

DINING OUT: SOUTHWEST BOULEVARD

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1 LuLu's Thai Noodle Shop

It's not about the décor that ranges from Buddhas to twining plants. It's all about the food in this fun, eclectic noodle shop. Soups, salads, wraps, curries, satay, and blazing wok bowls ladled with heavenly aroma and delightful blendings. Don't forget the Dim sum. There's curb-side parking, if you're lucky.

333 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 474-8424
Monday-Wednesday 5 p.m.-9 p.m.
Thursday-Friday 5 p.m.-10 p.m.
Saturday 12 p.m.-10 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$8-\$5

4 Rosedale BBQ

What's that smell? It's some of the best BBQ this side of the bi-state. Here's a joint with staying power. It has been around since 1934, stacking and blowing smoke from what was once just a drive-up window. Famous for meaty ribs, mile-high sandwiches, and truck loads of fries. You'll want to take home a bottle of sauce along with that slab.

600 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (913) 262-0343
Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$8-\$20

7 Shiraz

If sitting in a courtyard is your thing, you'll find this little gem to your liking. Or seek shelter inside where the ambiance, exposed brick walls—intimate urban with a Mediterranean twist—is just the ticket. Stephanie and Ali Shirazi opened in the early '90s, so this place has benn marinated to perfection. Best bet: the eggplant marrakesh.

320 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 472-0015
Monday-Friday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Wednesday-Saturday 5 p.m.-10 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$20 & up

2 La Bodega

Spanish tapas bar loaded with intricate little hot and cold plates. If you're looking for paella, look no further; they even designate Wednesday as "Paella Day." Happy Hour explodes with tiny bubbles of light, bright, whites, and firm reds. Expect joy!

703 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 472-8272
Monday-Saturday 11 a.m.-close
Sunday 4 p.m.-10 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$4-\$20

5 Manny's on the Boulevard

The Lopez family knows how to dish. They have been at it consistently for more than 20 years. This is one big place. Kids, families, singles—everyone is welcome. The frijoles are nestled, the cheeses zesty, and the tamales are still baked in corn husks. Mucho grande.

207 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 474-7696
Monday-Thursday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$5-\$14

8 Pocos

Go ahead, have your biscuits and gravy, waffles, and eggs, but don't skip out without trying the delicious lunch and dinner fare that Lorenza "Poco" Gutierrez is cooking up in her new little place. Once a humble Waids, the place is now a blend of American and Mexican cuisine with mouthwatering dinners (served only three nights a week), ranging from grilled rack of lamb to chicken mole.

3063 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 931-2526
Monday-Sunday 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
Thursday-Saturday 5 p.m.-10 p.m.
Breakfast, lunch, and dinner Price: \$7-\$20

3 Ponak's

What can we say, this is a dive, but hey, it works. Nothing fancy schmancy, just great Mexican food. Splash down the margaritas, praise the beer all the while munching on endless chips and salsa. Ample portions and lots of cheddar and rice always seem to please the crowds. Service is fast and no-nonsense. Love your flauta.

2856 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 753-0775
Monday-Thursday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$10-\$20

6 El Pueblito

Here's the thing about Mexican restaurants, they're ubiquitous—especially along Southwest Boulevard. This place, however, is a find. A bustling, happy place that serves up ceviche to Caldo Reys. It never disappoints.

810 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 471-5442
Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-11 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 9 a.m.-1:00 a.m.
Breakfast, lunch, and dinner Price: \$7-\$12

9 El Patron

The website doesn't mince words, the noise level is directly in proportion to the amount of tequila consumed. Nevertheless, it's the food that generally sings here. Piquant sauces—ranging from jade to ruby—snappy chips, seafood cocktails, and all the most favored south-of-the-border dishes Arturo Cabral—a transplanted Chicagoan restaurateur—divines is golden.

2905 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 931-6400
Monday-Sunday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$7-\$19

10 La Fonda El Taquito

It's an itty bitty hole in the wall, but the food is anything but. Everything here is not only authentic but also homemade. Thank goodness. Killer margaritas, ditto on the guac. Parking can be an issue, but with a little good karma, you won't have any problem.

800 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 471-1675
Monday-Thursday 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sunday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Breakfast, lunch, and dinner Price: Less than \$10

11 Taqueria Mexico

Okay, okay, so the parking is a bit tough, but hey, step inside this newly remodeled restaurant and it makes up for the frustration. Mexican beer specials Monday and Tuesday evenings, then here comes the \$2.50 margaritas on Wednesday and Thursday. If you want super-duper authentic Mexican food, this is it. It also has the best service. Ask for Laura, she won't disappoint.

910 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 221-1399
Monday-Saturday 8:30 a.m.-11 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$5-\$21.99

12 Margarita's

Dave Quiarte and Ron Abarca—buddies since childhood—figured if they were making and selling burritos to their friends on the local auto plant assembly line, they could do even better by opening a restaurant and selling even more. They have never looked back since. The Gringo, The Durango, The Chimi—they're all here in this mainstay eatery. No cantina music here; instead, it's decidedly more contemporary—like the food.

2829 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (913) 931-4849
Monday-Thursday 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m.
Sunday 12 p.m.-9 p.m.
Lunch and dinner Price: \$8-\$12.99

13 Paleteria Tropicana

This is the best-kept secret in town. You will find ice cream, smoothies, and popsicles that will jolt you straight into the stratosphere. Refreshing fruit blends or novel pairings; try the mango-chili if you want a unique experience.

830 Southwest Blvd. Hours: (816) 221-0192
Monday-Sunday 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Price: Less than \$10

