

Chimu Restaurant Guide



INTRODUCTION

Chimu is constantly on the lookout for great restaurants and cafes. So we have collected the best ones for you in Peru, Santiago, Rio de Janeiro, Quito, Buenos Aires and Mexico City to give you a wide range to choose from when exploring these cities! We hand-picked them ourselves, to guarantee you a great tasting experience!



Further Reading

- <http://www.chimuadventures.com/blog/2015/10/top-10-restaurants-in-south-america-4>
- <http://www.chimuadventures.com/blog/2013/08/the-best-steak-in-buenos/>
- <http://www.chimuadventures.com/blog/2013/06/a-taste-of-chile/>
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Key

PRICE CATEGORY	
Budget	*
Mid-Range	**
Up-Scale	***

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1. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN PERU

Peruvian cuisine is among the most varied and best in the world. It's a reflection of its three main geographical zones – the coast, the Andean highlands and the jungle, and an incorporation of influences from different times and immigrant cultures. While the Peruvian cuisine has only been recognized internationally in the last few years, food and its preparation is one important part of the Peruvian culture and a very personal way to express the Peruvian identity. We highly recommend booking restaurants in advance to ensure you get a table.

1.1. Lima–Miraflores

Astrid y Gastón* (Signature Cuisine) Cantuarias 175, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 442 2775**

For a great culinary experience, Gaston Acurio's signature restaurant offers typical Peruvian food with a twist. The first world-renowned chef's food establishment, Astrid & Gaston (named after the chef and his wife) continues to be part of Miraflores' main food scene and identity. The restaurant is housed in a beautiful old building and the décor and menu change regularly, ensuring a unique dining experience. The restaurant offers a 30-course tasting menu that can be accompanied by a wine pairing, a great opportunity to experience the new and wonderful flavours that the restaurant has to offer.



Amaz* (Amazonian Food) Avenida La Paz 1079, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 221 9393**

The restaurant brings many obscure Amazonian ingredients to Lima, where few even realize they exist. Dishes range from updated traditional Amazonian dishes such as *pataraschca*, where fish is cooked inside a banana leaf, to oversized Amazonian snails drizzled with a sweet chorizo dressing. A hot sauce combines *aji* peppers from the Amazon with star anis. The cocktail menu, a definite high point, combines Pisco with underutilized fruits such as *taperibá* and *cocona* in more than a dozen original cocktails.



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AlmaZen ** (Vegetarian) Recavarren 298, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 243 0474

This soothing spot features a rotating daily selection of organic dishes such as sweet-potato and ginger soup, as well as tarts and risottos. Wheat-free and vegan items are also available. Located in a quiet part of Miraflores, AlmaZen has a café, serving tea and cakes and a small dining room with just four tables.



Central* (Peruvian Fusion) Santa Isabel 376, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 242 8515**

The toast of Lima and the 4th best restaurant in the world, Central has impressed many a critic with its seductive creations. Chef Virgilio Martinez spent a decade in the top kitchens of Europe and Asia, but coming home meant reinventing local traditions. Together with Chef Pia León, they create unique dishes using native and new ingredients sourced from across the country. Seafood – like the charred octopus starter is a star, as is octopus in purple coal. Peruvian classics also feature such as suckling pig dazzle, reinvented with pears, mustard and tomate de arbol.



La Mar ** (Cevicheria) Avenida La Mar 770, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 421 3365

When in Lima, you have to immerse yourself in the genuine cevicheria experience – and there is nowhere better to do so than at Gaston Acurio's Avenida La Mar hotspot. Stylishly designed – with a striking concrete façade jutting onto the tree-lined avenue and a bamboo roof over the airy dining area – La Mar is full of fashionable young Limeños as well as curious out-of-towners. But the main draw here is the raw marinated fish specialty itself, well complemented by a vast selection of main dishes.



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Rafael* (Modern Peruvian) Calle San Martin 300, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 242 4149**

Among the best known chefs in the region, Osterling has made a name for himself with authentic (save a few Mediterranean influences) but relatively upmarket takes on Peruvian dishes. On the menu Peruvian must-haves such as ceviche and empanadas jostle with more original fare, including a hearty stew of grouper cheeks with clams, squid and confit potatoes.



Punto Azul (Cevicheria) 595 San Martín, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 445 8078**

Adored by Limeños, this pleasant family eatery dishes up super-fresh ceviches and tiraditos, as well as big-enough-to-share rice dishes. Try their risotto with parmesan, shrimp and ají amarillo (yellow chili) – and don't miss the line-up of tasty desserts. It gets packed on weekends, so show up before 1pm if you want a table.



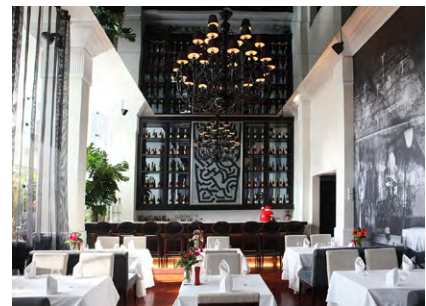
La Rosa Náutica* (Seafood) Espigón 4 Circuito de Playas, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 445 0149**

One of the most recognizable landmarks in Miraflores, La Rosa Náutica is a rambling Victorian-style building perched over the Pacific at the end of a long pier. Its gazebo-like dining rooms have spectacular views of the water, where surfers ride the breakers by day. Stop by in the late afternoon for a drink, as the sunsets can be stunning. Signature appetizers include grilled octopus, scallops sautéed with hot peppers, and a mixed fish, scallops, and octopus ceviche (marinated in lime juice).



Mesa 18* (Japanese-Peruvian Fusion) Av. Malecon de la Reserva 1035, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 610 4000**

Mesa 18 is a stunning restaurant, 'a rhapsody of delight,' attached to the beautiful Miraflores Park Hotel in Lima, Peru. The restaurant is run by the renowned chef and TV celebrity Toshiro Konishi who, although a native of Japan, has spent a major part of his life in Peru. It was here he found the inspiration to develop a new range of cuisine best described as a fusion of Japanese and Peruvian styles.



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La Lucha* (Sandwich-Bar) Pasaje Champagnat 139 / Av. Diagonal, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 241 5953

La Lucha is the kind of bustling but informal sandwich bar that draws you in before you even know it. The walls are decorated with old black and white photos of Peru, the polite waiters all wear big smiles and the small tables sit snugly within the buzzing interior. The sandwiches range from simple hamburgers to overstuffed club sandwiches. Tasty Peruvian-style fillings include lechon (suckling pig), jamon del pais (ham with salsa criolla) and chorizo sausage.



Maido* (Japanese-Peruvian Fusion)** Calle San Martin 399, Miraflores, Lima. +51 1 444 2568

Located in Peru's capital, restaurant Maido is one of the culinary highlights in Lima. Maido serves Nikkei style food, a cultural blend of Peruvian and Japanese influences. Chef Mitsuharu Tsumura uses Japanese techniques combined with Peruvian ingredients to create incredible dishes, rich in taste and well presented.



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1.2. Lima-Barranco

Canta Rana (Cevicheria) Genova 101, Barranco, Lima. +51 1 247 7274**

Canta Rana has got character. The Singing Frog, as it would be in English, has the kind of character only gained with 26 years of serving ceviche and seafood to a mix of regulars, local bohemians and tourists in a nook off Barranco's Grau Avenue. The owner is a huge soccer-fan which is demonstrated in the interior. Everywhere there are pictures of football-players, scarves and memorabilia given as presents from friends and customers.



Ayahuasca Bar (Bar) Av. Prolongacion San Martin 130, Barranco, Lima. +51 981 044 745**

This place is named after the enigmatic rainforest vine that shamans use to connect with spirits. Ayahuasca has a generous cocktail list and two-for-one happy hour on Thursdays and Fridays.



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1.3. Cusco

Pachapapa (Peruvian)** Plazoleta San Blas 120, Cusco. +51 84 241 318

If you've been putting off trying the famous Andean dishes of guinea pig or alpaca, then wait no longer. This fabulous restaurant is hands-down the best place in town for Peruvian food. Modelled after a typical Peruvian open-air quinta, wooden tables are scattered around a large patio. Evoking a rustic highland ambience, this open courtyard with wooden tables serves up well-prepared Peruvian classics, cooked over a wood fire or in clay pots.



Greens (Vegetarian)** Santa Catalina Angosta 235, 2nd floor, Cusco. +51 84 243 399

With all-organic food and a bright farmhouse feel, Green's Organic oozes health. Located just down the street from the Imperial City's majestic cathedral, Greens Organic is a restaurant specializing in gourmet organic food, featuring local ingredients. For starters tuck into a vegetable ceviche or a super fresh organic salad, followed by ravioli with goat's cheese and nuts or whole-wheat penne with chargrilled vegetables.



Chicha* (Peruvian)** Calle Plaza Regocijo 261, 2ndFloor, Cusco. +51 84 240 520

With a menu designed by the famous Peruvian chef Gaston Acurio, Chicha has become one of the most popular restaurants in Cusco. This modern and stylish restaurant offers a modern take on traditional Andean and Peruvian dishes that will capture your imagination, leaving you with a desire to try more Peruvian dishes. Naturally, debate rages as to whether it's worth the price (and pretension): our vote is yes.



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Jack's Café (American Food) Choquechaca 188, Cusco. +51 84 254 606**

One of Cusco's favourite cafes for those in the know. Simple but generous sandwiches, pastas etc. and very tasty! One of the most popular gringo hangouts in Cusco and owned by the guy who runs a thriving Irish pub in town, Jack's isn't just a spot to have a drink and check out some American and British magazines. It serves very fresh, very good, and frequently very large meals throughout the day, and features enough variety that you wouldn't be the first to eat here several times during your stay.



Cicciolina* (Tapas Bar) Triunfo 393, 2nd Floor, Cusco. +51 84 23 9510**

One of the hottest and most stylish restaurants in Cusco. It looks as if it has been ripped from the Tuscan countryside. The long and often boisterous country-elegant bar is decorated with bunches of garlic, peppers and fresh-cut flowers. It is a great spot for one of the excellent cocktails (such as a maracuyá sour), or dinner itself, especially if you're in the mood for creative tapas (which are served only in the bar). The eclectic, sophisticated food is divine, starting with house-marinated olives, continuing with crisp polenta squares with cured rabbit, huge green salads, charred octopus and satisfying mains like squid-ink pasta and tender lamb.



Fallen Angel (International) Plaza Nazaranas 221, Cusco. +51 84 258 184**

Tucked away in the corner of Plaza Nazaranas, two blocks up from the Plaza de Armas, the Fallen Angel is famous in Cusco for its daring decor and style. Creativity and art mix to combine a truly stunning if not slightly crazy setting for one of the funkier restaurants in Cusco. The menu is a combination of Andean and international fusion cooking, but consists of predominantly soups, salads, steak and pastas.



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1.4. Arequipa

Zingaro (Peruvian) San Francisco 309, Arequipa. +51 54 217 662**

It is here in an old sillar building with wooden balconies, stained glass and a resident pianist, that culinary legends are made. Zingaro has taken on Zig Zag and Chicha as a font of gastronomic innovation, meaning it's an ideal place to try out nouveau renditions of Peruvian standards including alpaca ribs, ceviche, or perhaps your first cuy (guinea pig).



Crepisimo (Café) Santa Catalina 208, Arequipa. +51 54 206 620**

For a truly great cafe you need all the essential components – food, setting, service and ambience. Crepismo succeeds by taking the simple crepe and offering it with 100 different types of filling, from Chilean smoked trout to exotic South American fruits. Furthermore, it wraps them up in a chic colonial setting in the local French cultural centre where casual waiting staff serve you coffee as good as in Paris.



La Nueva Palomino (Peruvian) Leoncio Prado 122, Arequipa. +51 54 252 393**

Definitely the local favourite, the atmosphere at this picantería is informal and can turn boisterous even during the week when groups of families and friends file in to eat local specialties and drink copious amounts of chicha de jora. The restaurant is in the Yanahuara district, 2km northwest of the city centre.



Lakshmi Van* (Vegetarian & Vegan) Jerusalén 400, Arequipa. +51 54 22 8768

Set in a colourful old building with a tiny outdoor courtyard, this place has various menus (set meals) and an extensive à la carte selection, all with South Asian flairs. Lakshmi Van is a restaurant dedicated to preparing vegetarian, lacto-vegetarian, and ovo-vegetarian dishes (by request).



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2. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN BUENOS AIRES

Buenos Aires is one of the world's most important food cities and dining options are endless. Its cuisine derives from a mix of influences, using beef from cows raised on the Pampas, Italian staples such as pastas and rich sauces, and even underlying native Indian ingredients.

Tegui* (Eclectic International) Costa Rica 5852, Buenos Aires. +54 11 5291 3333**

Tegui has become one of Buenos Aires' cult restaurants and one of its most popular. Named after its head chef Germán Martitegui, the restaurant's unassuming, unmarked entrance leads to a long, thin room decorated in black and white, with leather benches and stylish upholstered chairs. Once inside, the rather gritty first impression evaporates with a plush bar complete with comfy sofas and a view of the impressive kitchen easing you gently into what will be an unforgettable experience. The menu is fixed-price, offering four choices each for starters, entrées and desserts. It changes regularly as Martitegui is continually changing his cooking style.



Standout dishes: Ricotta gnocchi, trulada cream, sweetbread crocantes or apricot purée

Don Julio* (Argentinean Parrilla) Guatemala 4691, Palermo Soho, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4032 6058**

According to Chad, one of Chimu's directors, "the restaurant itself appears quite understated from the exterior but once inside, a rambling series of eclectic decorated rooms awaits you. Bookshelves with random objects amid rows and rows of empty wine bottles festooning every available surface decorate one of Palermo's best steak houses. The menu is as eclectic as the restaurant with some unique salad combinations for example. It is also fun in that you can sign any wine bottles you drink and they will put them on the walls!"



Standout dishes: Ojo de bife (rib eye) and cuadril (rump steak)

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La Cabrera*** (**Parrilla**) Costa Rica 5852, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4831 7002

Palermo's best parrilla is on the quiet corner of Cabrera and Thames and is Agnes', our UK destination specialist, favourite restaurant in town. The meat here is expertly sourced with bola de lomos, bife de costillas and asados sizzled with unparalleled care and attention to bring out the flavour of the country's famed grass-fed beef. La Cabrera is also known for the high quality of its starter plates – try the provoleta de queso de cabra (grilled goat's cheese) and its chinchulines de cordero (small lamb intestines) as well as its unusually creative side dishes.

Standout dishes: Flank steak, stuffed pork bondiola (shoulder)



Oviedo*** (**Classic Spanish Seafood, Mediterranean & Argentinian**) Antonio Beruti 2602, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4822 5415

Authentic Spanish preparations include grilled chaperones, baked clams, oven-baked sole and hake-filled empanadas – as well as oysters a-plenty fresh from the boats of Mar del Plata. A small but equally expert selection of meat dishes is also available, along with croquetas, tortillas and pasta dishes. Exquisite plating is matched with classically polished service standards. The wine list, as one might expect in this gentlemen's club-like restaurant, is one of the finest in the city, mixing Mendoza classics with a variety of European imports.

Standout dish: Trout with black rice and seasonal vegetables



Sucre*** (**Fusion with Influences from Italy, Spain, Japan and Peru**) Sucre 676, Cross Street: Figueroa Alcorta & Castañeda, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4782 9082

Sucre is the cutting edge of cuisine in Bajo Belgrano, and though it's way off the beaten path, it is well worth the trip. Enjoy the delicious and creative appetizers, but save room for a main course straight off the wood-fired grill: spit-roasted bondiola (pork shoulder) and melt-in-your-mouth Patagonian lamb are among the stars.

Standout dish: Patagonia gigot of lamb with mashed potato



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Aramburu* (Modern Argentinean) Salta 1050, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4305 0439**

Found behind a shabby unmarked door (ring the bell) on the outskirts of Buenos Aires' San Telmo district, Aramburu is an ambitious tasting-menu-only restaurant that sees traditional Argentine dishes and ingredients reinterpreted using molecular gastronomy techniques. The cook certainly impresses with his famed *bife de chorizo* (strip steak) and suckling pig with chocolate and pear puree.

Standout dish: Sandalwood-infused smoked and vacuum-packed salmon



Miranda (Argentinean Parrilla) Costa Rica 5602, Palermo Hollywood, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4771 4255**

This fashionable contemporary parrilla is a steakhouse for the trend-conscious carnivore. Chad visited the restaurant last time he was in Buenos Aires and found it "very trendy with lots of polished concrete and dark wood. The restaurant uses fantastic cuts of meat but is not overly pricy. Certainly one of the coolest restaurants I've eaten at in Buenos Aires." Classics like *bife de lomo* (tenderloin) and *cerdo* (pork) are updated and served with imaginative sides like *papas rotas* (literally, "broken" potatoes), colourful salads such as "Antonia" (sprinkled with sunflower seeds) and super-soft bread made on the premises.



Parrilla 1880 (Argentinean Parrilla) Defensa 1665, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4307 2746**

For a good, solid parrilla experience away from the more touristy sections of San Telmo, make your way south to this popular joint – it is right across from Parque Lezama. The atmosphere is thick with history and locals enjoying all the juicy cuts of meat coming off the open grill in front – try the *ojo de bife* (rib eye) or *pechito de cerdo* (pork ribs). The half portion of *bife de chorizo* is more than enough for one person.



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Café Tortoni* (Café) Avenida de Mayo 829, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4342 4328

Argentina's oldest café is everything you would expect it to be – grand and charmingly ceremonial. Since 1858, it has played host to a stellar cast, from the depths of bohemia to the heights of the literati and across the political spectrum. Beyond the wooden tables and marble floor a popular salon hosts jazz and tango shows.



I-Latina* (Latin Fusion) Murillo 725, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4857 9095**

The Colombian brothers behind the operation previously ran a restaurant in Patagonia's Bariloche, but decided to take their skills to the masses in Buenos Aires, opening I Latina in a stately home in the Villa Crespo neighbourhood. The cuisine is Latin fusion, utilizing flavours originating in the Caribbean and Colombia. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights Chef Santiago presents a five-course menu with optional wine pairings. I Latina is also one of the only closed-door restaurants that serves brunch, which takes place every Sunday.



Arevalito* (Vegetarian) Arévalo 1478, y Cabrera, Palermo, Buenos Aires. +54 11 4776 4252

Vegetarians should make a pilgrimage to this divinely cramped restaurant in Palermo Hollywood. Arevalito stands out for its home-made food and for its daily sandwich special – fit for a king's picnic. Starring roles go to the five daily dishes on a menu that changes between lunch and dinner, with support from a vegetable tart, a salad of the day and numerous desserts.



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BARS

Rey de Copas Gorriti 5176, Buenos Aires.

Rey de Copas is a cosy tapas bar and cafe, very popular for its cocktails, friendly atmosphere and imaginative bites. It tends to get pretty crowded at the weekends, but even at peak hours, the service is close to flawless. Rey de Copas has an interesting ambience, with vintage furnishings, resembling a private residence. Everyone feels at ease, patrons are as friendly as the staff, and the prices will not scare you off either.



Victoria Brown Costa Rica 4827 (esq. Jorge Luis Borges), 1414 Baires, Buenos Aires.

One of the newest cocktail bars in the neighbourhood, Victoria Brown already ranks among the best in town. It looks dark from the outside and inside you'll find a place that looks like a vast speakeasy. Still, the atmosphere is chic and trendy, inviting you to party every time. Victoria Brown serves creative signature cocktails, in an effervescent atmosphere, with occasional live DJ acts to spice up the night.



Florería Atlántico Arroyo 872, Buenos Aires.

One of BA's hottest bars, this basement speakeasy is located within a flower shop, adding an air of mystery and likely a main reason for its success. Hipsters, artists, chefs, businesspeople and expats all flock here for the excellent cocktails, whether they're classic or unique - and the lack of gas lines means all of the delicious tapas and main dishes are cooked on the parrilla grill. If you're a gin lover, note that the owner, Renato Giovannonni, produces and sells his own brand - called 'Príncipe de los Apóstoles' - aromatically infused with mint, grapefruit, eucalyptus and yerba mate. Reserve ahead for dinner.



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3. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN QUITO

The diversity of habitats and regions in Ecuador is reflected by this country's varied and delicious cuisine. Fresh seafood in many forms awaits those who visit the Pacific coast. Recipes from the high Andes have been developed and refined for thousands of years. The rainforests of the Amazon provide ingredients for several dishes and drinks, and each Ecuadorian town seems to have its own take on widespread recipes. To help you choose the perfect restaurant in Quito, we have selected a few for you. We highly recommend that you book in advance, to ensure you get a table.

Zazu* (Fusion) Mariano Aguilera 331, Quito. +593 2 543 559**

Fresh, local ingredients and elegant white and grey interiors are what's on hand at Zazu, which has consistently been ranked as one of Quito's top restaurants since its 2007 opening. Now headed by Peruvian chef Rafael Pérez, who arrived after a successful career in the United States, Zazu's contemporary Latin menu is regularly updated. Often overlooked is the selection of imported beef, American and Uruguayan, which is some of the best in town. Don't sleep on the wine, which is stored in a 25-ft. cylindrical wine cellar with giant glass doors.



Standout dishes: Peruvian style ceviche, yellow potato gnocchi with truffles and pangora (stone crab) and avocado salad seasoned with lemon foam

Mea Culpa* (Mediterranean) 2nd floor of Palacio Arzobispal, Plaza de la Independencia, García Moreno and Chile, Quito. +593 2 295 1190**

Mea Culpa is Quito's grandest classical restaurant. Overlooking Plaza Grande from the second floor of the Palacio Arzobispal, it has one of the most beautiful restaurant settings in the Old Town, with vaulted ceilings, hand-carved wooden chairs, and tall windows with heavy drapes. Dinner here is a rather formal affair, requiring "business casual" attire. The menu is classic white-tablecloth and you'll get exactly what you expect - above-average takes on pork tenderloin in raspberry sauce, ostrich filet flambéed in brandy and served with a maple-soy-apple reduction as well as an array of pastas and steaks.



Standout dish: Crepe stuffed with octopus, shrimp, mussels and calamari

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Theatrum* (International) Teatro Nacional Sucre, 2nd floor, Quito. +593 2 257 011**

This is one of the most stylish restaurants in the country and your best option for a fine dining experience in the Old Town. A stunning dining room on the second floor of the Teatro Nacional Sucre features heavy red drapes, white tablecloths and high ceilings. In tandem with the tuxedo-clad staff, the effect is like being part of some sort of dinner theatre. The contemporary New Andean-Mediterranean menu, prepared by Peruvian-born chef Julio Jose Avendaño, has plenty of highlights. There are two options for five-course tasting menus and they're some of the best deals in Quito. Free transportation to and from hotels can be arranged with a call in advance.



Standout dishes: Rabbit agnelli with salvia and lemon, or grilled octopus with foie gras butter and 25-year-old balsamic vinegar

Belle Epoque* (International) Garcia Moreno y Chile esq., Quito. +593 2 051 0777**

La Belle Epoque restaurant at Hotel Plaza Grande is something every traveller visiting Quito should experience. Set on a high floor of the hotel with views of the beautiful and historic Plaza Grande, the restaurant evokes something magical. Entering, it feels as if you've somehow stumbled into the dining room of a French castle with sconces, candelabras, heavy woods and fine silver dotting the space. The waiters and all of the staff who will be involved in the dining experience are in tuxedo-like formalwear and show you right to the table.



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Pims (Ecuadorian/International) Calle Melchor Aymerich, Old Town, Quito. +593 2 317 0878**

The food here is relatively pedestrian, but you're most likely coming here for the view. Located just off the Virgen de Quito monument, on top of Panecillo Hill, it has plenty of seating with a view, both in the multileveled main dining room and the heated outdoor areas. The menu is massive and ranges from hamburgers and sandwiches to a wide selection of meat, poultry, and seafood options. You can get a pepper steak or trout in almond sauce. There's a limited children's menu, which includes chicken nuggets and mini hamburgers. This is a popular tourist destination, and the place is often filled with tour-bus groups. There is second restaurant with an equally stunning view, in the Centro Cultural Itchimbía, on the top of Itchimbía Hill.



Alma (Argentinean) El Monitor 188 y Quiteno Libre, Quito. +593 2 225 2248**

In a residential neighbourhood high on a Quito hillside overlooking the city, Alma has gone through a series of changes since first opening. Its current incarnation is as a contemporary Argentinean restaurant headed by Buenos Aires-born chef Miguel de Arregui. Classic Argentinean grilled cuts like the picanha and rib-eye, as well as milanesas and burgers, are the main specialties, though there are also good-value eight-course tasting menus for under \$50. The interior is sleek, filled with lots of wood and glass and attracts a beautiful crowd.



Mare Nostrum (Seafood) Mariscal Foch E10-5 and Tamayo, Quito. +593 2 252 8686**

Translated from Latin as "our sea", Mare Nostrum is one of the city's most renowned seafood restaurants, serving Quito since 1985. Inside a brick, castle-like space, it feels as if a conquistador decorated the three dining rooms, as medieval knights, mastheads, and leather-backed chairs are the norm. The oversized portions of fresh Ecuadorian seafood (as well as shellfish from Chile) along with inexpensive prices have ensured a loyal following.



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Segundo Muelle (Peruvian) Av. Isabel La Católica 24-883, Quito. +593 2 224 8796**

This buzzy satellite restaurant of a popular Lima cevicheria burst onto the scene a few years ago. The décor follows the current fashion of trendy Peruvian cevicherias, with white walls and blond woods. Segundo Muelle serves great, classic Peruvian seafood dishes that extend far beyond the obligatory ceviches that are as good as any to be found in Quito. Those who know Peruvian seafood preparations will find the recipes quite standard: *Causa de cangrejo* (a potato casserole layered with crab) and *pulpo al olivo* (octopus in a purple olive sauce) join the long list.



La Octava de Corpus (International) Calle Junín E2-167, Plaza Marcos, Quito. +593 2 295 2989**

Octava de Corpus is an antique, traditional townhouse that has been converted into a beautiful restaurant. The food is a fusion of international cuisine and the menu is packed with plenty of seafood options. Hosted (and prepared) by the owners Jaime and his wife, the restaurant holds a charm unlike anything else in the city. The place is gloriously filled with local artwork running up and down the walls of the entire place.



La Boca de Lobo (Mediterranean) Calama 284 y Reina Victoria, Quito. +593 2 223 4083**

In English, 'the mouth of the wolf', La Boca de Lobo is a sophisticated hangout in Quito. Featuring a colourful glass-encased patio with shimmering chandeliers, shabby chic birdcages, and faux Renaissance portraits, La Boca del Lobo stands out as the most flamboyant joint in the Mariscal's somewhat low-key gringo scene. It's no surprise then, that La Boca del Lobo is also gay-friendly, and a place where Quito's 'beautiful people' mingle with the tourists. With a diverse menu of Mediterranean-fusion appetizers and a long list of fruity cocktails all made with Absolut Vodka, La Boca del Lobo is the kind of place you can sit and enjoy relaxed drinks for hours.



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Mama Clorinda* (Ecuadorian) Reina Victoria 1144, Quito. +593 2 254 4362

The focus is on hearty and traditional recipes from the highlands, including seco de chivo (goat stew), llapingachos (potato-cheese patties), and guatita (beef, potato and peanut stew). All varieties of grilled pork are also available, as well as roasted chicken served with elote (corn on the cob). This is not a good place for a vegetarian because even the mashed potatoes are cooked with pork fat (which is the traditional Ecuadorean way to cook them). But if you want a taste of what locals consider a fantastic meal, then this is one of your best bets.



Café Kallari* (Ecuadorian Café) Wilson E4-266, at Juan Leon Mera, Quito. +593 2 223 6009

Indigenous Kiwicha farmers' co-op "Kallari," from Ecuador's Amazonian Napo province, is wildly successful, having landed their bean-to-bar chocolates in North American retailers like Whole Foods. This very simple one-room café and shop in the heart of La Mariscal is decorated with indigenous handicrafts. From selling the house organic chocolate bars at the best prices anywhere to fair-trade Andean coffee, Café Kallari offers a small menu of simple but excellent Ecuadorian specialties like yucca cakes and tamales as well as hearty Amazonian breakfasts.



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4. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO

The capital of Brazilian nightlife is, unsurprisingly, a paradise of fine dining and eating. Rio de Janeiro offers a complete spectrum of eating experiences. Almost every kind of international cuisine is available in Rio, but the local dishes here reach their culinary heights. The diva of Rio's dishes is *feijoada*, a black bean and pork dish that comes with rice, kale and manioc. To help you choose a good restaurant, here are our recommendations.

Antiquarius *** (Brazilian) Rua Aristides Espínola 19, Leblon, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2294 1049

This traditional restaurant is credited with bringing Portuguese cuisine, one of the staples of the Brazilian food heritage, to an enhanced level that benefits both from fine dishes such as *Bacalhau a Lagareiro* – a signature codfish recipe – and from the serene ambiance based on antique furniture (hence the restaurant's name).



Standout dish: *Bacalhau a Lagareiro* (a signature codfish recipe)

Oro *** (Contemporary) Rua Frei Leandro 20, Jardim Botânico, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 7864 9622

Food as theatre is the theme of the restaurant of celebrity chef Felipe Bronze, who has created an avant-garde dining experience like no other in the city. A pink-hued glass wall allows diners to watch his culinary team prepare ultra-contemporary dishes, many using traditional Brazilian ingredients. Clever tricks such as using liquid nitrogen to "freeze" chocolate mousse add to the stylish-yet-playful atmosphere.



Standout dishes: Savoury profiteroles stuffed with hand-made Brazilian cheeses and a hummus-style dip for which edamame beans replace the chickpeas

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Olympe* (French)** Rua Custódio Serrão 62, Jardim Botânico, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2537 8582

To dine at Olympe is to experience all that classic French food once meant and to savour everything that modern Brazilian food has become. After 32 years as a carioca, the link between Brazil and France became deeply rooted in Troisgros' work, and is perhaps the reason the food appears to become a common culture, not a mixture of two different ones.

Standout dishes: Lamb tenderloin with an açai crust and Yucca-Anna and passion fruit crêpe soufflé.



Brigite's* (Eclectic)** Rua Dias Ferreira 247 A, Leblon, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2274 5590

Leblon's Rua Dias Ferreira is becoming a go-to street for foodies, and the upmarket bar-restaurant Brigitte's is a major reason why. As one might expect in body-conscious Leblon, there's an emphasis on fresh, organic ingredients, and vegetarians fare well here with dishes such as goat cheese-stuffed risotto and hot tomato sauce.

Standout dishes: Octopus or pasta with a lamb ragout



Satyricon* (Seafood)** Rua Barão da Torre 192, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2521 0627

Some of the best seafood in town is served at this eclectic Italian restaurant that has impressed the likes of Madonna and Sting. A tank of snapping lobsters at the entrance gives diners an indication of the freshness of the fare served here.

Standout dishes: Grilled swordfish and sea bass



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Confeitaria Colombo (Café) Rua Gonçalves Dias, 32 – Centro, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2505 1500**

Enormous jacaranda-framed mirrors from Belgium, stained glass from France, and tiles from Portugal are among the art-nouveau decor's highlights. Diners come to nibble on above-average *salgados* (savory snacks) and melt-in-the-mouth sweet treats. You can wash it all down with a creamy coffee or a fruity cocktail (served virgin or laced with alcohol). If you want to experience the opulent side of city life, do so the way Rio's high society did a century ago, with *chá da tarde*, or afternoon tea.

Standout dish: Waffles



Aprazível* (Brazilian) Rua Aprazível, 62 – Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2508 9174**

Located in the charming, hilly neighbourhood of Santa Teresa, Aprazível (which means "pleasant", in relation to a place) has a casual, rustic feel and a menu that explores the bounty of Brazilian vegetable gardens. This place is a bit out of the way, so call ahead (sometimes the restaurant is booked up by groups), take a taxi and have your map handy, as drivers don't always know this place. Aprazível showcases fabulous Brazilian food in a fun setting.

Standout dish: Grilled orange-infused tropical fish with coconut rice and roasted plantains



Bar do Arnaudo* (Brazilian) Rua Almirante Alexandrino 316-B, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2210 0817

A neighbourhood favourite for more than three decades, this informal tavern serves excellent north-eastern cuisine in more than ample portions. Sun-dried beef is a popular choice among carnivores, and vegetarians will love the set meal of *queijo coalho* (grilled white cheese, similar to halloumi) with brown beans, rice, and seasoned *farofa*. Reservations aren't necessary, but the restaurant is always packed on weekend evenings. It's quieter at lunchtime, when you may be able to occupy one of the two tables that have views down to Guanabara Bay.



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Blyss Holy Foods* (Vegetarian) Rua Visconde de Pirajá 180, Loja H Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 9218 5511

Hidden away in a small arcade off Ipanema's main square, Blyss Holy Foods provides culinary delights for vegetarians, vegans, and anyone who fancies a break from the meat-centric Brazilian diet. The restaurant's organic lunch buffet is laden with fresh vegetable soups, colourful salads, fish-free sushi, savoury pies and tarts, and a host of other dishes that are as tasty as they are nourishing.



Garota de Ipanema ** (Brazilian) Rua Vinícius de Moraes, 49, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro. +55 21 2522 0340

This is one of the most famous restaurants in all of Rio de Janeiro simply for the fact that musical history took place here. It was in the Garota de Ipanema that poet Vinicius de Moraes and singer Tom Jobim wrote that memorable song "The Girl from Ipanema".



The place serves well-priced food and drink that no doubt originally appealed to the two songsmiths. Occasional live-music events take place in the upstairs lounge. They serve a nice cold choppe and the caipirinhas are some of the better ones around. But where Garota de Ipanema really shines is with the picanha – sirloin that's been BBQ'd on the outside and served on top of a sizzling tray for you to finish cooking up slices of it.

Bars

Rio Scenarium Rua do Lavradio 20, Rio de Janeiro.

The Rio Scenarium is probably the most beautiful bar in Rio. Located in a renovated warehouse on the edge of Lapa, this antiques-store-turned-bar is one of the places that played a big role in reviving Lapa's nightlife several years ago when there were few classy options available.



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Bar dos Descasados Rua Almirante Alexandrino 660, Rio de Janeiro.

Rio's most romantic patio bar sits tucked away inside the recently restored Hotel Santa Teresa. Spend a lazy afternoon or evening (or both, once you get comfortable you may not want to leave) lounging in a big comfy chair on the terrace of a 19th-century mansion. Order a caipirinha and enjoy the fabulous views of Santa Teresa and downtown. Tip: This is a prime sunset spot.



Baretto-Londra Av Vieira Souto 80, Rio de Janeiro.

One of Rio's claggiest bars is inside the Hotel Fasano, and offers a vision of decadence matched by few of the city's nightspots. The intimate space, designed by Philippe Starck, has an enchantingly illuminated bar, leather armchairs and divans, and a DJ spinning world electronica.



Bar Teto Solar Rua Paulo Barreto 110 A, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro.

Long before it received its current incarnation, the bar space at the Solar theatre was a favourite arty hangout, a word of mouth, those-in-the-know secret and happily so. It may have gone a little more mainstream since, but the air of discovering something a little special remains, as, thankfully, does the idea of creating a different experience for the increasing crowds of drinkers. Hence, one can only imagine, the VW Beetle car sticking out of the wall high above the main bar, but also the nice option of four different draught or over 40 bottled beers from around the world, with an excellent house Pilsner.



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5. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE

Stretching along South America's Pacific coast, Chile is a country full of contrasts. This diversity is represented in Chilean cuisine, with its multiple influences from the people who have made Chile their home. Mixing Spanish influences with excellent native recipes, the freshest of ingredients with exotic fruits and fish, it offers tantalising combinations best enjoyed with a glass of acclaimed Chilean wine. Here are some of Chimu's favourite cultural restaurants in Santiago. We highly recommend that you book in advance to ensure you get a table.

Boragó* (Ground Breaking Chilean) Avenida Nueva Costanera 3467, Santiago. +56 2 2953 8893**

Describing itself as a dialogue between nature and cuisine, Boragó's emphasis on natural Chilean techniques permeates everything from the varied and seasonal menu to the simple yet welcoming décor. Designed for open-minded, adventurous eaters, the menu is short and sweet but due to the restaurant's emphasis on sustainability and seasonality the menus can change suddenly depending on availability of locally sourced ingredients. From rare mushrooms from the most remote of forests to seafood from the iciest waters of southern Patagonia, Borago's menu encapsulates Chile's wildest corners. The restaurant is led by the highly skilled chef Rodolfo Guzmán. The tasting menu covers 8 courses, which keeps locals coming back for more of the extraordinary meals of great quality that enlighten the senses.



Standout dish: Curanto cooked with rainwater from Patagonia

Osaka* (Fusion of Peruvian & Japanese Cuisine) W Hotel, Isidora Goyenechea 3000, Las Condes, Santiago. +56 2 2770 0000**

Renowned chef Hiro Watanabe takes you on an epicurean exploration that blends harmoniously unique elements from Peruvian, Thai, Chinese and Japanese cuisine into what can only be called "sublime inspirations". Forget the overpriced wine list and sip some sake or order one of their dangerously tasty cocktails like the Gingeroska, a play on a caipiroska with fresh ginger.



Standout dish: Salmon skin with a cream of Peruvian pepper and lemon

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Europeo* (Continental) Av. Alonso de Córdova 2417, Vitacura, Santiago. +56 2 2208 3603**

Europeo specializes in European-influenced cuisine, although native Swedish chef Carlos Meyer has expanded his global range by adding a dab of Asia here and there to liven things up. You'll find dishes such as foie gras, steak tartare on rye, or a "strudel" of lobster and spinach on vanilla-infused bisque, as well as more classic steak and lamb specialties. Before diners yield to the temptation of dessert, they are served a complimentary exotic sorbet as a palate cleanser.

Standout dishes: Succulent mero, a white fish, or the shellfish risotto topped with a foam of fish stock



CasaMar* (Seafood) Av. Padre Hurtado 1480, Vitacura, Santiago. +56 2 954 2112**

One of Chile's top contemporary restaurants serving innovative seafood dishes, Chef Tomas Oliveira Leiva has set up a 'cocina de autor', which he describes as 'pure, honest and with a touch of nostalgia'. Sample signature dishes such as conger with abalone out on the terrace, or tuck into a 6 course tasting menu around the chef's table after a few punchy rounds of the CasaMar Pisco Sour (which includes a dash of brandy) at the long, laid-back bar.

Standout dishes: Congrio (conger eel) with locos (abalone) sauce and the merluza austral (a type of hake) with peas cream and causeo clams



Coquinaria* (Café) Isidora Goyenechea 3000, Las Condes, Santiago. +56 2 2245 1958**

Santiago's first gourmet market, Coquinaria sells a wide selection of home-made bread, pasta and chocolate, all of which make an appearance in the daily changing menu of Coquinaria's restaurant. We are particular fans of their brunch: gourmet options include eggs benedict with Parma ham, and a very indulgent croque monsieur.



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Astrid y Gastón* (International) Antonio Bellet 201, Santiago. +56 2 2650 9125**

Astrid y Gastón is the Latin American chain sensation at the forefront of the upscale Peruvian cuisine movement that's taken hold across Spain, South America and parts of North America. The chef uses the finest ingredients, combined so that each plate bursts with flavour and personality. Here, you'll find French, Spanish, Peruvian and Japanese influences, as well as impeccable service, an on-site sommelier and a lengthy wine list. If you can afford it, don't miss dining here.



Ox Restaurant (Parrilla) Nueva Constanera 3960, Vitacura, Santiago. +56 2 2799 0260**

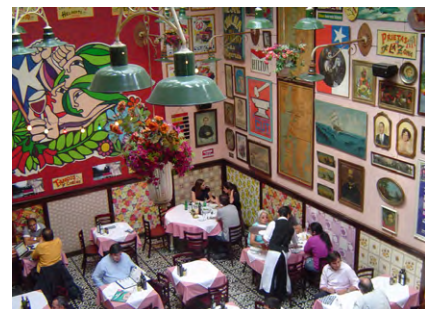
It would have been very difficult to compile this list without including a proper meat specialist. To pick out one of the many parrillas (South American barbecue style) of the city is not an easy task, but a dinner at Ox is definitely a safe bet. This luxurious parrilla serves some of the best, most succulent and flavoursome meat in town. Prepared with love and passion and accompanied with an impressive selection of wines, Ox is the perfect place for meat lovers with high expectations.



Standout dishes: Scallops and the crème brûlée are excellent

Liguria (Chilean Bar & Restaurant) Av. Providencia 1373, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 236 7917**

A long-time favourite among the locals for its bohemian atmosphere, bow-tied waiters and competitive prices, Liguria is a buzzing restaurant and bar that serves quintessential Chilean dishes and is equally as good for a long lunch as it is for late night drinks and philosophizing with the regulars. However, this extremely popular picada is always packed, so you might have to wait to be seated in the chandelier-lighted dining room or at one of the tables that spill out onto the sidewalk.



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Aquí Está Coco (Seafood)** La Concepción 236, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 2235 8649

This restaurant is one of the best seafood restaurants in the area and wildly popular with foreign visitors, with good reason. The kitschy atmosphere is as fun as the food is mouth-watering. The restaurant is spread over two levels of a 140-year-old home and festooned with oddball and nautically themed gadgets and curios.

Standout dishes: Grilled corvina (sea bass) or Easter Island tuna tartar



El Huerto* (Ethnic, Vegetarian) Orrego Luco 054, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 2233 2690

It is true that Chilean cuisine is not particularly vegetarian-friendly. However, El Huerto proves that it is still possible to find original vegetarian food in Santiago. The menu offers a good blend of international cuisine rearranged to fit the credo of the house: healthy and tasty. The calm and relaxed atmosphere is perfect to enjoy some quiet moments and regenerate positive energy to tackle more of Santiago's treasures.



Café Melba* (Café) Don Carlos 2898, off Av. El Bosque Norte Las Condes, Santiago. +56 2 2232 4546

Breakfast is served all day at this storefront restaurant – something that's almost unheard of in Chile. If you're particularly hungry, order "The Works" – baked beans, mushrooms, sausage and bacon. Drink it down with a café latte, served in a large white bowl. For lunch, there's a selection of hot dishes, quiches, salads and sandwiches. The interior is open and airy, with wooden tables scattered about the wood-floored dining room. In warm weather, grab a seat on the covered patio in front.



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Mestizo* (Chilean) Av. Bicentenario 4050, Vitacura, Santiago. +56 9 7477 6093**

This restaurant, with its view over the Parque Bicentenario, is a bit out of the way but is well worth the trip for a leisurely lunch or, on a summer evening, to sip a perfect and generous-size Pisco Sour as the sun sets between the hills. The restaurant's design, with a roof supported on large boulders, makes the best of its setting, and the eclectic menu brings together some of the best of Chilean and Peruvian cuisine. With an emphasis on fish, it also offers some great meat dishes such as plateada, a slow-cooked cut of beef, on a bed of mashed potatoes and basil.

Standout dish: Plateada, a slow-cooked cut of beef on a bed of mashed potatoes and basil



Como Agua para Chocolate* (Chilean) Constitución 88, Barrio Bellavista, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 2735 4511**

This interesting eatery is based on the concept behind the popular Latin novel "Like Water for Chocolate." The festive dining room includes some very interesting ways to enjoy the sensuality of foods. Try provocatively named seafood, steak and vegetable entrees prepared in a traditional style with a dash of international flavour that sets them apart from other restaurants.



Bocanariz (Wine Bar) Bocanariz, Jose Victorino Lastarria 276, Santiago Historico, Santiago. +56 2 638 9893**

Chile is famous for its wine and so it comes as no surprise that a wine specialist has made it onto this list of Santiago's best cultural restaurants. If you can't spare the time to leave Santiago and visit one of the nearby wineries, a visit to Bocanariz is your next best bet. In the heart of the artistic Lastarria neighbourhood, here the emphasis is truly on the wine, with a menu of sensitively chosen yet innovative accompaniments to complement them perfectly. With over 800 Chilean wines on offer, you may need to ask the expert staff for their personal recommendations.



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Giratorio (Contemporary)** Av. 11 de Septiembre 2250, Santiago. +56 2 232 1827

This original restaurant, situated on the top floor of a high-rise building, offers you a panoramic view of Santiago for an hour at a time. The floor is built onto a revolving mechanism that turns the room a full 360 degrees during your meal. The tables are arranged alongside the large windows, which allow you to enjoy a truly magnificent, and ever-changing view. They specialize in seafood and fish prepared in the Chilean tradition, although they also serve a variety of meat dishes including duck and chicken.



Divertimento (Italian)** Av. El Cerro at Av. Pedro de Valdivia Norte, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 233 1920

A favourite with Chilean politicians, journalists from the nearby television channels and, on Sundays, local families, this restaurant serves both homemade pasta – the spinach and ricotta ravioli served with butter and sage is excellent – and traditional Chilean fare such as *pastel de choclo*. Its main attraction, however, is its tranquil tree-shaded setting at the base of San Cristóbal Hill.



Eladio* (Chilean) Providencia 2250, Providencia, Santiago. +56 2 777 508

You can eat a succulent *bife de chorizo* (sirloin) or mouth-watering *costillas de cerdo* (pork ribs) or just about any other meat cooked as you like and enjoy it with a good bottle of Chilean wine, and your pockets wouldn't be much lighter. Finish with a slice of *amapola* (poppy-seed) sponge cake. This restaurant also has a branch in Bellavista at Pío Nono 251. Both get very full and don't take bookings, so you may have to wait a little while for a table.



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Bars

The Clinic Monjitas 578 Miraflores, Santiago.

This cool, quirky bar and eatery has an intellectual edge – it's the official watering hole of Chilean political magazine *The Clinic*. Santiago's famously left-leaning alternative weekly, *The Clinic*, lends its humour and irreverence to its eponymous restaurant and bar. You'll be downing classic cocktails and gourmet pub food alongside hipster journalists in dark-rimmed glasses. It's a fun and energetic atmosphere, and although the drinks are not quite as cheap as you might expect, it's still worth a visit for the ambiance and the history.



Etniko Constitución 172, Santiago.

Etniko is one of Santiago's hippest restaurants, serving Asian influenced cuisine in a trendy and sophisticated space frequented by Santiago's stylish young adults and expats. For all the interior sleekness, it's the beautiful garden you will want to be in on summer nights, soaking up the midnight sun, sake and other powerfully built cocktail concoctions. There is no sign on the door outside, so listen for the sounds of joyous people when you try to find it.



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6. THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN MEXICO CITY

Mexican food is gaining popularity all over the globe for many reasons. It smells wonderful, tastes great and is also very healthy. Authentic Mexican food is vibrant, delicious and fun and varies according to which region it comes from. It uses an amazing array of chilies, both fresh and dried. Some people think Mexican food is too spicy – but true Mexican food has a depth of flavours with its combination of savoury and earthy flavours, and use of fresh herbs.

Pujol* (Mexican Reinvention) Francisco Petrarca 254, Miguel Hidalgo, Chapultepec Morales, Mexico City. +52 55 5545 3507**

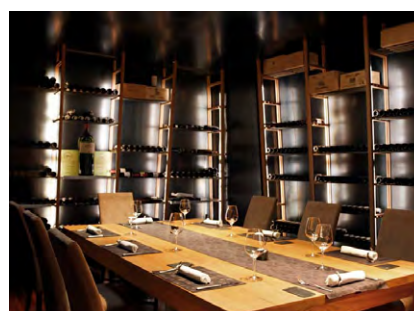
If you fancy yourself as a globetrotting gourmand, lunch or dinner at Chef Enrique Olvera's Pujol is obligatory. Pujol has held a top spot on Restaurant Magazine's World's 50 Best Restaurants list for the past three years; it's currently at spot 17, up from 36 the year before. When Chef Enrique Olvera opened Pujol almost 14 years ago, the budget was so small that his wife had to paint the walls. Things have changed at what is now widely considered Mexico's best restaurant, with its platoon of 27 cooks. One of the leading exponents of New Mexican gastronomy, it is deeply immersed in the republic's cultural legacy. Some dishes utilise time-honoured native seasonings, and dried insects also feature heavily.



Standout dish: Sea bass ceviche taco made with hoja santa tortilla and black bean purée

Biko* (Spanish and Mexican Modern Fusion) Presidente Masaryk 407 Miguel Hidalgo, Polanco, Mexico City. +52 55 5282 2064**

Biko's menu is a stimulating collision of Spanish and Mexican, described by chefs Bruno Oteiza and Mikel Alonso as 'sumptuous with surprises'. Local produce is coaxed for maximum flavour in two contrasting menus: one traditional, referencing Basque cooking from their native San Sebastián; the other using forward-thinking techniques, giving the duo the freedom "to have all the fun we want".



Standout dish: 100% cotton foie-gras

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Anatol* (Mexican & American) Presidente Masaryk 390 Polanco, Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico City. +52 55 3300 3950**

Anatol, located in Hotel Las Alcobas, has a warm and intimate dining room whose vibe is congruent with that of the hotel that hosts it. The menu ranges from contemporary Mexican (try the tempura squash blossoms) to American classics like mac and cheese, reflecting the cultural and culinary influences of its chefs, Mexican Mayra Victoria and American Justin Ermini. Many plates are deliberately small and are made for sharing; order several to sample the range available.

Standout dish: The "Trifle de Cafe de Olla," a boca negra cake served with cream of coffee and brown sugar ice cream, is especially delicious.



Zhen Shanghai* (Haute Chinese) Campos Eliseos 218, Mexico City. +52 55 5327 7774**

This Shanghai-based restaurant is one of the capital's top choices for gourmet Chinese cuisine. The contemporary dining room has round tables with revolving centrepieces for sharing, exquisite place settings and elegant leather chairs. Soft Oriental music plays in the background as the expert servers attentively wait on the tables.

Standout dishes: Start with pork and masago dim sum or spring rolls with chicken and vegetables. For a main course, try the braised spareribs with aged vinegar or stir-fried snapper with celery.



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Izote *** (**Mexican Haute Cuisine**) Av. Presidente Masaryk 513 (btw. Calles Sócrates and Platón, Col. Polanco). Mexico City. +52 55 5280 1265

There are only 19 tables, and the atmosphere is simple, but what's on your plate will more than compensate. Located on the most upscale street in all of Mexico, it remains one of the capital's most popular restaurants, so reservations are essential, even at lunch. The menu is a compilation of modern versions of pre-Hispanic dishes and draws heavily on indigenous ingredients such as yucca flower, cactus and masa (corn flour). Each dish is a delight.

Standout dishes: Try traditional Oaxacan mole, or lamb barbecued in a banana leaf. Endings are especially sweet here – save room for Tarta Zaachila, a chocolate pastry filled with nuts, accompanied by the traditional café de olla.



Hacienda de los Morales *** (**Mexican Haute Cuisine**) Vazquez de Mella 525, Mexico City. +52 55 5283 3000

The Hacienda de los Morales is an enchanting place for special occasions. The Spanish colonial decor includes dark wood furnishings, stone columns and domed brick ceilings, with some tables looking out to garden fountains. The entrance patio doubles as an elegant bar, where you will find precious artwork and the original chapel where Spanish aristocrats once prayed. While the Hacienda is a bustling power lunch spot by day, it transforms into a romantic retreat at night. Expertly prepared food includes the best of Mexican dishes, with an excellent selection of meat, fish, and seafood, as well as pastas, crepes, and other selections. Jacket and tie are suggested and reservations recommended.



Standout dishes: A must starter is the *crepas de huitlacoche*, the "huitlacoche" being a small black mushroom which grows on a corn stalk. This truffle-like delicacy is placed inside thin crepes which are bathed in a creamy béchamel sauce, and the resulting dish is a marvel. Continue with the *trucha en salsa verde con romeritos*, trout stuffed with "romeritos," which are a leafy vegetable similar to spinach but much more tart.

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Chimu Restaurant Guide



Au Pied de Cochon* (French/Bistro) Campos Eliseos 218, Mexico City. +52 55 5327 7756**

A direct import from Paris, this bistro always packs in the city's jet set and fashion-forward for classic cafe fare. Open 24 hours, it's the best late-night dining option in the city. The main dining room is a spirited scene of activity and conversation, in multiple languages. Two service bars offer singles places to dine without feeling "solo", and other tables are packed in together. There's also a raw bar, an excellent selection of French wines and an ample choice of tequilas. Desserts are classically French and rich.

Standout dishes: Pâtés, cheese plates, and exquisite salads are standard starters. The French onion soup and the foie gras are particularly delicious. For the main course, perennial favourites are the steak frites, steamed mussels and the specialty *pie de cochon* (pigs' feet).



Naos* (Mexican/Seafood) Paseo de las Palmas 425, Mexico City. +52 55 520 5702**

A glass-panelled open kitchen and raw bar serve as the centrepiece of acclaimed chef Monica Patiño's NAOS restaurant in the fashionable Palmas neighbourhood. Waiters in black ties and vests provide crisp, attentive service to the food-loving crowd. The contemporary dining room combines glass, marble, and hardwood floors with fascinating, if slightly spooky, wall sketches of *katrinas* (humorous skeleton representations celebrating death). Although the menu spans the gamut, seafood remains the specialty.



Standout dishes: Start with a tuna carpaccio dressed up with fried capers and a citrus vinaigrette, followed by the mild sea bass prepared with three chillies. Fresh oysters and stone crabs from Baja California are offered, along with numerous creatively prepared fish and seafood dishes.

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Quintonil* (Mexican) Newton 55, Polanco, Álvaro Obregón, Federal District, Mexico City. +52 55 5280 1660**

Run by husband-and-wife team Jorge Vallejo and Alejandra Flores, the restaurant opened in 2012 and earned 21st spot in Latin America's Best Restaurants in 2014. Like the Pujol, its strong suit is regional Mexican fare updated with modern techniques. As is the case with other upscale Polanco restaurants, Quintonil's price points are quite affordable compared to similarly-ranked restaurants in Australia or the UK.

Standout dish: Unique dessert option - nopal (cactus paddle) lime sorbet.



Azul Condesa* (Mexican) Nuevo León 68 Cuauhtémoc, Federal District, Mexico City. +52 55 5286 6380**

Unlike some fellow chefs who strive to elevate traditional Mexican cuisine through contemporary techniques or clever presentation, Ricardo Muñoz Zurita relies on a tried and true formula: take the classics, prepare them exceptionally well, and serve them in a bright, clean space. He does just that at his three Mexico City restaurants, including Azul Condesa in the Condesa neighbourhood.

Standout dishes: Sopa de tortilla and cochinita pibil, the latter a sumptuous pulled pork dish served with tortillas and black beans.



Turtux (Mexican) Av. De la Paz 57 Local 1 Col. San Angel Del. Alvaro Obrego, Mexico City. +52 55 5550 3632**

Residents and aficionados of pretty Colonia San Angel rejoiced when Chef Margarita Carrillo, who has cooked for President Obama, opened her restaurant Turtux in 2013. Carrillo's recipes are personal and family favourites - "real Mexican" she has called them in interviews - that don't require much gilding of the lily to impress.

There's an octopus appetizer, thinly sliced and drizzled with a simple cilantro dressing, whose freshness is its only necessary merit.

Standout dishes: Turkey in a mole featuring pistachio is an exceptional entree, and flan tops it all off deliciously.



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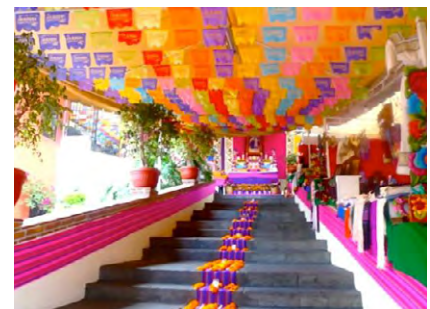
Rosetta (Italian) Colima 166 Cuauhtémoc, Roma Norte, Mexico City. +52 55 5533 7804**

Part bakery and part restaurant, Rosetta, helmed by Chef Elena Reygadas, has been the place to eat Italian food in Mexico City since it opened in 2010. The menu features handmade pasta (many of the varieties are not served elsewhere in Mexico City), local produce, and ultra-fresh seafood and fish. Eat inside the colonial-era house or within the small sidewalk section of intimate tables. A solid wine list and affordable prices make the spot particularly commendable.



Arroyo (Mexican) Av de los Insurgentes Sur 4003, Tlalpan, Mexico City. +52 55 5573 4344**

Suspend disbelief when you enter Restaurante Arroyo, the world's largest Mexican restaurant. Its vast rooms seat more than 2,200 avid diners. Equally outrageous is Restaurante Arroyo's ceiling, abloom with multi-coloured paper bunting. Food is prepared in open hearths, where women in traditional Mexican dress grind spices, fry pork skin, and pound fresh tortillas. Restaurante Arroyo specializes in barbacoa, or slow-roasted mutton. Pre-Columbian, only-in-Mexico foods not for the faint of heart include escamole, moist ant larvae often called "Mexican caviar."



Standout dishes: The roast pork carnitas is a standout dish, and the mixiote (steamed meats and vegetables in a papelote-like banana-leaf wrapper) is delicate, tasty, and generous enough for four

Villa Maria (Traditional Mexican) Homero 704, Mexico City. + 55 5203 0306**

A fun crowd comes to drink giant flavoured margaritas, listen to mariachi music and eat delicious Mexican food. The inviting dining room has two floors and is peppered with silly bar sayings such as, "I just joined alcoholics anonymous," and "I'm still drinking, but under a nickname." There are as many locals as expatriates here, and it's as much a refined celebration of Mexican food as of the culture. Tacos are available in every variety (really good are the fish tacos with red adobe sauce), as are enchiladas and mole dishes.



Standout dishes: The red snapper cooked in a tamarind sauce and wrapped in a banana leaf, and the centre beef cut served with a creamy tequila sauce

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Contramar (Mexican/Seafood) Durango, 200 (Plaza Madrid), Mexico City. + 52 55 5514 9217**

A high-ceilinged, whitewashed, airy space, Contramar attracts a fashionable, well-heeled crowd (publishing, models, artists, bankers) that comes here to see and be seen. Apart from being perpetually chic, it also has a top-quality menu that adds novel twists to customary Mexican seafood dishes. It's best to arrive between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., just after they open, or at 5 p.m., when the crowds have thinned since it can get quite busy. There's a full bar and a wine list with some very good, reasonably-priced wines.

Standout dishes: Raw tuna tostadas with chipotle mayonnaise, sautéed soft-shell crabs, *pescado a la talla Contramar* (a split snapper, half with a dry red spice rub, the other half with green), and mussels in a spicy chipotle broth



La Casa de Toño ** (Mexican) Sabino 166, Col. Santa Ma. Insurgentes, Mexico City. + 52 55 2630 1084

If you want to try Mexican food, you should come here. They sell *quesadillas*, *sopas*, *tostadas*, *tacos*, *flautas* and *tacos de cochita pibil*. There are also Mexican traditional desserts and different kind of drinks including beer (they offer you a variety of them) and the famous fresh waters (a mix of fruits and cereals, blended with sugar & water).

Standout dish: Surely the best dish here is *pozole*, with pork, chicken or vegetables.



Tacos Joven* (Mexican) Universidad 197, Narvarte, Mexico City. +52 55 5519 8395

Since 1971, this fast-food spot has been turning out what many folks believe are the best tacos in Mexico City. It is hard to beat this restaurant if you are looking for fast cheap food. It serves plump *tacos de canasta*, stuffed with your choice of shredded beef, refried beans and potatoes and their size is outmatched by their flavour. You have to stop by early, as business ends at 4:30 pm each day and a bit earlier on Sundays.



Buen provecho!

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