Dining in Duke City: Albuquerque Restaurants

Albuquerque, named for the Spanish Duke of Albuquerque, has a rich and diverse culinary scene which will satisfy every taste. The following is a list of restaurants primarily between Old Town Albuquerque (site of the VRA conference hotel) and the University of New Mexico campus – restaurants that are conveniently located along the conference route. Some exceptional local restaurants that are off the beaten path are also listed – you won’t regret the extra effort to visit any of these excellent eating establishments.

As you will find, the centerpiece of authentic New Mexican food is Chile. No New Mexico culinary experience is complete until you have been asked the obligatory interrogative, “Red or Green?” by your wait staff. Be daring and answer “Both!” with great gusto. And don’t be surprised to find Chile topping everything from eggs to burgers to Sushi.

The Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau maintains an excellent Google Map guide that shows the locations of all major hotels and restaurants in greater Albuquerque. All of the restaurants in this guide can be found on the map (with the exception of the 3 Santa Fe restaurants in the last section). You’ll be able to use it to quickly chart your directions between conference locations and the restaurant of your choice: http://www.itsatrip.org/travel-tools/maps/default.aspx?cat=Dining

The guide below is organized by city neighborhood. A description of each restaurant’s specialty fare and contact information is included for each entry:

Old Town

Old Town is one of Albuquerque’s several cultural districts and is located on the west side of the city, situated between Tiguex Park and Rio Grande Boulevard. The area hosts many museums, shops, and very excellent restaurants.

Hotel Albuquerque

There are two fine restaurants in the Hotel Albuquerque:

Cafe Plazuela & Cantina
Summary: Offers traditional New Mexican ambience and cuisine, including burritos, enchiladas, plus American-style sandwiches, soups and salads.
Phone: (505) 843-6300
Hours: Open daily, 6:00am - 10:30pm

Cristobal's Fine Dining Restaurant
Summary: Cristobal's offers a fine dining experience of both classic Continental and original New Mexican Cuisine in a quiet and romantic candle-lit setting. Reservations at Cristobal's are recommended.
Phone: (505) 222-8766
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 6:00pm to 10:00pm

Casa de Ruiz - Church Street Café
Summary: A very pretty little restaurant tucked away in one of Albuquerque’s oldest traditional adobe houses, this restaurant offers both American and New Mexican fare. Excellent choice for lunch. Try the handmade pink corn tamales.
Address: 2111 Church St. N.W.
Phone: (505) 247-8522
Web: http://www.churchstreetcafe.com
Hours: Monday-Saturday 8:00am-9:00pm, Sundays 8:00am-4:00pm
La Crêpe Michel
Summary: Wonderful French Cuisine served in a beautiful adobe house and garden setting.
Address: 400 San Felipe Dr. # C2
Phone: (505) 242-1251
Web: http://www.lacrepemichel.com/
Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 11:30am-2:00pm (Lunch); Tuesday-Saturday, 6:00pm-9:00pm (Dinner)

Little Anita's (Old Town)
Summary: Excellent New Mexican style fare, fast service and reasonable prices. Try the Enchiladas Rancheras (flat enchiladas).
Address: 2105 Mountain Rd. NW
Phone: (505) 242-3102
Web: http://www.littleanitas.com/locations.mountain.html
Hours: Open daily, 7:00am-9:00pm

St Clair Winery and Bistro
Summary: Enjoy an authentic New Mexico wine tasting with lunch or dinner. St. Clair winery makes some of the finest wines in New Mexico - their Mimbres Red is my own favorite. The Bistro offers light mostly American fare: Soups, Salads and Sandwiches. Listen to live jazz music Wednesday through Sunday nights. Just north of Hotel Albuquerque.
Address: 901 Rio Grande NW
Phone: (505) 243-9916
Web: http://www.stclairwinery.com/bistros/albuquerque/
Hours: Sunday-Thursday, 11:00am-9:00pm; Friday-Saturday, 11:00am-10:00pm

Seasons Rotisserie and Grill
Summary: American menu featuring simple dishes prepared with exceptionally fresh ingredients. Specialties include roast chicken, grilled bone-on ribeye and grilled double-cut pork chops.
Address: 2031 Mountain Road Northwest
Phone: (505) 766-5100
Web: http://seasonsabq.com/
Hours: Open daily for lunch 11:30am to 2:30pm, Dinner starts at 5pm

North Valley
A quiet, pastoral area of the city, the North Valley is known for its large homesteads and even larger cottonwood trees. A fifteen-minute drive from Old Town, this beautiful area of the city is definitely worth the trip.

El Pinto
Summary: One of Albuquerque’s established favorites, El Pinto is located in a beautiful old adobe style manor house on a large country estate. Guests have the option to dine outdoors, on one of several garden patios. The food is excellent, and the menu specializes in traditional New Mexican family recipes.
Address: 10500 4th Street
Phone: (505) 898-1771
Web: http://www.elpinto.com/
Hours: Monday-Thursday - 11am - 9pm, Friday-Saturday - 11am - 10pm, Sunday - 10:30am - 9pm
Downtown Albuquerque

For those more urbane visual resources curators who prefer a bit of night life, downtown Albuquerque will not disappoint. Many restaurants and clubs are located on Central Avenue as you head east out of Old Town towards UNM.

Artichoke Café
Summary: Very popular French-American gourmet restaurant with an impressive wine and cocktails list.
Address: 424 Central Ave. S.E.
Phone: (505) 243-0200
Web: http://www.artichokecafe.com/
Hours: Monday-Friday, 11:00am-2:30pm and 5:30pm-10:00pm; Weekends, 5:30pm-9:00pm

Farina Pizzeria & Wine Bar
Summary: Intriguing upscale pizzeria serving gourmet pies that are chef-crafted.
Address: 510 Central Ave. SE
Phone: (505) 243-0130
Web: http://www.farinapizzeria.com/
Hours: Open daily, 11:00am-10:00pm

The Library Bar & Grill
Summary: If you’ve gotta dance, this is the place. A major nightlife venue with a dignified name. Full bar. Serves mostly TGIF-style party food: Burgers, salads, wraps, pizzas and burritos. Late night menu (appetizers) served from 10pm to close.
Address: 312 Central Ave. SW
Phone: (505) 242-2992
Website: http://www.myspace.com/libraryabq
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 11:00am-2:00am; Sunday, 12:00pm-12:00am

Standard Diner
Summary: Way cool atmosphere located in a remodeled Route 66 service station, featuring eclectic renditions of classic American fare such as Chicken Fried Tuna, Smoked Salmon BBT, Lobster Caesar, Mac & Cheese, Chicken & Dumplings, Duck Tamales, Moroccan Pot Roast, Roast Chicken, and burgers.
Address: 320 Central Ave. SE
Phone: (505) 243-1440
Web: http://www.standarddiner.com
Hours: Monday-Friday 11:00am-9:30pm; Saturday-Sunday 9:30am-9:30pm

Sushi King
Summary: Enjoy fresh sushi, rice and noodle dishes with beer and wine in a contemporary atmosphere. Vegetarian dishes and carry out orders available.
Address: 118 Central Ave. SW
Phone: (505) 842-5099
Web: http://www.sushikingnm.com
Hours: Monday-Friday, 11:00am-9:30pm; Weekends, 12:00pm – 9:30pm
University of New Mexico Campus
UNM has a number of on-campus fast food restaurants that are located on the Mezzanine level of the Student Union Building, just a short distance from either Zimmerman Library or the UNM Art Museum. Campus eating establishments include Dos Hermanos (New Mexican style food), Gyros (Greek), Satellite Coffee, Chic-Fil-A (Chicken Sandwiches), Sonic (Burgers), Mandalay Express, Saggios, Sahara Express, and the New York Times Square Deli. A small convenience store, called Outtakes is located on the Student Union Building lower level. It features take-out sandwiches, coffee and sodas.

University District
Central Avenue, which runs east-west on the south side of UNM’s main campus is the university’s “main drag” and home to many convenient and creative restaurants, all of which are within easy walking distance from the campus.

Frontier Restaurant
Summary: Located on the south edge of the UNM main campus, the Frontier is the unofficial flagship restaurant of the university. The restaurant is in easy walking distance of all campus locations. Popular with students and faculty, the Frontier is always a hub of activity, and the menu features a wide range of casual fare to suit any taste. Try one of their famous Cinnamon Rolls for Breakfast and a Frontier Burrito for Lunch.
Address: 2400 Central NE
Phone: (505) 266-0550
Web: http://www.frontierrestaurant.com/
Hours: Monday-Sunday, 5:00am-1:00am

Los Cuates
Summary: Located just east of UNM campus on Lomas, Los Cuates offers authentic New Mexican cuisine at very affordable prices. Great choice for lunch. Their homemade salsa is unique and very delicious.
Address: 4901 Lomas BLVD NE
Phone: (505) 255-5079
Web: http://www.loscuatesrestaurants.com
Hours: Open Daily, 11am-9pm

Yanni’s Mediterranean Grill and Opa Bar
Summary: Very pleasant restaurant with good atmosphere and excellent Greek food. Yanni’s offers an extensive lunch and dinner menu featuring many favorite Greek traditional dishes, outstanding pasta options, pizzas, fresh seafood and the finest steaks and chops.
Address: 3109 Central Avenue Northeast
Phone: (505) 268-9250
Web: http://www.yannisandopabar.com/
Hours: Open daily, 11:00am-9:30pm

East Side
It might take an effort of will to get over to the east side of Albuquerque, but there is one restaurant in particular that is worth making the trip for:
Cervantes
Summary: Ranked among the top 5 restaurants offering authentic, traditional New Mexican cuisine in New Mexico. This restaurant is a bit farther afield, but definitely worth the trip. Cervantes has excellent New Mexican style food and features many low fat dishes. Their homemade salsa is phenomenal and worth the trip. Try the Carne Adovada, Chicken Enchiladas or the Chile Rellenos.
Address: 5801 Gibson Blvd SE
Web: http://cervantessalsa.com/Restaurant.aspx
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 11:00am-10:00pm; Sunday, 11:00am-9:30pm

Dining in Santa Fe
Visitors to Santa Fe will want to take time to sample some of the superb fare available in the state capitol. Fine and affordable restaurants abound in Santa Fe, the following is just a brief sample of a couple places you might want to hit on a day trip. A complete list of Santa Fe haute cuisine is available at: http://www.fodors.com/world/north-america/usa/new-mexico/santa-fe/restaurants.html

Pink Adobe
Summary: A Santa Fe tradition since 1944, the Pink Adobe is the favorite haunt of many State legislators and officials. Located across the street from the Roundhouse (state capitol). Cozy atmosphere, excellent New Mexican menu and a full bar to boot.
Address: 406 Old Santa Fe Trail
Phone: (505) 983-7712
Web: http://www.thepinkadobe.com/
Hours: Monday-Friday, 11:30-2:00pm (lunch); 5:30pm-8:30pm (dinner)

La Plazuela Dining Room at the La Fonda Hotel
Summary: La Plazuela is filled with natural light and whimsical folk art touches, including legendary hand-painted windows. Menu features excellent Northern New Mexico cuisine, made with locally sourced organic meats and produce. American menu items also available. Located near St. Francis Cathedral, Museums and Santa Fe Plaza shopping. Excellent for breakfast, lunch or dinner.
Address: 100 E. San Francisco St.
Phone: (505) 995-2334
Web: http://www.lafondasantafe.com/dining/
Hours: Open daily, 7:30am-10:00pm

Ore House on the Plaza
Summary: A bit touristy, but certainly fun and always lively. Located right on the plaza. Excellent steaks, New Mexican and seafood. Serves a very nice New Mexico wine list. Next door to shopping, museums.
Address: 50 Lincoln Avenue
Phone: (505) 983-8687
Web: http://www.yelp.com/biz/ore-house-on-the-plaza-santa-fe
Hours: Monday, 11:00am-9:00pm; Tuesday-Sunday, 12:00pm-10:00pm