

# Culinary Destinations

smart dining in austin



Photography Chris Patunas

## J. Black's Feel Good Lounge

710-B W. Sixth [512] 433 6954

This is far from average pub fare. With chef Josie Paredes, who has worked at Eddie V's and Asti, at the helm, J. Black's Feel Good Lounge on the highly happening West Sixth Street just might be redefining the lounge dining experience. Sharing plates offer everything from New Zealand lamb chop lollipops served chargrilled with Gorgonzola dipping sauce and smoked-salmon-and-goat-cheese mousse served with capers, shallots, and crostinis to classic with a twist, like gourmet pigs in a blanket and tasty bruschetta. The Texas Kobe beef sliders were grilled to perfection, and one of the signature thin-crust pizzas, the Stefano, combined applewood-smoked bacon, goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, shallots, and arugula for the kind of dish that you will crave enough to come back for it. On the beverage side, J. Black's serves 60 wines by the bottle, crisp Mexican martinis, and the more classic sidecars and mojitos. Kitchen open daily. Happy hour from 4 to 8 and all night on Sunday. **L. Ford**

## AMERICAN

### 1886 Café and Bakery

at the Driskill  
604 Brazos St.  
[512] 391 7066

Everything about this place exudes classic Texas elegance—especially the decor and the extensive menu that touts breakfast, lunch, dinner, and late-night dining. Highlights include

breakfast scrambles, the baked three-cheese crab macaroni and the famous dessert case.

### 34th Street Café

1005 W. 34th St.  
[512] 371 3400

Deli counter, pizzas, salads. Terrific lunch spot; dinner menu more formal. Refreshing blue plate specials.

### The Belmont

305 W. 6th St.  
[512] 457 0300

If the Rat Pack was still around, this is where they'd hold court. Instead, a modern *Ocean's 11* crowd imbibes in stylish cocktails and eats at this buzzing, retro-Vegas supper club.

### Blue Star Cafeteria

4800 Burnet Rd.  
[512] 454 7827

This sleek space offers a local- and season-driven menu with entrée options like maple chicken-fried quail with cheese grits. The old-fashioned dessert case tempts with homemade favorites. Saturday and Sunday brunch.

### Chez Zee Café and Bakery

5406 Balcones Dr.  
[512] 454 2666

Colorful decor and a huge menu with nice salads and lunchtime pizzas. Check out the dessert case near the bar.

### Counter Café

626 N. Lamar  
[512] 708 8800

In the old GM Steakhouse locale, Counter Cafe is sleek but homey with a thoughtful locally driven menu. Only 26 seats in the place, the cozy counter serves up farm fresh eggs, Niman Ranch steaks, crispy fries and spring greens salads. For breakfast, try the Counter Benedict.

### Daily Grill

The Domain  
11506 Century Oaks Terrace,  
Suite 100  
[512] 836 4200

Sometimes, simple is good. Its huge menu offers familiar, updated diner foods in plentiful portions, with signature items

like the chopped Cobb salad, chicken pot pie, and meat loaf with mashed potatoes.

### Eastside Café

2113 Manor Rd.  
[512] 476 5858

Serving delicious and healthy fare from the organic garden out back since 1988, this quaint spot is a local favorite. The chalkboard menu shows the vegetables and soups of the day. The menu includes gluten-free options.

### Finn & Porter

500 E. 4th Street  
[512] 493 4900

Chef Ravi Nage dazzles with steaks, chops, seafood and sushi. For an intimate gathering, reserve the oversized white leather banquette tucked in the corner.

### The Grove Wine Bar and Kitchen

6317 Bee Cave Rd.  
[512] 327 8822

Lively West Lake wine bar/retailer and restaurant. From pizzas to salads, there is something for everyone. Wine list boasts more than 250 by the bottle.

### Hoover's

2002 Manor Rd.  
[512] 479 5006

Real down-home Southern cooking. Chicken-fried chicken might be the best in town. Save room for the yummy made-from-scratch cobbler or pie.

### Hudson's on the Bend

3509 RR 620 North  
[512] 266 1369

Best handling of wild game in town—à la delicious quail salad, rattlesnake cakes, and grilled venison chops with lobster tail. Lovely setting, gracious service. Listen closely for nightly specials.