

Top Ten Restaurants in Arizona

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9 of the 10 are pinned on the map above. Neither OpenStreetMap nor Wikidata carries a location for Kai, so it is listed below but not pinned — a missing pin is left missing rather than guessed at. Each row also links straight to its own location in Google Maps.

The MICHELIN Guide American Southwest has been announced and will cover Arizona, but its first ceremony is set for 26 August 2026 and it has awarded nothing yet. Until that selection publishes, this list leads with James Beard Foundation recognition.

The ten

#	Restaurant	City	Distinction	Cuisine
1	Pizzeria Bianco	Phoenix	James Beard Best Chef: Southwest, Chris Bianco (2003)	Pizza
2	El Chorro	Paradise Valley	James Beard America's Classics (2005)	American
3	The Fry Bread House	Phoenix	James Beard America's Classics (2012)	Tohono O'odham fry bread
4	El Güero Canelo	Tucson	James Beard America's Classics (2018)	Sonoran Mexican
5	Bacanora	Phoenix	James Beard Best Chef: Southwest, René Andrade (2024)	Sonoran, wood-fired
6	Lom Wong	Phoenix	James Beard Best Chef: Southwest, Yotaka Martin (2025)	Regional Thai
7	The Palace Restaurant and Saloon	Prescott	Fourth rung: carries its own Wikipedia article; trading since 1877	American
8	Rock Springs Cafe	Black Canyon City	Fourth rung: carries its own Wikipedia article; trading since 1918	American, pie
9	El Charro Café	Tucson	Fourth rung: carries its own Wikipedia article; trading since 1922	Mexican
10	Kai	Chandler	Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star and AAA Five Diamond, held since 2009	Native American influenced fine dining

Why these ten

Arizona sits in an awkward gap. The American Southwest guide exists on paper and names Arizona among the states it will cover, but no Arizona restaurant can hold a star, a Bib Gourmand, or a Selected entry until

the 26 August 2026 ceremony. The whole first two rungs of the ladder are therefore empty and the list starts with James Beard.

Six entries clear the James Beard rung and are still trading, ordered by award year oldest first. The remaining four come from the fourth rung, restaurants documented well enough to carry their own Wikipedia article, ordered by how long they have been open. Kai is the outlier in that group: it has no MICHELIN or James Beard award, but it does hold Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star and AAA Five Diamond ratings continuously since 2009, which is a named distinction with a year rather than a reputation claim.

Two James Beard wins are deliberately missing. Nobuo Fukuda took Best Chef: Southwest in 2007, but the restaurant behind that award and his later Nobuo at Teeter House have both closed, so there is nothing open to list. Charleen Badman won Best Chef: Southwest in 2019 for FnB in Scottsdale, and FnB is currently listed as closed; it will go back on the list if it reopens.

Sources

- Visit Phoenix, James Beard award-winning dining in Phoenix: <https://www.visitphoenix.com/stories/post/james-beard-awards/>
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- Wikipedia, List of James Beard America's Classics: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_James_Beard_America%27s_Classics
- Wikipedia, Charleen Badman: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charleen_Badman
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