

# **R**estaurants in the Oakland Area

**College Avenue  
Piedmont-Lake Merritt  
Old Oakland  
Chinatown  
Broadway  
Jack London Square**

**Lucille Poskanzer**

<b>Introduction</b>	0
<p>This is the Oakland section of Restaurants in the Berkeley Area. It concentrates on restaurants near the downtown region and on College Avenue. It has been on the Web at <a href="http://RNC.LBL.gov/RestOak/">http://RNC.LBL.gov/RestOak/</a> since 2003. The authors alone are responsible for the information provided and the opinions expressed.</p>	
8/23/2008	

<b>New</b>	1
<p>Since the last revision the following restaurants are <b>new</b>: Breads of India in Oakland. The following are <b>newly included</b>: Cock-A-Doodle Cafe, Crown Wok, Gourmet Delight, Pacific Coast Brewing, Ratto's and Tamarindo. The following have <b>closed</b>: Cuvae, Pearl Oyster Bar, and Sushi Zone. Turnover is frequent, so it is always wise to check ahead. Many close early on Sunday and are closed on Monday.</p>	

2
<h1>College Avenue</h1>

<b>Mitama</b>	3
3201 College Ave. at Alcatraz	652-6157
<p>At the Berkely-Oakland border, you will find this corner storefront Japanese restaurant. There's a small sushi bar, the tables are nicely spaced, and the modern atmosphere is quiet. Service is friendly and families are welcome. The sushi is very fresh, the donburi generous and tasty, but the tempura tends to be a little greasy. The prices are slightly high end. There's a good choice of sake, too. A nice place for lunch also. Worth a try if you are in the area.</p>	

<b>Flavors of India</b>	4
3211 College Ave. at Alcatraz	658-3461
<p>A small, nicely decorated, informal place offering quite delicious Indian food, including a number of excellent small plates, huge inexpensive tandoori wrap sandwiches, and more. It can get pretty crowded at peak dining times, and service can lag, but it's worth the wait. One of the better Indian places in this part of town.</p>	

<b>Wood Tavern</b>	5
6317 College Ave. south of Alcatraz	654-6607
<p>This extremely noisy, lively and very popular place offers really delicious California eclectic cuisine in a gorgeously designed space. The food prices are fairly high, there are many unusual wine choices, all too expensive, and they offer some great cocktails too. The chef is particularly good with the meat dishes. Don't expect to hear your dinner partners in the din, just sit back, enjoy the food, and talk later. Crowded even at lunch.</p>	

<b>Nan Yang Rockridge</b>	6
6048 College Ave. south of Claremont	655-3298
<p>This is a popular Burmese restaurant in the Rockridge area, with a menu featuring a variety of unusual soups, salads, noodles, and main dishes. Everything is uniformly tasty and very fresh in flavor. The atmosphere is bright and lively, the prices moderate, service quick and friendly. There are just a few outdoor tables, with heat lamps, for eating al fresco.</p>	

<b>Barclay's</b>	7
5940 College Ave.	654-1650
<p>A popular pub, with a very informal atmosphere, and a wide selection of ales and beers. The food is simple, the portions generous and the spicing assertive. It's fun to do a beer tasting here, and the staff can make good suggestions as to what to try. It gets very crowded and noisy here on a weekend night, but that's part of the charm of the place. There are some outdoor tables. One of the few places serving food after 10 p.m., even on Sunday.</p>	

<b>Somerset</b>	8
5912 College Ave. at Chabot	428-1823
<p>Decorated in California Craftsman style, with dark wood paneling and widely spaced tables, this is a great place for a good lunch or brunch, and a decent if not great dinner. Prices are reasonable for the large portions. Service is warm and friendly, and children are welcome. The noise level is totally manageable, and there's a lovely outdoor patio for warm days and nights.</p>	

<b>Barney's Hamburgers</b>	9
5819 College Ave. just north of Rockridge	601-0444
<p>A branch of a popular chain (others are on Solano Ave., on Shattuck Ave. at Cedar, and on Piedmont Ave.). Good for huge hamburgers with all kinds of toppings, soups, large salads, milk shakes, wine and beer. The French fries are terrific, and a half-order is plenty! In my opinion this is the best Barney's because of the lovely shady patio in back, which is wonderful for eating on a warm day.</p>	

**Oliveto** 10  
 5655 College Ave. at Rockridge BART 547-5356

This two level architecturally interesting place, within the Market Hall complex of shops, features delicious but expensive Mediterranean cuisine. The presentation is simple and reflects whatever is fresh in season. Wines are outrageously overpriced. Annual special food events are famous and popular. Good service but noisy, and reservations are recommended. Downstairs is a less formal cafe, with lower prices and no need to reserve.

**Citron** 11  
 5484 College Ave. 653-5484

This lovely place features inventive bistro food with an elegant touch. It is very popular. The small, well chosen menu changes with the seasons, but everything is quite good. Prices are expensive, but worth it if you order carefully. Reservations are essential for dinner, but not at lunchtime. There is a beautiful back patio for outdoor dining, when weather permits. This should be on your list for "something special".

**A Coté** 12  
 5478 College Ave. next to Citron 655-6469

A popular place, this storefront space has been transformed into a plush, dimly lit, intimate cafe featuring French bistro inspired small plates, along with a large selection of wines and cocktails. Prices are high, especially for the wine, but this does not deter the crowds. The food can be great or merely good, depending on what you order, but the bill will be expensive for what you get. Open late -- go at an off hour to snag a table.

**Soi4** 13  
 5421 College Ave. 655-0889

An upscale Thai restaurant in Rockridge, located in a serene architecturally beautiful space. There is a full bar, with a large choice of cocktails. The service is solicitous, and the food has all of the standards, along with some unique dishes, too. The tables are nicely spaced, perfect for intimate conversation. The owners are gearing this towards a glamorous crowd. However, all of this comes with high end prices, to my mind not warranted.

**Uzen** 14  
 5415 College Ave. 654-7753

In a small storefront in the Rockridge area you will find this spare, high ceilinged, eclectically decorated Japanese restaurant. The small menu features distinctive sushi, along with noodle and rice dishes. The sushi is fresh and excellent, but the choice is often small. Lunchtime prices are moderate, but dinner can get pricey. There's a large selection of sakes along with the Japanese beers. This place can get quite crowded on weekend nights.

**Garibaldi's** 15  
 5356 College Ave. 595-4000

A spacious beautifully designed restaurant, with elegant and sophisticated decor, and a Mediterranean menu. Open for lunch and dinner, the food is good, portions generous, service friendly, but the prices are a bit high. There is a full bar, as well as a large wine list with high prices. This can get very noisy when crowded.

**Marica** 16  
 5301 College Ave. 985-8388

This is a wonderful intimate storefront in Rockridge with decor somewhat Art Moderne and lovely lighting. The small menu features exquisitely prepared delicious seafood, beautifully presented, along with a few other choices. There's a raw bar also, if you are an oyster fan, as well as cocktails and wine. This is a real gem, and definitely worth a try.

**Pizzaiolo** 17  
 5008 Telegraph Ave. south of 51st St. 652-4888

Extremely popular, this is a great Italian restaurant offering unusual thin crusted pizzas, along with creative delicious pastas. The menu choices change often, but everything is wonderful. Reservations are now taken so there's no need to wait. Wines are decently priced, and there's a good selection of beers. Waitpersons are individualistic, and service can be slow when crowded, but do not miss this fine place!

**Dona Tomas** 18  
 5004 Telegraph Ave. south of 51st St. 450-0522

Take yourself to this out of the way location to discover a fabulous menu of Mexican food with a California flair. The restaurant consists of adjoining storefronts decorated with folk art, as well as a lovely heated patio out back. The food is always tasty and different, the prices moderately high but worth it, the service professional and friendly. There is a large choice of cocktails to enhance your dining, as well as well priced wine. Highly recommended.

**Piedmont Ave  
 Lake Merritt**

**Drunken Fish** 20  
 3314 Piedmont Ave. near B'way 645-1912

An out of the way location with a modest small storefront exterior, has some of the best sushi to be found in the Bay Area. Portions are large, the handmade sushi rolls huge and excellent, and the prices very moderate for the quality and quantity. Decor is faux Japanese Country Inn, service is warm and friendly, and the noise level is blissfully low. Street parking at night is plentiful, but day times are more difficult.

**Bay Wolf Café** 21  
 3853 Piedmont Ave. 655-6004

Converted Victorian house, warm and cozy. Elegant, expensive, inventive California menu and wonderful wines. If duck is on the menu, order it! Famous in the East Bay, rightfully so. Reservations required. Professional and knowledgeable service. This is one of my favorite "fancy" restaurants in the East Bay. Open for lunch, too. The heated deck is available at all times, and allows for quieter dining.

**Jojo** 22  
 3859 Piedmont Ave. 985-3003

This is a very small fine restaurant featuring superb, eclectic, sophisticated French cuisine, with a well chosen menu, lovely wines, and professional service. The menu changes according to the season, but the confit of duck leg is great. The desserts are especially good, too. The space is compact, but the friendliness of the service makes up for the crunch. Food prices moderately high, wine even more so. Here's another favorite to add to your list.

**Zatis** 23  
 4029 Piedmont Ave. 658-8210

In a long narrow storefront space, you will find this worthwhile restaurant choice, with an eclectic menu of both classic favorites and Turkish specialties, all moderately priced. Open for both lunch and dinner, this is not trendy food, but it is solid and satisfying. Tables are nicely spaced, service professional, noise level manageable, this is a good place for families, with something for all palates.

**César Piedmont** 24  
 4039 Piedmont Ave. at 40th St. 985-1200

An Oakland branch of a Berkeley favorite, it offers a large and lively space and an expanded menu of both small and large plates, along with a retail space for specialty foods. It's open throughout the day until fairly late at night, and has been extremely popular from day one. Prices depend on what you order, the food is well spiced, the cocktails and wine great, the ambiance both friendly and sophisticated. This is a great, if noisy, place for hanging out.

**Xyclo** 25  
 4218 Piedmont Ave. at Ridgeway 654-2681

Wonderful upscale Vietnamese food in a quiet, nicely decorated small storefront. Tables are well spaced for easy conversation. The Vietnamese rolls are especially delicious and inventive, but everything on the menu is fresh and tasty, with lots of vegetarian choices. Prices are moderate for the quality of the food, service is friendly, and even the wines are moderately priced. Definitely recommended!

**Dopo** 26  
 4293 Piedmont Ave. near Echo 652-dopo

This cafe occupies two adjoining storefronts, with a few outside tables. The chef owner is an alumnus of Chez Panisse, and his cooking is terrific -- fresh and seasonal. The menu is limited -- small plates, creative pizzas, panini, salads, and pastas -- and everything is really delicious. Service friendly and personal. No reservations taken, so try to go at an off hour. Open for lunch on weekdays, too.

**Luka's** 27  
 2221 Broadway at W. Grand 451-4677

This taproom, restaurant, lounge, and hangout has a little bit of everything. The menu offers a wide range of Belgian bistro food, with shellfish platters, mussels, frites, and sandwiches as well as more substantial dishes. There's a huge list of beers as well as cocktails and wine. Prices are moderate, service casual. Mondays are noisy \$1 oyster nights. Later on there's music, dancing, and a pool table. Don't miss this experience!

**Mezze** 28  
 3407 Lakeshore Ave. near Trestle Glen 663-2500

An open and airy restaurant that features Mediterranean cooking, offering a number of small plates as well as more substantial dishes. The prices are moderately high, the service warm and welcoming. When crowded, this place can get noisy, but it's a worthwhile place to try because of some of the unusual menu items.

**Di Bartolo** 29  
 3306 Grand Ave. up from Grand Lake 451-0576

An urban Oasis on a bustling street full of small shops, this restaurant has a no reservations policy, but it is definitely worth any wait. The decor is chic, hard edges, black and chrome, and it does get noisy, but you feast on a delicious menu of moderately priced Mediterranean food. The pizzas have a thin crackling crisp crust, the fish is perfectly cooked, and the service professional. Wines a bit high priced, though. Worth a visit for sure.

30

# Old Oakland

## Old Oakland

31

Washington between 8th and 10th Sts.

This is an area of Oakland that is an intriguing architectural mix of renovated Old Victorians, gentrified condominiums, and hard edge modern office buildings, centered around Washington Street, but extending a bit in other directions. It has a wonderful array of small cafes with outdoor tables and restaurants, as well as shops and galleries. There's a crowded and popular Farmers Market on Fridays also. Very lively during the day, and increasingly popular at night too.

## Crown Wok

32

1019 Clay St. at 11th

625-1005

Near the convention center, this is a large and bustling Chinese restaurant with quick service, an inexpensive menu offering a huge choice of standard items, well cooked if not extraordinary. At lunchtime during the week you can partake of a variety of Dim Sum offered on rolling carts -- just point to what you want, and the Chinese waitpersons will mark your bill. The total will not be expensive. This place is lots quieter than some of the other Dim Sum places.

## Le Cheval

33

1007 Clay St.

763-8957

A large, crowded, and very popular Vietnamese restaurant with a huge menu and moderate prices. Lunch is a real bargain, and the service speedy. This place can get really noisy when full, so beware. The cuisine features lots of meat dishes, but there are a number of vegetarian choices too. There is also a busy take-out counter. Be prepared for long waits on weekend nights, when valet parking is available.

## Breads of India

34

948 Clay St. at 10th

834-7684

A new branch of a popular Berkeley restaurant, this beautifully decorated place offers solicitous service, well spaced tables perfect for quiet conversations, and a daily changing menu of classic and traditional items from all over India. The food is delicious, spicing subtle, if not very fiery, and the various breads uniformly wonderful. Prices are very moderate. Closed on Sundays.

## Pacific Coast Brewing

35

906 Washington St.

836-2739

Located in an historic building very close to the Convention center is this brewpub, offering a large menu of beers brewed on site, as well as "guest" draft beers, all inexpensive. The menu has moderately priced soups, salads, sandwiches, and pizza. The cooking is decent and hearty, but not as outstanding as the beer! Open for both lunch and dinner, there is a lovely patio in back open all year. A good place to hang out and drink, even on Sunday.

## B

36

499 9th St. at Washington

251-8770

In a beautifully restored Old Oakland building you will find this restaurant, featuring excellent California eclectic cuisine, with many inventive appetizers and salads. The pizzas are terrific. The wine list, with many unusual choices, is expensive. It can get noisy when crowded, and the service erratic, but it's worth a try. Prices are moderately high but lower at lunch. Outdoor tables for good weather.

## Levende East

37

827 Washington St. at 9th

835-5585

An addition to the developing Old Oakland restaurant scene, this is a beautiful space with a sleek and modern look. It also has a large bar/lounge, and is extremely noisy including the music pumped up to top volume. The pricey food, featuring small plates and a selection of larger dishes is quite delicious, but can be uneven. The mini lamb burgers are terrific. Wines are expensive, and there are many inventive cocktails too. Outdoor tables for lunch.

## Ratto's

38

821 Washington St. below 9th

832-6503

A classic that's been around forever, complete with dim lighting, wood floors, and bins of beans and pasta, this old fashioned Continental Italian deli offers an eclectic array of things to buy, along with large inexpensive sandwiches, panini, and salads made to order. Grab a sandwich order sheet, wait your turn, and enjoy a delicious lunch at one of the outdoor tables. Popular and crowded at lunchtime.

## Cafe 817

39

817 Washington St.

271-7965

A lovely art filled place, close to the Convention Center, open only for breakfast and lunch. The menu choices are small, but everything is fresh and truly delicious. The Italian sandwiches are wonderful, as is the polenta. The peaceful atmosphere is a plus when you want to get away from the crowds, read your paper and enjoy a delicious coffee. Outdoor tables for warm days, too.

<b>Cock-A-Doodle Cafe</b>	40
719 Washington St.	465-5400
<p>Open for breakfast and lunch, offering a standard array of decently priced choices with a slightly South American touch, this small cafe is now open also for dinner some nights, when the menu changes to moderately priced nicely cooked Cuban food. Decently priced wines are a bonus, as is the lovely back patio. Service informal and friendly, and it's not too crowded most days.</p>	

<b>Tamarindo</b>	41
468 8th St. north of B'way	444-1944
<p>Upscale modern South American and Mexican cuisine in an elegant atmosphere, this small storefront has some outdoor tables also. Menu choices are mainly small plates at lunch, though at night they also offer a few larger plates. Cooking is really delicious, although the portions can be somewhat small, and the prices a little high for what you get. But, the guacamole is superb and generous. Very popular.</p>	

42
<h1>Chinatown</h1>

<b>Oakland Chinatown</b>	43
7th to 12th Sts. btw. Franklin and Harrison	
<p>This is an area that is having a huge surge in growth, and is full of wonderful inexpensive restaurants and cafes: Chinese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Korean, etc. Go for a dim sum lunch some day, or just tour the neighborhood, exploring some of the side streets too, and try whatever place smells good and is crowded! You can also get something "to go", and munch as you walk. Some of the places are extremely simple, but do not let that deter you.</p>	

<b>Peony</b>	44
388 9th St., 10th btw. Webster and Franklin	286-8866
<p>Located on the second floor of the Pacific Renaissance Plaza, is this extremely large and popular Chinese restaurant, featuring excellent dim sum at lunch, and specializing in banquets at night. Everyone seems to order the special Peking Duck. There is always a crowd waiting, the place is noisy and bustling, and the prices are high end for the cuisine. But the food is very good, and it is a fine choice for a large group.</p>	

<b>Joy Luck</b>	45
327 8th St. btw. Webster and Harrison	832-4270
<p>Follow the local crowds waiting at this Chinese restaurant, and you will find good food at incredibly low prices. No atmosphere, tables crowded together, noisy, everyone feasts on a large choice of fresh seafood dishes, along with more typical menu items. This is an especially good place for dim sum at lunchtime, when you can eat generously for very little money. Service is quick, if impersonal.</p>	

<b>Gourmet Delight</b>	46
701 Webster St. at 7th	832-7661
<p>Always crowded and nosy, filled with Chinese families, which is always a good sign, this small restaurant makes no concessions to Westerners, but it does offer delicious fresh inexpensive dishes featuring seafood and really good Dim Sum at lunchtime. Since the Dim Sum ladies and their rolling carts do not speak much English, look carefully at what's offered, and point and choose. They'll tote up the bill, and you'll have a fine experience.</p>	

<b>Legendary Palace</b>	47
708 Franklin St.	663-9188
<p>This place is more upscale than most others in the area, both in decoration and prices. It features Hong Kong style dim sum and seafood. The shrimp are supposed to be especially good. This translates into higher prices, more solicitous service, and very fresh fish. The other choices are less distinctive. Only you can decide whether the decoration and food warrant the cost.</p>	

48
<h1>Broadway</h1>

<b>Flora</b>	49
1900 Telegraph Ave. at 19th St.	286-0100
<p>An old florist shop reconfigured into a sleek sophisticated Art Deco bar/restaurant, in a part of town that is still in transition, this is an oasis of California eclectic food, good wines, a gorgeous bar, and more. Despite the out of the way location, it is popular, especially at lunch. Dinner prices are moderately high, with a few decently priced wines. The noise level is usually manageable, and tables are nicely spaced. Service is variable. Easy parking at night.</p>	

**Saigon**

50

1526 San Pablo Ave.

465-4545

In Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Hall Plaza), 15th St. west of B'way is this simple place with excellent Vietnamese food. Popular at lunchtime, when you can sit outside in the sunny plaza, the menu features huge bowls of pho, or refreshing cold vermicelli noodle salads called bun, with a variety of toppings. Prices are low, service friendly. At night it is quieter, and there are more menu choices. The Vietnamese crepe, offered only at night, is great!

**City Center Mall**

51

13th St. btw. Broadway and Clay

This small pleasant mall has a wealth of informal cafes offering quick breakfasts and decent lunches. The foods range from bagels and espresso to pasta and burritos. Nothing is very expensive, and on sunny days you can take advantage of a large number of outdoor tables and benches. At lunchtime, it becomes crowded with workers from the nearby office buildings. There are also a few shops, a bookstore, and easy access to BART.

**Verbena**

52

1111 Broadway at 11th

465-9300

Hidden away in the back lobby of a high rise office building close to Oakland's City Center is this delightful sophisticated place, which is well worth seeking out. Warm atmosphere, tables nicely spaced, a lovely bar. The food is California eclectic, nicely done, prices moderately high but worth it. Popular at lunch, it is very quiet at dinner. Not open on weekends, but give it a try, and you won't regret it!

**Battambang**

53

850 Broadway

839-8815

This is a small informal restaurant that features pretty good if not superb Cambodian cuisine, with many unusual menu items, all moderate in price. The atmosphere is quiet, service is friendly, and tables nicely spaced so that you can have a quiet conversation. It is worth a try for something different, and is usually not too crowded.

**La Furia Chalaca**

54

310 Broadway

451-4206

A small restaurant that features Peruvian cooking at moderate prices. The atmosphere is pleasantly quiet and comfortable, the tables nicely decorated with white cloths and flowers. The service is informal but friendly. The food has some unusual dishes featuring potatoes in numerous guises, as well as more typical meat and seafood choices. The sangria is much too expensive, but there is wine and beer.

**Soizic**

55

300 Broadway on 3rd St.

251-8100

A wonderful restaurant not far from Jack London Square, featuring fresh Californian-Asian cuisine at moderately high prices. This is definitely the best restaurant in the area. The cooking here is of high caliber, flavorful, with lovely presentation. Wines are somewhat high priced, atmosphere simple and quiet. This is a popular place, both at lunch and dinner, so reservations are recommended. There is a private room for groups.

**Oakland Grill**

56

301 Franklin St.

835-1176

An extremely informal and funky place, good for generous breakfasts and lunches. Open for dinner too. Don't expect high-end gourmet cooking, but the food is good and the prices moderate. Popular for weekend brunch, when there's often a wait. Located in the middle of the wholesale produce district, it's worth a try for something different.

**Everett and Jones**

57

126 Broadway

663-2350

Very popular, always crowded, generally noisy, this place features Barbecue in all its combinations. The service is friendly, the atmosphere extremely informal, and everyone seems to be having a great time. Open late on weekends, the portions are generous, the prices moderate.

58

**Jack London Square****Jack London Square**

59

bottom of Broadway from Clay to Alice

At the bottom of Broadway, (watch out for the trains as you cross Embarcadero), facing the inner harbor, you will find Jack London Square, stretching a few blocks in either direction. There is a lovely walkway along the water. At one end is the First and Last Chance Saloon, which is a must-see, and at the other end a ferry to San Francisco. There's a Barnes and Noble Bookstore, many shops, cafes and restaurants. On Sundays there's a very good Farmers Market too.

<b>Yoshi's</b>	60
510 Embarcadero West	238-9200
<p>Architecturally stunning, this restaurant facing Jack London Sq. features Japanese cuisine in a large quiet dining area with a sushi bar, and an acoustically superb performance space. The food is improving, but the real draw is the music late into the night, at what is one of the top Jazz Clubs in the Bay Area. Prices are moderate to slightly expensive. This is not my favorite Japanese restaurant, but the music makes it special.</p>	

<b>Scott's</b>	61
bottom of B'way on the water	444-3456
<p>A large and busy upscale seafood restaurant on the waterfront, featuring decent cooking, professional friendly service, and well spaced tables. Popular with large groups and families, get a table overlooking the water if you can. Prices are upscale, there's a huge menu, and the food is good if you stick to the simpler presentations. Reservations recommended, especially on weekends.</p>	

<b>Kincaid's</b>	62
One Franklin St. in Jack London Square	835-2032
<p>This place is somewhat formal and dark, with wood interiors. It overlooks the water, so ask for a table with a view, if possible. The large moderately expensive menu features steaks and chops as well as seafood. This is a popular place for business lunches but is quieter at night and on weekends. Service efficient and professional.</p>	

<b>Pescatore</b>	63
near Franklin St. in Jack London Square	465-2188
<p>An Italian restaurant that specializes in garlic infused pastas, as well as a choice of seafood. It is located on the water, so the tables with a view are preferred. The atmosphere is friendly and informal, the prices moderate.</p>	

<b>Hahn's Hibachi</b>	64
Embarcadero and Franklin	628-0717
<p>This is a simple informal place featuring low priced Korean style barbecue, chicken, ribs and chops. There are also some Japanese dishes, such as udon and tempura. This is not the place for a fancy gourmet dinner, but it is tasty and quick.</p>	

<b>Authors</b>	65
<p><a href="http://RNC.LBL.gov/Restaurants/">http://RNC.LBL.gov/Restaurants/</a></p>	
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