

Restaurants in the Oakland Area

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

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Introduction 0

This is the Oakland section of Restaurants in the Berkeley Area. It has been on the Web at <http://RNC.LBL.gov/RestOak/> since 2003. The authors alone are responsible for the information provided and the opinions expressed.

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News 1

Since the last revision the following restaurants are **new**: Bowl'd BBQ, Brotzeit Lokal, Desco, Jack's Oysters, KronnerBurger, Shakewell, The Cook and the Farmer, and The Dock at Linden Street.
 newly included: none.
 closed: Barlata, Box and Bells, Legendary Palace, and Ume.
 Many restaurants close early on Sunday and are closed on Monday. Also, some now include the service fee on the bill.

2

College Avenue

Mitama 3

3201 College Ave. at Alcatraz 652-6157

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 dinner prices are slightly high end. There's a good choice of sake, too. A nice place for lunch. Worth a try if you are in the area.

Wood Tavern 4

6317 College Ave. south of Alcatraz 654-6607

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 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.

Southie 5

6311 College Ave. at 63rd 654-0100

This very small, very informal place, a spin off from Wood Tavern next door has a few tables and a counter, a fun loving staff, and a dynamite chef. Everything on the menu is superb and the prices are very moderate for the quality of the food. Wine and beer, also. My favorite is the "Pulled Piggie", but a close second is the fried chicken salad. Although it's great for take out, I like to sit at the counter and watch the chef perform.

Noodle Theory 6

6099 Claremont Ave. at College 595-6988

If you love noodles and vivid fresh flavors this is the place for you. A small pie shaped modern space, with some outdoor tables for warm days, the food is well cooked with nice Asian fusion touches, balanced and subtly spiced. Lots of vegetarian choices also. The prices are very reasonable for the quality of the food. Service can falter when the place is crowded, but it's worth the wait.

Barclay's 7

5940 College Ave. 654-1650

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.

Osmanthus 8

6048 College Ave. south of Claremont 923-1233

This space used to be a popular Burmese restaurant but it has been transformed to feature Pan-Asian Fusion cuisine in a cool and classic modern setting. Prices are moderate, but the food is variable, and the spicing often quite subtle rather than bold and enticing. There are cocktails as well as wine and beer, and the noise level is at a level that allows one to have a conversation.

Toast 9

5900 College Ave. at Chabot 658-5900

This place offers a welcome concept -- a family friendly informal wine bar, an expanded restaurant space, and many unusual choices of wines by the glass. They offer an array of snacks and small plates, all moderately high priced. There are now more choices of larger plates, and if the spicy lamb meatballs are on the menu, order them! A great idea is the daily wine on tap. There's a large outdoor terrace for warm nights. A totally enjoyable experience.

Barney's Hamburgers

10

5819 College Ave. north of Rockridge BART 601-0444

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! I think that this Barney's and the one on Piedmont are the best because of the lovely shady patios in back, which are wonderful for eating on a warm day.

Ramen Shop

11

5812 College Ave. north of Rockridge BART 788-6370

Three friends from Chez Panisse have branched off into the realm of Japanese cuisine, and opened this instantly popular home style noodle shop. The small menu changes every few days, with different broths, chewy noodles, and eclectic toppings. There are also some appetizers, rice dishes, and not too sweet desserts, as well as a hip bar. The food tends to be quite salty, so be forewarned. Prices moderately high, no reservations.

Oliveto

12

5655 College Ave. at Rockridge BART 547-5356

This two level place has expensive Mediterranean cuisine upstairs, which can be very good or less so, depending on the choice. The presentation is simple, fresh, and seasonal. Wines are outrageously overpriced. Good service but noisy. Reservations recommended. Downstairs is an all day cafe, with lower prices, decent food, and no need to reserve. It has light fare with a few more substantial dishes in the evening.

Bourbon and Beef

13

5634 College Ave. near Rockridge BART 586-8789

This place features a large bar along with a few tables. The decor is glitzy and glamorous, the wine and cocktail list is large, and the food features strong flavors with a Latin American heritage. Prices are definitely high end, and it can get noisy when crowded, but the location near the Rockridge BART station makes it a good possibility for a relaxed drink and a bite to eat after work.

A Coté

14

5478 College Ave. at Forest 655-6469

A popular place, this storefront space has been transformed into a plush, dimly lit, intimate cafe featuring French bistro food, along with a large selection of wines and cocktails. Prices are moderate. The food has noticeably improved lately, and it's definitely worth a try. If the deep fried squash blossoms are on the menu, order them! The interior can get pretty noisy, but the expanded back patio is blissfully quiet.

Molinari Enoteca

15

5474 College Ave at Taft 428-4078

A very small friendly place with six tables and counter seating. There is no outside signage, but it's worth seeking out for some delicious food and wine. The menu features snacks, salumi, and small plates, but the best items are the crostini and the creative, delicious house made pastas. The flourless chocolate cake is superb too! The chef used to work at Lalime's, so you know the quality of the cooking is very fine. Recommended.

Soi4

16

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 food has all of the standards, along with some unique dishes. The tables are nicely spaced, perfect for intimate conversation, and the service is solicitous. The owners gear this towards a glamorous crowd, so all of this comes with high end prices. Tastier Thai food can be found elsewhere, however.

Uzen

17

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 sushi, along with noodle and rice dishes. The sushi is fresh but the choice is often small, and the former superior quality of the food seems to be slipping. At lunch, prices are moderate, but dinner can get pricey. There's a large selection of sakes along with Japanese beers. Can get quite crowded on weekend nights.

Chu

18

5362 College Ave. south of Manila 601-8818

This is a beautifully decorated place, featuring delicious, creative, often spicy Chinese cuisine. It is related to both Kirin and Shen Hua restaurants, but offers many unique dishes not found elsewhere, and a serene atmosphere. The prices are a bit high, but the quality is excellent, and worth every penny. Service is solicitous. This is a wonderful choice for a quiet delicious meal or a group dinner.

A16

19

5356 College Ave. at Hudson 768-8003

An East Bay offshoot of one of San Francisco's most popular upscale Italian restaurants has been crowded since opening day. There's a huge bar as well as large dining room filled with people enjoying excellent creative pizzas, pastas and a few more substantial main dishes. Prices are high end, service quick and professional, it should definitely be on your list to try.

Pucquio 20
 5337 College Ave 658-7378

Formerly a little known pop-up, this Peruvian restaurant is offering some very tasty contemporary interpretations of an unfamiliar cuisine. The Peruvian "cebiches" are delicious and unusual. This is a small space with a delightfully friendly staff. Prices are moderately high for the portion size, but it is definitely worth a try.

Marica 21
 5301 College Ave. 985-8388

This is an intimate storefront in Rockridge with decor somewhat Art Moderne. The small menu features seafood, beautifully presented, along with a few other choices, and the quality is excellent. There's a raw bar also, if you are an oyster fan, as well as cocktails and wine. Portions are generous, and the prices moderate for the quality. It is wonderfully quiet. This is certainly worth a try.

Juhu Beach Club 22
 5179 Telegraph Ave., but on 51st St. 652-7350

Located in the Temescal Triangle just west of Telegraph, this place is a little difficult to find, but worth the search. The decor is funky and hip, the food a California take on Mumbai street food. The menu focuses on Pav's, slider styled sandwiches with inventive, often spicy fillings, all delicious and unusual. There are curries too, and some salads, but everyone goes for the Pav's. Prices are very moderate, service friendly, but it can get pretty raucous when crowded.

Pizzaiolo 23
 5008 Telegraph Ave. south of 51st 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 taken so there's no need to wait. Wines are decently priced, and there's a good selection of beers. There's a lovely heated back patio also. The friendly service can be slow when crowded, but do not miss this fine place!

Dona Tomas 24
 5004 Telegraph Ave. south of 51st 450-0522

Take yourself to this popular Temescal place to discover a menu of Mexican food with a Modern Californian flair. The restaurant consists of adjoining storefronts decorated with folk art, as well as a lovely heated patio out back. The food is tasty and different, if not truly great, the prices moderately high, the service professional and friendly. There is a large choice of excellent cocktails to enhance your dining, as well as fairly priced wine.

Doukkala 25
 4905 Telegraph Ave. 653-8691

Located in Oakland's trendy Temescal this Moroccan place is a quiet respite from the noise and crowds. The cooking offers a more modern take on Moroccan flavors, using high quality ingredients, sometimes successful, sometimes not. However, the best dishes on the menu are the classic French selections, reflecting the heritage and training of the chef. Prices are somewhat high for this area, but it offers something different and unusual.

Bowl'd BBQ 26
 4869 Telegraph Ave. 654-2000

This is a clean and modern new place that features Korean barbecue, fried chicken, rice bowls, stews, and other typical Korean food. The cooking is somewhat westernized, but still tasty, if not fiery hot. Portions are large and prices moderate. The Temescal location means that it can get crowded on the weekends, but it is a good place for families and for an introduction to this cuisine.

Burma Superstar 27
 4721 Telegraph Ave. at 48th 652-2900

Another informal place in the lively Temescal neighborhood, this place is relatively unmarked, but that doesn't deter the crowds that show up every night to feast on unique, often spicy Burmese food at moderate prices. It's a great place for lunch too, when it is more quiet and uncrowded. Popular dishes are the tea leaf salad, the samusa salad, and the spicy green beans. The decoration is simple, the service friendly, if not professional.

Sahn Maru 28
 4315 Telegraph Ave. at 43rd 653-3366

If you want to venture into Korean food, this is a good place to start. It does not have the typical table top grills, but instead features a large and delicious menu with lots of choices, both spicy and mild. The group dinner specials are a real deal, more food than you can eat for a good price. Do not pass up the sizzling seafood pancake or the spicy BBQ chicken. The place has friendly service.

29

**Piedmont Ave
 Lake Merritt**

Bay Wolf Café

30

3853 Piedmont Ave.

655-6004

Elegant, expensive, inventive California menu and wonderful wines. Justly famous in the East Bay. If duck is on the menu, order it! Reservations required. Professional and knowledgeable service. This is one of the great "fancy" restaurants in the East Bay, and also a personal favorite, especially for celebratory family dinners. The heated deck is available at all times, and allows for quieter dining.

Commis

31

3859 Piedmont Ave.

653-8902

This very special place was awarded a Michelin star, reflecting the complex, elegant, personal, and creative food produced by a visionary young chef. It features modern haute cuisine in a very small storefront, very expensive but with unique dishes that you will not find elsewhere. Portions are small and exquisitely presented, service professional. If you choose the more expensive tasting menu you sit at the counter and watch the chefs at work.

Homestead

32

4029 Piedmont Ave. at 40th St. Way

420-6962

Delightful and delicious California inspired food, both traditional and inventive. It features local and sustainable ingredients and an open wood fired brick oven. The setting is informal, with an open kitchen, but the food is sophisticated, French influenced, and the service professional. Prices are somewhat high, but worth it. This is one of my new favorites.

Bar César

33

4039 Piedmont Ave. at 40th

985-1200

An Oakland branch of a Berkeley favorite, it offers a large and lively space. The well priced menu has been revamped to showcase the spicy robust flavors of Latin America, but the execution is not always successful. It's open throughout the day until fairly late at night. It has great cocktails as well as an extensive wine and beer list. The ambiance is both friendly and sophisticated. This is a fine, if noisy, place for hanging out.

KronnerBurger

34

4063 Piedmont Ave. at 41st

This new place features what some people feel is the best burger in the Bay Area. Very popular since its opening, there are other menu choices, but most people order a burger, often topped with beef marrow, and the legendary fries. Service is friendly and very quick, prices are moderate, and there are some nice outdoor tables for a quieter meal.

Xyclo

35

4218 Piedmont Ave. at Ridgeway

654-2681

Wonderful upscale Vietnamese food in a nicely decorated small storefront. The Vietnamese rolls and the crepe 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

36

4293 Piedmont Ave. near Echo

652-dopo

This cafe occupies two adjoining storefronts, with a few outside tables. The cooking is terrific -- fresh and seasonal. The menu is limited -- small plates, creative pizzas, panini, salads, and pastas. The menu now includes Sicilian specialties. Everything is really delicious, but the panini are my lunch favorites. Service friendly and personal. No reservations taken, so try to go at an off hour. Open for lunch on weekdays, too. This is definitely a highly recommended place.

Adesso

37

4395 Piedmont Ave.

601-0305

Salumi wonderland, with an ever changing enormous array of house made cured meats, along with other delectable small plates, patés panini, salads, and more. Everything is delicious but can get pricey. The formula has been copied around town, but this is still the best. The all Italian wine list is fabulous, as are cocktails and aperitifs. The atmosphere is simple and informal, and it can get pretty crowded and noisy at peak hours.

Boot and Shoe Service

38

3308 Grand Ave. up from Grand Lake

763-2668

The owners of Pizzaiolo have taken over a former shoe repair shop and turned it into a very popular, lively, and friendly informal pizza joint. The pizzas are just terrific, some of the best around. This place is very noisy with exposed brick walls and tables close together. The wait persons are young and trendy. Open for lunch with panini and salads that you order at the counter.

Penrose

39

3311 Grand Ave. opposite Boot and Shoe

444-1649

By the same owners as Boot and Shoe Service. With spectacular architecture, great decoration, an enormous wood fireplace equipped with three big grills, the effect is dramatic and over the top. The food is mostly small plates, focused on Mediterranean influenced meat and vegetables. Prices are somewhat high for the portion size. There's a huge bar, too. The atmosphere is noisy but conducive to a fine experience.

Camino 40
 3917 Grand Ave. at Crofton 547-5035

Located in a large storefront, the decor is Farmhouse rustic/Old English church. Seating is mostly at one of two very long refectory tables. The very small menu changes daily, and the food is minimalist, pure, organic and sustainable, with a choice of only a few appetizers and main dishes, mostly cooked in the fireplace or wood burning oven. All this comes with high end prices, including the wine. If this is your style, go for it -- if not, be warned.

Michel Bistro 41
 3343 Lakeshore Ave. at Trestle Glen 836-8737

A wonderful authentic French bistro in an unobtrusive space. Marcel Pagnol dialogue graces the high walls, some of the terrific servers speak French, and the small, delicious, moderately priced classic menu will delight your senses. There's an extensive choice of on- tap wines, as well as cocktails and beer, or you could be very French and order a Pastis. Noise lever is very manageable, too. I think this place is just terrific.

Shakewell 42
 3407 Lakeshore Ave. above Trestle Glen Rd. 251-0329

This new place has Spanish-Mediterranean food, and very reasonable prices. Lively, noisy, informal, the food is really good and the wines moderately priced. I especially like the various appetizers and the Bombas, a hearty and generously portioned version of paella, easily shared. The service is welcoming. Reserve if you want a table, otherwise there is seating at the bar or at high tops.

Caña 43
 530 Lake Park Ave. at Lakeshore Ave. 832-1515

This Cuban restaurant is not completely authentic, but will have to do until something else comes along. There are two side by side spaces, with low priced counter service on one side, and next to it a lively and noisy space with table service, a large bar, and music. The food is delicious and it's best to stick to the simpler items, such as the empanadas, the fried chicken and the sandwiches. There's a small front patio where you can relax and watch the crowds walk by.

Bellanico 44
 4238 Park Blvd. at Wellington 336-1180

Small and friendly, this lovely Italian restaurant is a neighborhood favorite, featuring delicious food, wonderful wine, and moderate prices. The appetizers are inventive and delicious, the pastas can be ordered in half portions and you can easily put together a terrific meal. It's worth the trip to this area, a small enclave of shops, cafes, and restaurants.

Sidebar 45
 542 Grand Ave. opposite the Lake 452-9500

This informal wine bar and restaurant is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Open through out the day (yeah!) it offers both lunch and dinner menus, as well as small "in between" snacks for late afternoon. The menu ranges from sandwiches and salads to more substantial fare, the prices moderate, and the atmosphere delightful. The food can be really delicious or merely good, depending on the choice.

Lake Chalet 46
 1520 Lakeside Dr. btw. 14th and 17th 208-LAKE

Nothing can compete with the spectacular views at this gorgeous complex of spaces built from the old Lake Merritt Boathouse. Open for lunch and dinner it is a wonderful addition to Oakland, and a destination that should not be missed. The food is more variable and can be very good or not, depending on your choice. Prices are high end, and the service well meaning if not always totally professional. Parking can be a problem.

47

Old Oakland

Old Oakland 48
 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. Very lively during the day, and increasingly popular at night too.

Le Cheval 49
 1007 Clay St. 763-8957

This place is crowded, very popular, and features Vietnamese food with a huge menu and moderate prices. Lunch is a real bargain, and the service speedy. It 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.

Breads of India

50

948 Clay St. at 10th

834-7684

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

51

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.

The Cook and Her Farmer

52

907 Washington St.

285-6140

This new very casual place is a welcome addition to the Swan's Market complex of restaurants. The food features excellent fresh seafood along with some Southern specialties. The mussels are exquisite. Prices are very moderate. There is counter seating as well as seating in the market's communal space. Definitely recommended to try!

Cosecha

53

907 Washington St. in Swan's Market

452-5900

Located inside Swan's Market, which is being revitalized, is this gem of a restaurant offering wonderful Mexican food, really delicious and moderately priced. Bare bones decor, it is a great place for lunch, although it is also open for early dinners and Saturday brunch. Beer and wine also. You order at the counter, sit back, look out at the windows and sky, and enjoy the food when it arrives with a smile. This is a great place for sharing. Highly recommended.

Miss Ollie's

54

901 Washington St.

385-6188

Another restaurant gem in Swan's Market, this place offers a delicious eclectic menu ranging from Caribbean specialties to fabulous Southern Fried Chicken, available only on Tuesdays. The chef is well known in the Bay area, and this place, named after her grandmother, reflects her personal perspective. Everything is wonderful and not to be missed. Prices are moderate.

Desco

55

499 9th St.

663-9000

This new place features delicious traditional Italian food, great salads, panini and pastas, all moderately priced, a fine place for lunch, especially on the outside patio. The location is in a historic building with large windows looking out at the heart of Old Oakland. Unfortunately, the dinners, although tasty, are not as great as the lunches, and it can get noisy when crowded. Still this is one of the better choices in the neighborhood.

Ratto's

56

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

57

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.

Tamarindo

58

468 8th St. north of B'way

444-1944

Upscale modern South American and Mexican cuisine in an elegant space, with some outdoor tables also. Menu choices are mainly small plates at lunch, though at night they have larger entrees. Cooking is really delicious, although the portions can be small, and the prices a little high for what you get. The guacamole is superb and generous. Lots of drink choices from cocktails to tequilas to wine and beer. Very popular.

59

Chinatown

Oakland Chinatown 60
 7th to 12th Sts. btw. Franklin and Harrison

This is an area that is having a huge surge in growth, and is full of wonderful inexpensive restaurants and cafes: Chinese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, 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.

Peony 61
 388 9th St., 10th btw. Webster and Franklin 286-8866

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.

Phnom Penh House 62
 251 8th St. at Alice 893-3825

This small Cambodian place at the edge of Chinatown offers delicious fairly inexpensive food, served with a smile. Especially good are the tamarind soups, the Cambodian crepe, the crunchy green beans, and the noodles. Beer and wine as well as Cambodian iced coffee and tea, also. The decor is simple, but the food makes up for it. Try it for something different.

Joy Luck 63
 327 8th St. btw. Webster and Harrison 832-4270

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.

Gourmet Delight 64
 701 Webster St. at 7th 832-7661

Always crowded and noisy, 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.

Broadway

Mua 66
 2442a Webster St. at 25th and B'way 238-1100

Almost unmarked and a little difficult to find, this restaurant, bar, and performance space is in a former garage, located in the burgeoning Uptown area, and it's totally cool and hip. The food is inventive, usually delicious and prices are low. The decor is industrial chic, with a large popular and gorgeous bar, and a noisy eclectic crowd. Open late most nights, too. Try this for a truly different experience.

Hawker Fare 67
 2300 Webster St. 832-8896

This small storefront space offers an ode to Asian street food as imagined by the chef of the very high priced Michelin starred Commis. The prices here are low, the ambiance urban hip, the walls covered with graffiti art. The food is truly delicious, and the prices allow you to try all sorts of unfamiliar items. Service is professional and pleasant, although the tables are close together, and when crowded, which is usual, it's really noisy.

Picán 68
 2295 Broadway at 23rd 834-1000

This is a beautiful, slick, and glamorous place that is usually crowded, noisy and hopping with people enjoying cocktails or wine at the huge gorgeous bar, and has a gourmet take on delicious Southern cooking. Located in the up and coming Uptown area, it is a good choice for a pricey meal that feels vibrant and special. Most people order the fried chicken, made even more scrumptious with a slather of honey, but the ribs are great too. Service is professional.

Luka's 69
 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 popular \$1 oyster nights. Later on there's music, dancing, and a pool table. This place can get very noisy, but don't miss it!

Hutch

70

2022 Telegraph Ave. at 20th

419-0622

The chef is from Memphis, and his place features Southern cooking from that region-grits, oysters, remoulades, and Brunswick stew. Prices are moderate and portions generous. There's a nice bar also. However, the most remarkable thing about this place is the Sunday Supper, where for a about \$20 a person, your table gets a truly enormous platter filled with good food to eat family style. Most everyone goes home with leftovers -- a real experience!

Hopscotch

71

1915 San Pablo Ave. btw. 18th and 20th

788-6217

This place in Oakland's Uptown is in a small storefront with a sign that is difficult to see, and has the decor of a 1950's roadside diner. But if you persist and find it you will be rewarded with some terrific food and drink. The cocktails are creative, the small menu offers beautifully cooked dishes with a Japanese fusion touch, and the wines are delicious, if high priced. Service is friendly and the atmosphere very hip and cool. Parking not too difficult.

Flora

72

1900 Telegraph Ave. at 19th

286-0100

An old florist shop reconfigured into a sleek sophisticated Art Deco bar/restaurant, in a part of town that is now very lively. It's an oasis of California eclectic food, good wines, a gorgeous bar, and more. Prices are moderately high, with a few decently priced wines. The noise level is usually high though tables are nicely spaced. Service is professional. Adjoining the restaurant is a small bar called Fauna.

Duende

73

468 19th St., btw. Telegraph and Broadway

893-0174

The former chef of Oliveto has opened up this place, trendy and lively, featuring his wonderful interpretation of Spanish food, both in small and larger plates. The decor is beautiful and elegant, the service professional. Many nights there is music also. Next door is a Bodega, open throughout the day for drinks and pastries, as well as food products for sale. This is one of my favorite places.

Saigon

74

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

75

13th St. btw. Broadway and Clay

This small pleasant mall has a number of informal cafes offering quick breakfasts and decent lunches. The foods range from bagels and espresso to pasta and burritos. Nothing is 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, and easy access to BART.

Tribune Tavern

76

401 13th St. at Franklin

452-TRIB

This downtown place has become one of the most popular spots for lunch or an after work drink. It's central location on the first floor of the old Oakland Tribune Tower adds to the history and the lively pub atmosphere. The menu features well priced meat centric American standards with warm and friendly service. There's a nice classic bar, too, as well as an outdoor patio.

Oakland Grill

77

301 Franklin St.

835-1176

An extremely informal and funky place, good for generous breakfasts and lunches, but 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 totally different.

Everett and Jones

78

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.

The Dock at Linden Street

79

at the bottom of Linden St.

338-3965

This new place is really out of the way, in an former factory building near freeway overpasses and train yards. Accessible only from 3rd Street. If you can find it you will be rewarded with a hip atmosphere, a large selection of special beers, and pricey, unusual, and eclectic foods, created by the chef of Hawker Fare and Commis. Lovely outdoor patio as well as plenty of indoor seating. Lots of parking too!

Chop Bar 80
 247 4th St. at Alice 834-2467

This is a terrific small place with a casual friendly neighborhood feel, affordable prices, attentive service, and wonderful eclectic food. The cocktails are popular, as is the beer and low priced barrel wine. The menu is wide ranging with something for all tastes, and there is usually a group outside waiting for one of the tables. The crowd tends to be young and hip, but everyone is welcome.

Nido 81
 444 Oak St. at 5th 444-6436

This place is far from Jack London Square in an industrial neighborhood with difficult daytime street parking. The decor is minimal and trendy. The food is Mexican with a California sensibility, locally sourced, unpretentious, tasty, and home style. The small space is crowded and noisy, the prices moderate. However, I for one cannot understand why this place was listed as one of the 100 Best Restaurants in the Bay Area.

Brotzeit Lokal 82
 1000 Embarcadero 645-1905

This newly added waterfront beer garden is a bit difficult to find, but search and you will be rewarded with a wonderful experience -- lots of beer choices, delicious home made sausages, and other German specialties, moderate prices and a laid back informal atmosphere. Both indoor and deck seating. Great to go in the early afternoon to watch the sunset, or for weekend brunch.

Jack London Square

Jack London Square 84
 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 are a number of cafes and restaurants too, as well as a popular Sunday Farmers Market.

Yoshi's 85
 510 Embarcadero West 238-9200

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.

Forge 86
 66 Franklin St. in Jack London Sq. 268-3200

Overlooking the water, this very informal spot, with walls of windows and high ceilings as well as a nice outdoor deck, features an array of terrific wood fired pizzas along with a few appetizers and salads. They offer cocktails and beer as well. Popular with families, everyone seems happy to be there. Service is friendly and fast, prices moderate. This is a great place to hang out on a sunny day.

Lungomare 87
 at the foot of Broadway 444 7171

This place at Jack London Square is a beautiful restaurant in a prime waterfront location. It has a lovely outdoor patio, good service and decent food. It is a great choice for a lazy sunny afternoon, watching the boats go by with a drink in your hand, and a bite to eat. If you don't expect a high level of cooking, you'll have a wonderful experience.

Scott's 88
 bottom of B'way on the water 444-3456

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.

Kincaid's 89
 One Franklin St. in Jack London Square 835-2032

This place is somewhat formal and dark, with wood interiors and a cozy fireplace. 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. The cooking is not super creative, but pretty good if not great. This is a popular place for business lunches but is quieter at night and on weekends. Service efficient and professional.

Jack's Oyster Bar

90

336 Water Street in Jack London Sq.

271-7952

Adjacent to Bocanova, and with the same owners, this new seafood and oyster bar has moderately priced terrific food and decently priced wine. A lovely patio overlooking the water adds to the charm. There is a daily featured oyster for \$1.50 each, or you can splurge on Lobster or other delights, both traditional and creative. This is one of my favorite choices in the area.

Bocanova

91

at the foot of Webster St. in Jack London Sq. 444-1333

This beautifully decorated place features the delicious flavors and cuisines of Mexico, Peru, and Central and South America, with a California twist. The menu offers a large variety of small plates meant to be shared, along with terrific ceviches and a raw bar. Open throughout the day, the prices are moderate. It can get very noisy inside, but there's a wonderful heated patio with a lovely view that is more peaceful.

Haven

92

at the foot of Webster St. in Jack London Sq. 663-4440

In an industrial chic space, this place features an inventive, adventurous chef who has been trying to find the right formula for success in this space. There is now a family style fixed price dinner, moderately priced and changing daily, reflecting what is fresh and local, as well as an informal more traditional bar menu. Wines are very expensive. Let's hope this is successful!

Authors

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