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Restaurant critics from state's largest cities pick top new eateries

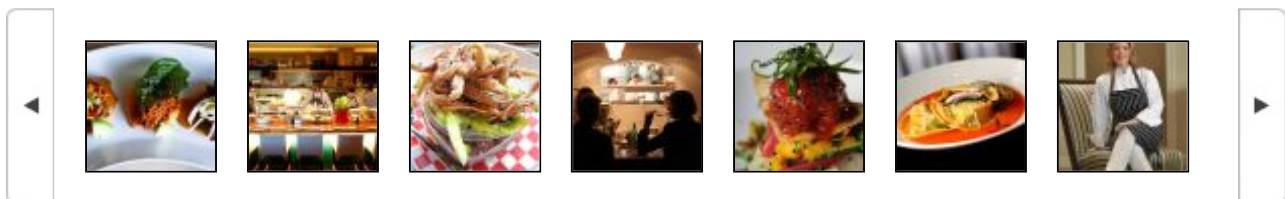
Published: 12:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 18, 2011

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Arepitas, a traditional corn bread dough topped with three meats, is one of the offerings at Latin Bites Café. MICHAEL PAULSEN/HOUSTON CHRONICLE Photo: Chronicle, Michael Paulsen / Houston Chronicle





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From the Gulf Coast, to Austin's Sixth Street, to the Alamo, Texas has much to offer travelers. But what's a trip – whether for business or pleasure – without good food? To make your Lone Star State travels easier, restaurant critics from the state's five largest cities – [Mike Sutter](#) of the Austin American-Statesman, [Leslie Brenner](#) of the Dallas Morning News, [Teresa Gubbins](#), contributor to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, [Alison Cook](#) of the [Houston Chronicle](#) and [Edmund Tjjerina](#) of the San Antonio Express-News – have assembled their top two picks from eateries that opened their doors in 2010. As you plan your in-state trips, map your routes and make hotel reservations, you'll want to make calls to these restaurants as well. Bon appétit, y'all.

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Karen Haram

Austin

Uchiko

An extension of chef [Tyson Cole](#)'s popular Uchi restaurant, Uchiko draws from the same fusion of sushi and Japanese cooking techniques for fish, Wagyu beef, pork belly, even rabbit. Executive chef [Paul Qui](#) also brings inspiration from his native Philippines, as well as Vietnam and Thailand, most explosively in karaage, a fried chicken dish with a crackling thin shell around tender meat. The sushi bar follows Qui's pursuit of that one perfect bite through Norwegian mackerel garnished with basil, heirloom tomato and truffle and the Toledo sushi roll with fried almonds, chorizo, tuna and a torrent of grilled garlic.

Address: 4200 [N. Lamar Blvd.](#), Suite 140, Austin

Price range: \$4.50-\$16

Hours: 5-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 5-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday

Info: uchikoaustin.com;

512-916-4808

Foreign & Domestic

The husband-and-wife team of Ned and [Jodi Elliott](#) have almost 20 years' experience between

them working for Michelin-starred places such as Per Se, Gramercy Tavern and Bouley in New York. But they see Foreign & Domestic as a casual place that might have venison-heart tartare with fried pig's ear on one night, or octopus and scallops with squid ink and chorizo on another, or something as simple as slices of prized Tennessee ham. The kitchen is built right into the dining room, so if you liked the pork belly with candied olives, just tap the cook on the shoulder and tell him.

Address: 306 E. 53rd St., Austin

Price range: \$14-\$24

Hours: 5 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 5 to 10:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Info: foodanddrinkaustin.com; 512-459-1010

Dallas

Lucia

From the moment chef David Uygur announced that his highly anticipated Oak Cliff restaurant was open for business, Lucia was, hands-down, the hardest reservation to snag in town. With expectations running high, disappointment could come easily. But with the first bite of crusty house-baked bread, the first taste of olives bathed in warm oil and herbs, I was thoroughly charmed. Don't look for fettuccine Alfredo on the menu; you won't find it. What the chef is doing in the 36-seat spot is very personal. Oyster risotto, bright with parsley; house-made whole-wheat spaghetti topped with rich, saucy braised duck. All the details feel right, down to the garlicky fried bread crumbs with a smidge of anchovy and lemon zest on top of cauliflower roasted to exactly the right point of melty caramelization.

Address: 408 W. Eighth St., Dallas

Price range: \$20 to \$24

Hours: 5:30-10 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Info: luciadallas.com; 214-948-4998

Neighborhood Services Bar and Grill

There's a reason there's always a wait at Nick Badovinus' newest restaurant: The place is rollicking good. Excellent service, upbeat vibe, decent acoustics, comfy booths — what more do you want? The cocktails are great. The patio's relaxed. The menu has something for everyone: polished salads, deviled eggs topped with hot-smoked salmon and cucumber, luscious brisket

meatballs. Nicely cooked halibut, good house-made pasta with three-meat ragù and the best butterscotch pot de crème I've ever tasted.

Address: 10720 Preston Road, Dallas

Price range: \$15 to \$29

Hours: 5:30-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5:30-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday

Info: neighborhoodservicesdallas.com; 214-368-1101

Fort Worth

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Houston news

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Love on the Menu

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LOS 8:02 AM on January 20, 2011



Give us some "HOME COOKING". Would not pay the price for any of the food shown in those photos!

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Insured_at_a_cost 3:33 PM on January 19, 2011

These restaurants all sound good, but, what about some real food for real people. I prefer Cheddars, Outback or Roadhouse. Real food for a real appetite !!!

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Racheal Ray Loses 45 lbs

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