

RESTAURANT GUIDE

We did an informal survey of Rochester area library staff and these were the local restaurants that were chosen as the best restaurants in town. Bon appétit!

A Google map with all of the restaurants and comments can be accessed online at tiny.cc/rwosx.

DOWNTOWN (or walking distance from Downtown)

MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN RESTAURANTS:

City Café

216 1st Ave SW | 507-289-1949 | cccrmg.com/city_cafe.htm
The City Café prides itself on freshly caught seafood, such as the Parmesan-crusted Florida grouper with basil cream sauce, voted as Rochester's best seafood dish. The creative salads, breads and desserts all combine for a delicious dining experience, assisted by friendly servers. On a nice day, the outdoor patio is a wonderful retreat.

Newt's

216½ 1st Ave SW | 507-289-0577 | cccrmg.com/newts.htm (upstairs)
The food is mostly hot, fast and fried (although you can get a few "healthy-ish" items) and the burgers are consistently rated the best in Rochester. If you needed to sum up "why to go to Newt's" in two words, those words would be "Dave's Burger."

NEXT MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN RESTAURANTS:

Chester's Kitchen and Bar

111 S Broadway Ave | 507-424-1211 | chesterskb.com (inside University Square shopping area)
Chester's has a contemporary bar atmosphere and serves upscale "Classic American" food. The rotisserie chicken with asparagus is outstanding. It's neither super-cheap nor outrageously expensive. Outdoor dining is available.

City Market

212 1st Ave SW | 507-536-4748 | cccrmg.com/city_market.htm
For more casual take-out breakfast sandwiches or lunch (open 7:00AM-3:00PM only), try the City Market shop for generous deli-style sandwiches, fresh salad and tasty soups. They also have homemade cookies and brownies.

Nelson Cheese Factory

210 N Broadway Ave | 507-288-1888
All of their sandwiches are excellent and loaded with fixings (veggies of all sorts) in addition to a generous amount of meat and cheese. There are one or two soups du jour, an excellent potato salad, and Kemp's ice cream to order by the cup or by the cone.

OTHER FAVORITES:

Pescara

150 S Broadway Ave | 507-280-6900 | pescarafresh.com
If you love fresh seafood and fine wine, there is no other restaurant in town better than Pescara (located on the ground floor of the DoubleTree Hotel downtown). Adventurous seafood, "small plates" and cheeses. A great \$10 lunch menu selection.

Victoria's

7 1st Ave SW | 507-280-6232 | victoriasmn.com
Victoria's is a locally-owned Italian restaurant. The food is quite good and the prices are reasonable. More "family restaurant" than "bar" and soooo much better than the Olive Garden. Outdoor dining is available.

Michael's

15 S Broadway Ave | 507-288-2020 | michaelsfinedining.com
Michael's is quiet and has the best melt-in-your-mouth steaks and seafood. Because it's quiet, it's a great place for a business lunch. At lunch, they have daily specials such as barbecued beef brisket or a soup and sandwich combo—or one reviewer's favorite: the Michaelwich.

Roscoe's Root Beer & Ribs

603 4th St SE | 507-285-0501 | roscoesbbq.com
THE best ribs in town. Roscoe's barbecue sauce is very complex (compared to Famous Dave's and John Hardy's), not simply "hot" from hot sauce; likewise, the ribs are wonderfully seasoned and smoked and very meaty, as opposed to having mostly fat. Roscoe's has an excellent coleslaw and THE best onion rings, and offers other sides, as well, such as baked beans, potato salad, fries, etc.

OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN

MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN RESTAURANTS:

El Carambas

1503 US Hwy 14 | 507-281-3104

El Carambas, run by a friendly and energetic family, is a terrific place for lunch. Try authentic tacos (the Tacos Pastor comes highly recommended), fresh mango juice, and their salsa bar. Great, fresh corn chips and an extensive menu.

India Garden

1107 Broadway Ave N | 507-288-6280

(20 minute walk/5 minute drive from the Mayo Civic Center)

India Garden satisfies customers looking for a different type of cuisine. The decor is beautiful and the Bangladeshi owner is always eager to make friendly conversation. Recommended: the chicken makani with steamed rice and tea or the lunch buffet (which is always fresh and includes salads, vegetarian dishes, tandoori chicken, and beef curry). Accompany your choices with naan (flat bread) or rice pilaf, and end your meal with rice pudding, fresh fruit or mango custard.

Pi Wood-Fired Pizza

3932 Marketplace Dr NW | 507-424-3885 | live4pi.com

(west of Hwy 52 between 37th and 41st St)

Well worth the drive out of downtown. Hands down, the best pizza in Rochester, with unique and tasty toppings (no over-cheesed, bland pizzas here). Wood-fired individual pizzas and great (non-iceberg lettuce) salads. Very casual atmosphere.

Whistle Binkie's Old World Pub

3120 Wellner Dr NW | 507-289-9200 | whistlebinkiespub.com

(closest location to downtown)

For British Pub food (bangers & mash, shepherd's pie, Scotch eggs and more), try one of the two locations of the very popular Whistle Binkie's in Rochester. Very extensive beer list and great appetizers.

ZZest

1190 16th St SW, Ste 600 | 507-424-0080 | zzestmarket.com

(east of Hwy 52)

If you're willing to leave a parking ramp, a trip to ZZest will be worth your short drive. ZZest Culinary Market offers an eclectic menu of fine dining choices in a casual setting. The offerings change daily depending on ingredients from the market shelves. Great people and they have a culinary market, as well. Outdoor seating, weather permitting, is available.

OTHER FAVORITES:

Canadian Honker

1203 2nd St SW | 507-282-6572 | canadianhonker.com

(across from St. Mary's Hospital)

The Canadian Honker is known for its homemade food and desserts (including the world-famous Bunnies Coconut Cake). They have great senior citizen and healthy menus and fabulous soup, as well as a bar.

Good Food Store – The Back Room Deli

1001 6th St NW | 507-289-9061 | rochestergoodfood.coop

(near SuperAmerica off of Civic Center Dr)

Great little vegetarian deli in the back of the Good Food Store Co-Op. Try the hummus falafel or the Western portabella "burger". Open until 7:00PM.

Hunan Garden

1120 7th St NW | 507-285-1438

This is the best Chinese restaurant in town—great for take-out or dine-in. A bit out of the way, but if you need Chinese food in Rochester, you need to get to Hunan Garden.

John Hardy's BBQ

929 W Frontage Rd NW | 507-288-3936 | johnhardysbbq.com

(location closest to downtown)

John Hardy's has been around Rochester longer (1970s) than any other. The meat is great, love the jo-jo potatoes, and they have the best original sauces in town: six different levels of heat. Just good food and, of course, cold beer. Three locations.

Nupa Restaurant

1035 Civic Center Dr | 507-206-5044 | nupaexpress.com

Great Mediterranean food and an interesting menu that includes gyros, shrimp salad (with their signature kalamata olive vinaigrette), spanakopita, and muffaletta sandwiches. Eat in restaurant or take out. Also, a very friendly staff.

La Poblana

1121 Civic Center Dr | 507-292-7791

(in the Barlow Plaza strip mall west of Hwy 52)

It's a Mexican grocery store in the front and a restaurant in the back with great authentic Mexican foods. You can sometimes literally hear them pound out the tamale dough. You can get yummy Mexican Coca-Cola from the cooler, too.

Prescott's

1201 S Broadway Ave | 507-536-7775 | prescottsgrill.com

Fine dining menu prepared by local chef Christopher Rohe. Excellent breads, main courses and wine selection. Desserts are often to die for (in a good way). Menu is adjusted seasonally. Open for dinner only.