Amoeba Music (2455 Telegraph, 549-1125), a large and excellent used- and-some-new CD store that also carries DVDs and LPs. Another block up, at Channing, is Rasputin Music (2401 Telegraph, 848-9004), somewhat similar. In the mall beneath the Sather Gate Garage is the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library Bookstore (2431 Channing, 841-5604, limited hours); the back half of its space was the original home of The Other Change of Hobbit, now downtown. On Bancroft Way below Telegraph are several stores specializing in textbooks (including one across the street on campus in the Student Union). A bit further down is The Musical Offering (2430 Bancroft, 849-0211), just about the last classical CD specialty store anywhere; it's also a café.

Food: Some is good, but this neighborhood can be spotty. Between the mural and People's Park you'll find Mario's La Fiesta (2506 Haste St., 848-2588 – recently moved from its old location half a block away), a long-standing Mexican restaurant offering what I consider the canonical chicken and pork tamales. Caffe Mediterraneo (2475 Telegraph, 549-1128) serves salads and sandwiches and is a noted hangout featured in Diana L. Paxson's contemporary urban fantasy novels.

### ***The U.C. Campus***

Central campus, past Sather Gate at the far end of Sproul Plaza, is quieter than anything around it – an oasis of greenery and disparate buildings. Much of *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart (a U.C. professor) takes place in its future ruins. At the center of campus is the Campanile; during limited hours you can ride the elevator to the top for \$2. Facing it on the uphill side is LeConte Hall, the Physics building where Oppenheimer, Lawrence, et al had their offices. (Their element-discovering Chemistry colleagues had labs just up the hill in Lewis Hall.) The small building connected



to LeConte, Birge Hall, then an empty space, was where Ernest Lawrence set up his first cyclotron. Facing the Campanile on the downhill side is the Bancroft Library, a rare books collection specializing in California history, and connected to that on the far side is Doe Library, the main library, designed by John Galen Howard. Doe's Reference Hall, on the second floor, has the most beautiful ceiling on campus.

**Museums:** The Hearst Museum of Anthropology (642-3682) is in Kroeber Hall (named for Ursula K. Le Guin's father, longtime professor in the department) at the corner of Bancroft Way and College Avenue. The Berkeley Art Museum (2626 Bancroft Way, 642-0808) is across the street from campus between Telegraph and College. High up in the hills above campus (drive up behind the football stadium and take the road going up the canyon) is the Lawrence Hall of Science (Centennial Dr., 642-5132), a good basic science museum emphasizing children's and general public education.

### **Downtown**

Downtown is just west of campus, and Shattuck Avenue is its spine. If you take BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) to the Berkeley station, you'll arrive at Shattuck and Center Street. Just behind you across the street as you emerge from the main escalator is 2165 Shattuck (now a GNC health store), site of the TV and electronics shop where Philip K. Dick worked in the 1940s, model for all the small businesses in his novels, though the neighborhood has changed much since then.

**Shops:** The Other Change of Hobbit (2020 Shattuck, 848-0413) is 2 1/2 blocks north of BART on the left (west) side of the western branch of Shattuck. Dave Nee runs this, the other fantasy/SF/mystery bookstore in Berkeley. Besides the books, enjoy the classical music on the radio and the two cats, which (as of two months ago when I wrote this) were still young enough to scamper across the floor and underneath the bookcases in pursuit of any dust bunnies they could find. Just down the street is Comic Relief (2026

Shattuck, 843-5002), a comics bookstore of mindboggling size and stock. Round off your visit with Half-Price Books (2036 Shattuck, 526-6080)

**Food:** There are some gems hiding here. Just around the far corner and half a block down the street from the Other Change is Jayakarta (2026 University Ave., 841-0884), a modest Indonesian restaurant that's extremely inexpensive and incredibly good.

**Theater:** These are located in the block of Addison Street west (downhill) from Shattuck, a block north of the BART station. Berkeley Rep (2025 Addison, 647- 2949; [www.berkeleyrep.org](http://www.berkeleyrep.org)) is currently running a set of short plays by Tony Kushner, collectively titled *Tiny Kushner*, get it? The Aurora Theatre Company (2081 Addison, 843-4822; [www.auroratheatre.org](http://www.auroratheatre.org)) next door is performing Neil LaBute's *Fat Pig*. The new home of the Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse across the street (2020 Addison, 548-7603; [www.freightandsalvage.org](http://www.freightandsalvage.org)) is ground zero for acoustic music. Nightly performers offer folk, neo-urban folk, bluegrass, or Celtic; occasional jazz, blues, western swing, or even classical; and sometimes the just plain unclassifiable.

### ***North Shattuck***

Continuing north on Shattuck Avenue from downtown is the area called the Gourmet Ghetto, with many upscale foodie places between Delaware and Rose. If you want to eat at Alice Waters' *Chez Panisse* (1517 Shattuck, closer to Vine than Cedar, downstairs restaurant 548-5525, upstairs café 548-5049) – which I never have – you'll already have made a reservation. Right next door is the affordable and lovely *Cha-Am Thai Restaurant* (1543 Shattuck, 848-9664) My usual hangout in this part of town is *Saul's Deli* (1475 Shattuck, just north of Vine, 848-3354). It's not a patch on a good New York Jewish deli, and it may not even be the best deli in the Bay Area, but it does have the best atmosphere. Across the street from *Chez Panisse* is the *Cheese Board* (1504 Shattuck, 549-3183), a fabulous cheese shop which probably would have Venezuelan Beaver Cheese if you were crass enough to ask for it. On the cross street just above this corner is the original outlet of *Peet's Coffee and Tea* (2124 Vine, 841-0564).

## Solano Avenue/Albany

As you keep going north past the Gourmet Ghetto, the artery changes names a couple times and then dives into a tunnel. When you emerge you're on Solano Avenue westbound. In the mile-and-a-bit of Solano between here and San Pablo Avenue, in this part of Berkeley and the adjoining town of Albany, are packed what I consider the best restaurants in the area. There are several Chinese and Thai places, literally half a dozen other Asian nationalities represented, and some other things including Mexican and a few good varieties of basic American. I've never finished exploring the depth here, so I'm not even going to try to make recommendations, except to note the presence, near the tunnel end, of Zachary's Pizza (1853 Solano, 525-5950), deep-dish Chicago style, often considered the best pizza in Berkeley. It's also right next door to Pegasus Books (1855 Solano, 525-6888), specializing in high-quality remainders, also offering new and used books.

Coming from Shattuck, if you skip the tunnel by turning uphill on Del Norte, the last street to the right before the tunnel, this will curve around and deposit you at a traffic circle above the tunnel. Running uphill from here is upper Marin Avenue, once a streetcar line, barreling straight up at a terrifying incline that will challenge your car's transmission. It's one of Berkeley's odder sights.

## **Santa Cruz** **Introduced by M Lloyd**

Let's look at the city of Santa Cruz. You've probably have heard of it, a legendary spot for surfers and a beautiful city for all visitors. The beauty of Santa Cruz is that you can see a gorgeous city coupled with a lovely Boardwalk and several places for delightful food.

There is no easier set of directions than those from downtown San Jose to Santa Cruz. Hop onto 880 South (also known as Highway 17) and keep going until it dumps you out in the center of town. No other way to do it, really. The road between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz is twisting, mountainous and lovely. Those prone to car sickness should sit in the front.

If you're going to Santa Cruz, you should start by setting some time aside for the Boardwalk (400 Beach Street, Santa Cruz, 831-423-5590). It's a classic assortment of rides and sand and bad carnival food. The Giant Dipper is a legendary roller coaster that is worth the trip over the mountains. The place has improved as an amusement park, with mor erides added every year. Currently, it's the new Haunted House dark ride that's all the rage. This is also one of the few arcades left with actual video games and pinball machines instead of those ticket-delivery games that my kids are always begging to play.

After you've spent some time at the boardwalk, there are a couple of lovely places that you might want to visit, like the Lighthouse Surfing Museum (809 Center St, Santa Cruz, 831-420-6289). It's a tiny museum with a selection of legendary surfboards, memorabilia, and photos from 100 years of surfing history. It's a lovely joint, a good place to spend an hour or so. You'll learn a lot about surfing. Unless you already know a lot about surfing. Then you'll simply be in the best place to enjoy your passion. Or perhaps you're more of a natural history type, in which case the lovely Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History (1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, 831-420-6115). They've got a giant statue of a blue whale out front that kids love to climb on. They've got a big exhibit on bones right now. It's a pretty good one if you're a bone fan,

which I am. It's the Goth in me.

After that, you'll be hungry. You're lucky, there are bunches of places. I'd suggest starting with The O'mei (2316 Mission St., Santa Cruz, 831-425-8458). For more than twenty-five years, this place has been doing Chinese Fusion and is a fave with locals and families of UCSC students' families. The small plates are exceptional, and the calamari dishes are universally delightful. Café Brazil (1410 Mission St., Santa Cruz, 831-429-1855) is another great place, this one for lovely Brazilian foods. If you get a chance, enjoy the Acia bowls. I've been to a number of Brazilian places around the world and this is my favorite. Upper Crust Pizza & Pasta (2415 Mission St., Santa Cruz, 831-423-9010) is one of the best pizza places around. Highly enjoyable. If you like Greek, Vasili's Greek (1501 Mission St, Ste # A, Santa Cruz, 831-458-9808) and The Greek Authentic (435 Front St Santa Cruz, 831-466-9990) are both great Mediterrean fare.

Late afternoon might be a good time to head over to Natural Bridges State Park, where the monarch butterflies will have already started gathering. They cover the trees in the park and it's amazing. They close at sunset, so you can enjoy a lunch and then head over.

If you're looking to close-out the day in the area, try 99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall (110 Walnut Ave., Santa Cruz, 831-459-9999), which is right in the middle of the lovely downtown area. Beers from around the world along with a good smattering of bar food. It's a great way to end a visit to a lovely sea-side city.

## **Piedmont Avenue, Oakland Introduced by Christopher J Garcia**

To get there, take Interstate 880 north to Interstate 980. Veer off there and head on the 51st Street ramp, turning right off the ramp. Go straight a mile and a half, turn right at Piedmont. There are several small parking lots on both sides of the street, but they are often packed on the weekends.

Starting on the Eastern side of the street, there's Fenton's. If you remember the days when a trip to the Soda Fountain was a treat, then you're in luck because this place will take you back. The ice cream is delightful, and if you're interested, you should try the burger. Tasty, though slightly expensive. After that, you'll want to head up just a few doors to one of my favorite used book stores- Black Swan Books. You can find everything from classic literature to postcards from the 1939 World's Fair to the Julliard School of the Arts Year in Review, 1966. Well, you can't find those anymore, since I bought them, but you get the idea.

After that, there's a lovely church on the corner that's worth a look and maybe a photo or two, but the highlight of this section of Piedmont Avenue is the Piedmont Theatre (<http://www.landmarktheaters.com/Market/SanFranciscoEastBay/Piedmont-Theatre.htm>). It's a lovely joint that shows Art House fair. If you've got a few spare hours, there are far worse locations to see a flick. Cross the street and you're at the Park Avenue Bar & Grill ([www.parkavebar.com](http://www.parkavebar.com)). It's a lovely place for a meal, but even better during the weekend brunches. Try the steak sandwich. It's marvelous when fully-loaded.

If you cross Piedmont again, you'll find four fantastic places, a wine shoppe (Wine on Piedmont), a coffee/tearoom (L'Amynx Tea Bar), a marvelous bookstore (Spectator Bookstore- [www.spectatorbooks.com](http://www.spectatorbooks.com)), and an old-skool antique store (Lost & Found Antiques). All within a block of each other. You can spend some good money in those four places, especially at Spectator, where you can find recent best-sellers and hard-to-find paperbacks all in the same building. Their selection of art books, both new and used, is fantastic.

Hungry again? Cross Piedmont AGAIN and you'll find a similar run of fantastic places to eat. There's a magnificent burger place (Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers-[www.barneyshamburgers.com/](http://www.barneyshamburgers.com/)), a Mexican restaurant (Baja Taqueria-[www.bajaonpiedmont.com/](http://www.bajaonpiedmont.com/)) that does amazing Lobster Burritos and Quesadillas, Simply Greek ([www.simply-greek.com](http://www.simply-greek.com)), a fine place for Souvlaki and Gyros. If you're there for breakfast, try Piedmont Cafe & Bakery. I've been there every weekend for more than two years and I've not yet found a bad restaurant.

Comic Books? There's Dr. Comics & Mr. Games, which is a large, well-stocked comic shop with plenty of back issues, graphic novels, games, toys and what have you. You can find everything from Gumby to A Treasury of Victorian Murder on their shelves. You can find food stuffs of exotic and high-end qualities here too, with two fine groceries (A.G. Ferrari's and Piedmont Grocery Company) almost exactly across the street from one another. Right next to Ferrari's is Gregoire ([www.gregoirerestaurant.com](http://www.gregoirerestaurant.com)), and if you hit there last, you can take a wonderful boxed dinner away with you. The potato puffs are amazing. You can also find fine dining at Bay Wolf a bit further down the street. It's delicious and up-scale. You'll drop a good bit of wallet weight eating there.

All of that and marvelous clothes stores, shoes galleries, Starbucks, a marvelous newsstand, and so much more. You can spend a few hours or repeated visits over months and months and you won't be sorry for the time spent.

## **University Avenue, Palo Alto Introduced by Christopher J Garcia**

Palo Alto means the Tall Tree. The tree which it's named after is still there, but it's not nearly as impressive as you'd expect a tree with a city named after it would be. Palo Alto has all the advantages of being a tech town and a college town, what with Stanford being right next to downtown. University Avenue is, in many ways, the heart and soul of Palo Alto.

To get to University Avenue, take 101 North to the University Avenue exit and head towards Palo Alto (for the love of all the is holy, Don't head towards East Palo Alto!). You'll pass through a couple o f miles of lovely, expensive, huge and expensive homes. You'll pass across Middlefield and you'll be in the business portion of University.

Any visit to University Avenue will start with finding parking. Someitmes, this can be a majority of the visit. It is never easy, and during peak dining hours can be downright impossible. Do not be dissuaded! It is worth every second of effort. There are also parking garages off of University on the side streets that are well marked and can usually be counted on to have a few spaces.

Let's start with shoping. There are hundreds of shops up and down University, and it would be foolish to try and list them all. You want a Persian Rug? Go to Hatami Rug Gallery (170 University). You want high-end art? Try Modernbook (494 University). If you're in the mood for in-line skating supplies, Black Diamond Sports (162 University) is there for your needs. You could spend all day walking up and into the shops all along the street. You really can't go too wrong.

Food is always my priority. You'll find many exceptional restaurants on University, including Tamarine ([www.tamarineres-restaurant.com](http://www.tamarineres-restaurant.com)), one of the best Vietnamese places on Earth. There's also Pluto's Fresh Food ([www.plutosfreshfo od.com](http://www.plutosfreshfo od.com)) a small chain specializing in Made-to-Order salads. I always try to make room for La Strada Ristorante Italiano, ([www.lastradapaloalto.com](http://www.lastradapaloalto.com)) which is as tasty as Italian food gets in this part of town. Places like Loui Loui Steakhouse (473 University) only add to the joy. Prob-



ably the most beloved restaurant on the entire street, Miyake Restaurant (140 University) is usually packed and it's an absolute must for those who like having dinner surrounded by Stanford students. There's a lovely pizza place called Patxi's on Emerson, less than a block off of University that serves amazing pizzas that tend to be big enough to feed competitive eaters. The crust is a work of magic.

There are a few wonderful locations for architecture. While Border's may represent everything that's wrong with booksellers, the University Avenue venue is a lovely place for a cup of coffee to admire what was once the Varsity Theatre, where many a high school kid first encountered Rocky Horror. The courtyard area is a fine place.

Speaking of movie theatres, any description of University has to include the Stanford Theatre. The Stanford has been around since the 1920s and has been restored to the beautiful state that was once its calling card. They show a rotating schedule of pre-1960 films, typically in double features. There's also the Mighty Wurlitzer which comes out between movies on the weekends. I can not stress how cool it is. It's a place that's a lot of fun to hang out in, enjoy some popcorn and watch a flick.

There's also the Aquarius Theatre up the street and around the corner on Emerson which shows current art house fare, which can make for a good afternoon's viewing.

You can enjoy frozen enjoyables all over the place in Palo Alto. With the exception of Boston, there may be more frozen dessert action in Palo Alto than anywhere else on Earth. First, right across the street from the Aquarius Theatre is some delightful gelato at Gelato Classico (435 Emerson St). You go around the corner to Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream Shoppe (203 University) and that's never a bad thing. Frozen Yogurt? RedMango (429 University), L'Amour Frozen Yogurt Cafe (276 University) and Michael's Gelato & Cafe, which has amazing FroYo.

If you can make it down to University Ave., try and spend a little time just walking around. It's the best way to really understand Palo Alto.

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**Westercon64**  
West Coast Science Fantasy Conference  
The Fairmont, San Jose, California  
July 1st to July 4th, 2011