

10 eateries uniquely AZ

It's inevitable: Once our fabulous fall, winter and spring weather returns, so do hordes of shivering, sun-deprived visitors.

Sure, you could take your guests out to eat at a steak house, a Chinese restaurant or pizzeria — in a steak house, Chinese restaurant and pizzeria just like they have in their hometowns.

But why not give them a taste of something uniquely Arizona?

They're not going to get Indian fry bread in New York. They won't find blue-corn-crust sweetbreads in San Francisco. Buffalo carpaccio in Milwaukee? It's highly unlikely. And really, how many of their hometown restaurants serve prairie squab, chicken-fried trout or cochinita pibil?

And no matter where they're from, they won't have views of Camelback Mountain or the Sonoran Desert.

Maybe your guests will be so impressed, they'll even pick up the check. It's worth a shot.



Buffalo carpaccio at Cowboy Ciao in Scottsdale. MICHAEL CHOW/
THE REPUBLIC

KAI

Your visitors have never seen anything like Kai, no matter where they are from. An extraordinary kitchen fashions regional ingredients into a memorable experience. Look for the chile-spiced goat-meat torta and buffalo tenderloin with saguaro-blossom syrup.

Details: [Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort](#) and Spa, 5594 W. Wild Horse Pass Blvd., Gila River Reservation. 602-225-0100, [wildhorsepassresort.com](#).

BARRIO CAFE

This is where Mexican food turns into Mexican cuisine. Among chef Silvana Salcido Esparza's dazzling regional specialties are cochinita pibil, a slowly roasted, Yucatan-style pork dish, black mole chicken, and poblano peppers stuffed with chicken, fruit and nuts.

Details: 2814 N. 16th St., Phoenix. 602-636-0240, [barriocafe.com](#).

BINKLEY'S RESTAURANT

He has worked with Thomas Keller at the French Laundry and Patrick O'Connell at the Inn at Little Washington. Now Kevin Binkley has grabbed his own spotlight. Prepare for some serious, one-of-a-kind joy from a daily-changing menu that showcases a brilliant, never-ending stream of amuse-bouche.

Details: 6920 E. Cave Creek Road, Cave Creek. 480-437-1072, [binkleysrestaurant.com](#).



VINCENT ON CAMELBACK

What happens when a classically trained French chef gets his hands on Southwestern ingredients? Vincent Guerithault gets a James Beard Award, and diners get blue-corn-crust sweetbreads, smoked-salmon quesadillas and duck tamales with chiles and raisins.

Details: 3930 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. 602-224-0225, vincentoncamelback.com.

QUIESSENCE

Rustically set amid pecan groves and gardens, Quiescence offers a daily-changing menu based on whatever is fresh and local. Chef Greg LaPrad makes his own charcuterie and pasta, and you may find delights like guinea hen and

foie gras wrapped in savoy cabbage or truffled boudin blanc sausage.

Details: The Farm at South Mountain, 6106 S. 32nd St., Phoenix. 602-276-0601, quiescenceaz.com.

ATLAS BISTRO

It's the Valley's premier BYOB, but you'll find merriment even if your beverage is tap water. The quirky, globally accented fare may include wild-boar empanadas, Burgundy snails with goat cheese, acorn-fed pork belly and Southern-fried lamb and veal sweetbreads.

Details: Wilshire Plaza, 2515 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale. 480-990-2433, atlasbistrobyob.com.

COWBOY CIAO

The best-in-town wine list ranges all over the planet, while the wackily

wonderful fare inhabits its own unique space. Barbecue pork belly, buffalo carpaccio, chicken-fried trout and the signature exotic mushroom pan-fry in ancho-chile cream sauce are some of the temptations.

Details: 7133 E. Stetson Drive, Scottsdale. 480-946-3111, cowboyciao.com.

FRY BREAD HOUSE

Fry bread just like Mom used to make, if she grew up on the Tohono O'odham Reservation. Top this traditional Native American staple with red-chile beef. Then, if you have the courage, finish up with fry bread slathered with chocolate and butter. Wow.

Details: 4140 N. Seventh Ave., Phoenix. 602-351-2345.

EL CHORRO

Gorgeously nestled between Camelback and Mummy mountains, this Valley landmark has been around since 1937. Folks come here for the famous sticky buns and old-time favorites like chateaubriand for two, crispy chicken livers and beef Stroganoff.

Details: 5550 E. Lincoln Drive, Paradise Valley. 480-948-5170, elchorro.com.

MINING CAMP

Yee-haw! Release your inner cowboy at this giant mess mall, with all-you-can-eat grub served family style on community picnic tables. Look for chicken with stuffing, baked ham and barbecue ribs, with sides of beans and coleslaw. Open November-June.

Details: 6100 E. Mining Camp St., Apache Junction. 480-982-3181, miningcamprestaurant.com.



A family-style feast of chicken, ham and sides at Mining Camp in Apache Junction. DEAN SEYFFERLE



Indian taco served with bowls of green-chile stew and hominy stew at the Fry Bread House in Phoenix. MICHEL DUARTE/THE REPUBLIC



A pasta dish at Quiescence, at the Farm at South Mountain in Phoenix. MICHAEL MCNAMARA/THE REPUBLIC