

# Dining Options In and Around Stanford/Palo Alto

Opinions from Ben Brubaker and Dan Bump

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You can always ask us for more information and opinions. This list isn't meant to be exhaustive, but rather the places that Dan and I visit often. There are other good places on the web to look for options. Most notably, AIM maintains a list of local places with very few additional comments. It is located at:

<http://aimath.org/resources/restaurants.pdf>

For on campus options, the physics library has a good link including hours of operation and a great map indicating locations of all dining options (and even sample menus in many cases) at:

<http://library.stanford.edu/depts/physics/related/eateries.html>

Many of the restaurants on this list maintain their own webpages and a simple Google search will lead you to menus, directions, etc. Also, the Bay Area is notoriously food crazy, so there should be a wealth of opinions about choices around Palo Alto available online.

## 1 On Campus Options

There are a fair number of GOOD places to eat on campus, that use fresh ingredients and will get you lunch for between 5 and 10 dollars. Because of this, I never see any good reason to leave campus at the lunch hour to fight the Palo Alto lunch crowd at other places. Check the included map for locations. WARNING: Many places on campus have a narrow window for lunch, from 11:00 - 2:00 and they start shutting down at 1:30, so plan accordingly. Bytes, the Cantor Museum, and the Treehouse (open all day) are exceptions to this rule.

- Bytes (Packard Engineering)

The best combination of good food and very short walk. A nearby place with good coffee, surprisingly good croissants and pastries fresh daily in the morning, and nice lunch options including some creative salads, a good cuban sandwich with the works, and hot specials daily like lamb stew.

- Linx (Clark Center)

The best cafeteria on campus. Several stations include salads, roasted meats, asian noodle bowls topped with fresh filets of fish, sushi made daily, etc.

- Lutticken's Deli (at Center for Clinical Sciences Research)  
Dan and I argue about which is better: the veggie sandwich (including avocado) or the veggie meatball sandwich (with a little marinara and cheese with lots of accompanying veggies). Please help settle this controversy. In any case, both are really tasty and there's a whole list of other deli sandwiches. They have nice shaded tables just outside the cafe.
- Cantor Art Museum Cafe  
Slightly expensive (\$9.00 sandwiches) but very good organic ingredients. The burger is uncommonly tasty. And if you go, you can stroll through the (free) museum on your way out. Don't miss the driftwood horse in the main lobby. It's not made out of driftwood. WARNING: ONLY OPEN WED-SUN.
- Peet's Coffee and Tea  
There are two locations on Campus. Great coffee. Much better than Starbuck's, for example.
- Thai Cafe (in the math building courtyard, between buildings 380 (Math) and 420)  
Some people's stand-by at Stanford. Located in the courtyard below the Stanford math department, a cafe magically appears at lunch time. It's pretty decent Thai food served over rice on styrofoam plates. Given that the food comes from around a corner as soon as you order it, I tend to stick with the vegetarian options (I think Wednesday and Friday have veggie curries if the school year pattern continues in summer). Specials are often better than the soups or salads. Even with long lines, the food comes fast and furious. Be prepared to order when you get to the front of the line, or face the evil eye of the woman at the register.
- The Treehouse (at Tressider Union)  
Burritos and burgers. The burritos aren't up to California standards, but they're not bad. The turkey burger tastes pretty good too. The best part is that they're open late and have a few mexican beers on tap.
- Tressider Union  
Better than you might expect. Another cafeteria with hot food stations, including more salads, barbecue, traditional chinese (as in fried and coated in brown sauce), and a few pastas. Menus are slightly scaled back in the summer time. There's also a Subway sandwiches and a Jamba juice that stay open late if you're looking for a quick bite.
- Law School Cafe (in the Law School Building, behind the Stanford Bookstore and Post Office)  
Yet another sandwich place on campus. Not quite as good as Lutticken's, but has a nice courtyard for eating.
- The Coffee House (at Tressider Union)  
Open in the evenings only. You can get beer on tap there, as well as coffee, pizza, and snacks.

## 2 Off Campus

### 2.1 Sushi

- Naomi Restaurant (1328 El Camino Real, Menlo Park)

I recently found this place. I think it's got the most interesting, high quality selection of fish like ocean trout and yellowtail toro. The "Omikase," or chef's tasting menu, is a splurge (maybe 45 dollars a person) but is very good and includes a couple of cooked or prepared dishes and then a wealth of sushi. You can also order sushi a la carte, of course, to keep the price reasonable.

- Homma's Brown Rice Sushi (2363 Birch Street, about two blocks from Hotel California, Palo Alto)

One man making good sushi, so a gamble in terms of the wait. But very good fish at very good prices, though the place is a hole in the wall.

- Fuki Sushi (4119 El Camino Real, toward the border with Mountain View, in Palo Alto)

Another really nice sushi restaurant (perhaps just slightly cheaper than Naomi) with hit or miss service but always good salmon sashimi and a spicy scallifornia roll (scallops with spicy mayonnaise) that is often a special.

- Bonsai Japanese Restaurant (3401 El Camino Real, Atherton)

A little further to travel north on El Camino, but this is Dan's pick for vegetarian sushi options. Yes. Vegetarian sushi.

### 2.2 Pizza

- Oasis Beer and Pizza Garden (241 El Camino Real, about a block north of the Stanford Mall, Menlo Park)

Dive bar looks, but full of ordinary people. Medium crust California style pizza with interesting mix of toppings (like the Gilroy with garlic sauce, or Barbecued chicken or the Golden Greek with feta and olives) and local beer (Tied House) on tap. Also serves other pub fare like burgers, chicken wings, and sandwiches.

- Pizz'a Chicago (4115 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, toward Mountain View)

Chicago-style deep dish pizza (not ridiculously thick like some) with interesting combinations of toppings, like dried apricots and mushrooms, in addition to the usual options. Also, there's blues music playing in the background.

- Applewood Pizza (1001 El Camino Real, Menlo Park)

Similar California style pizza to Oasis, but I prefer Oasis. With Applewood, you have to walk an extra two blocks, but save a dollar or two on a large pizza. More of a 50's style interior than dive bar.

- Pizza My Heart (220 University Ave., near Emerson, Palo Alto)

New York style pizza. Fast and cheap, and nearby on University Ave.

## 2.3 Cafes

- Coupa Cafe (538 Ramona St., off University, Palo Alto)

Tucked away on Ramona, it should be quite relaxing in the summer when students aren't there in droves. Has great espresso drinks and a spicy Mayan hot chocolate that is outstanding. Also chicken salad, etc. and a wide variety of chocolate. Open pretty late.

- University Coffee Cafe (271 University Ave., Palo Alto)

On the main drag, with some affordable entrees as well as a good place to have a cup of coffee or a fruit smoothie.

- Cafe Barone (1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park)

A large amount of outdoor seating, in the shade or sun, with a full coffee bar and good hot sandwiches on baguettes. Crowded on weekend mornings for really good egg dishes, but there's so much space that you can always find a table even then.

- Joanie's Cafe (447 S California Ave, Palo Alto)

Just up the street from Hotel California, they're mostly a breakfast and lunch place, with great brioche french toast. But then you'll be given free breakfast here at the math department all week...

## 2.4 Mexican

- Palo Alto Sol (408 California Ave, Palo Alto)

Across the street from Hotel California, and better than average Mexican food. Still many dishes (like Enchiladas al Sol, Catfish tacos, or Chiles Rellenos) come with the usual rice and beans, but they're tasty. The Del Sol margaritas make it taste better.

- Estrellita's (971 N. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos)

Further away, but more authentic than Palo Alto Sol. Specials are displayed on plates on the way in and usually are the best choices.

- Los Gallos Tacqueria (3726 Florence St., Redwood City)

In a mall off of Marsh road near highway 101, this run down looking place serves the best burritos around and a very good Mexican sandwich, called a torta, with fresh baked bread and avocado. I didn't think Mexican food included sandwiches, but this thing is really good with carne asada (steak).

- El Grullense Tacqueria (3636 El Camino Real, Palo Alto)

Very close to the Hotel California, and pretty authentic versions of burritos. For convenience and price, this is hard to beat.

## 2.5 Other local eateries

- Bangkok Cuisine (407 Lytton Ave., one block north of University at Waverley, Palo Alto, aka Amarin Thai)  
Better than that Thai place that you always go to after seminar dinners. Ka Ree Pumpkin is a favorite entree. Tastes like a well- spiced butternut squash to me.
- Osteria (247 Hamilton Avenue, corner of Hamilton and Ramona, Palo Alto)  
Most folks' pick for best Italian. Very good pastas, fish and meat entrees, and some good wines. Entrees can range in price from teens for pastas to low twenties in dollars for some entrees.
- Kan Zeman (274 University Ave, Palo Alto)  
A dependable, affordable Middle Eastern restaurant (Jordanian if that makes a difference). There are two other kebab/gyro places on University Avenue, one at the very start of the business district close to Stanford, and one at the very end of the business district. Both are on the south side of the street. Both are also decent.
- Szechwan Cafe (406 California Avenue, Palo Alto)  
Next to Palo Alto Sol on California Avenue, they have pretty good food. The garlic eggplant is highly recommended by Dan. Apparently, the proprietor sometimes plays the flute when the mood strikes.
- Thai City (3691 El Camino Real, Palo Alto)  
Near California Ave, and offering authentically spicy Thai dishes.
- Flea Street Cafe (3607 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park)  
The better of the two splurge places on the list (vs. Evvia below). Organic local foods, well-prepared. Entrees run in the twenties. Ambience is quiet and casual in this somewhat small interior. Run by the same chef that does the museum cafe, Jesse Ziff Cool. This would be my pick if you wanted to do one evening a bit more upscale.
- La Bodeguita del Medio (463 California Avenue, Palo Alto)  
Always seems to pretend that it's a better restaurant than it really is. Has a Cuban influence with entree prices in the high teens, with some sandwiches for cheaper. The Masitas, a spicy pulled pork dish with red-wine carmelized onions is pretty decent for \$18.00.
- Evvia Estiatorio (420 Emerson Street)  
Also quite pricey, but many pristinely prepared Greek dishes, including a nice range of appetizers and options like whole steamed fish and grilled lamb.
- Pasta Pomodoro (445 Emerson, Off University, Palo Alto)  
A small chain, with good hearty portions of pasta at affordable prices and wines served in a juice glass.
- Pluto's (482 University Ave, near Border's, Palo Alto)  
Almost fast food with made to order salads which can be topped with chicken or steak. Fairly cheap.

- Mandarin Gourmet (420 Ramona St., Off University. Palo Alto)  
Chinese food with vegetables other than baby corn. So better than the average Chop Suey places.
- Nola's (535 Ramona, Off University. Palo Alto)  
Cajun food with entrees priced in the teens. Becomes a bit of a scene toward the later part of weekend evenings, but during the week, is just a pretty decent restaurant.

## 2.6 Further Afield

- Here are some names of great high end restaurants in San Francisco that are very consistent (in order of preference): Zuni Cafe, Delfina, Aziza, Quince.
- On Saturdays, the Farmer's Market at the Ferry Building at Pier 1/2 in San Francisco (along the Embarcadero) is amazing. During the week, the Ferry Building restaurants are all very interesting and vary from high Asian cuisine (Slanted Door) to gourmet burgers (Taylor's refresher).
- In Berkeley, Cheeseboard Pizza, across the street from Chez Panisse in Berkeley on Shattuck Ave. is my favorite pizza in the world. They make one kind of vegetarian pizza every day and sell it until it's gone.