
The Ten Best Restaurants in Coral Gables

LAINÉ DOSS, EMILY CODIK | MARCH 8, 2017 | 9:11AM

Coral Gables isn't nicknamed the "City Beautiful" for nothing. With its gorgeous Mediterranean architecture, tony boutiques, and tree-lined streets, it's the perfect place to live or simply visit for the day. Its dining scene once catered to law-firm types; now the Gables heralds a cool era of dining. There are cocktails, funky foods, and young chefs. What follows are the top ten restaurants in the area, a mix of the old and new.

1. **Palme d'Or**

The Biltmore Hotel's venerable Palme d'Or is the grande dame of Miami's culinary dining scene. Steeped in Old-World charm, the restaurant has accumulated numerous accolades, including the AAA Five-Diamond designation. Dinner service is a \$115, six-course affair or a \$155 chef's tasting menu, and that could translate into staid and stuffy. Chef Gregory Pugin, however, combines traditional technique with fresh and local ingredients to redefine and modernize his elegant creations. It's the best reason in Miami to get dressed up and take an imaginary trip to Paris.

2. **Pascal's on Ponce**

OK, OK. We know. Pascal's is kind of fusty, its tables festooned with roses and its walls lined with sconces. But while other chefs obsess over foams and 64-degree eggs, Pascal Oudin sticks to what he knows: cheese soufflé, duck terrine, and olive-oil-poached fish. Classic French, independently owned restaurants are a rarity in this novelty-obsessed town. For that, and his unrelenting permanence, Oudin deserves a spot on this list.

3. **Bulla Gastrobar**

Bulla Gastrobar is exactly what Coral Gables needs: a place with creative cocktails, cool vibes, and a young crowd. Go for the croquetas de jamón (\$9); stay for many,

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4. **Xixón Spanish Cuisine**

You look like you need some Spanish meatballs – tender orbs of beef bedaubed in tomato sauce (\$10.50). Or maybe you crave black rice, its grains coated in squid ink and topped with seafood. Xixón isn't just a restaurant on Coral Way; it's a Miami institution where you can drink red wine, eat *mucho* jamón, and learn to love the funky flavors of boquerones and salted cod.

5. **Swine Southern Table & Bar**

Pork in your drink? Try the bacon-washed whiskey. Pork in your supper? Choose from Swine Southern Table & Bar's suckling pig porchetta (\$38) or crispy pig head (\$70). Pork in your sweets? Treat yourself to the sticky bun, a dessert garnished with candied smoked bacon. If you don't like Swine, you can't possibly be from Miami. This is the city of *la caja china*, chicharrón, and pan con lechón. So kudos to Swine!

Because little will ever trump a meal of pork on pork on pork.

6. Eating House

Giorgio Rapicavoli's Eating House started life as a pop-up and continues to attract a diverse crowd that ventures to the small eatery for innovative, ever-changing dishes. Though Rapicavoli more recently opened Glass & Vine in Coconut Grove, Eating House remains his experimental playground. The menu rotates daily, but on any given day, you might find heirloom tomatoes with Thai fish sauce and frozen coconut milk (\$14) or "420"-minute braised short ribs (\$30). Whatever you do, check out the annual 420 dinner, held April 20, for the chef's whimsical take on stoner food that features Cap'n Crunch pancakes and other delights.

7. Frenchie's Diner

Let's get one thing straight: The croque-monsieur at Frenchie's Diner is one of the most delicious lunches in town. Sure, the family-run spot churns out delectable French onion soup (\$9), escargots (\$11), and moules-frites (\$24), but it's the béchamel-smothered creation that'll keep you going back. So take a lunch break and tell your friends you're just popping out for a quick salad. Then stuff your face with this ham-stuffed sandwich – a decadent creation crowned with blistered, bubbly Gruyère (\$12). It'll do you good.

8. Su-Shin Izakaya

Warning: Su-Shin Izakaya will not refund your money if your meal was not what you expected. In other words, take your maduro-sushi-loving *culo* somewhere else. (Seriously, this disclaimer appears on the homepage of the restaurant's website.) At this Aragon Avenue mainstay, follow the lead of its regulars. Try the specials or whatever looks good on the chalkboard menu: pork and garlic donburi (\$12.50), grilled squid, or fish collar. Eat up. Don't even think about asking for your money back.

9. Ichimi Ramen

There's something about a steaming bowl of noodles that's universally satisfying, and Ichimi's savory bowls of ramen are filled with everything you crave: noodles, made

in-house using a state-of-the-art noodle machine, steeped in a rich broth. That's the base for your choice of proteins or veggies. Try the baby-back rib ramen (\$26) for a hearty meal. The uni and roe summer ramen, served chilled, is the perfect noodle dish for our tropical climate (\$36). It's all served in a cool industrial setting.

10. Gusto Fino

There are sandwiches, and then there's Gusto Fino's Pork Five-O (\$8.95) – a ridiculously rich sammie stuffed with sliced pork tenderloin, mushrooms, mozzarella, and pancetta. Sure, lighter items also appear on the menu: soup, caprese, carpaccio, and antipasto. But don't let the greenery stop you from ordering this lunch spot's famous meatball sub, a heaping mass of beef, pomodoro sauce, and pecorino cheese. It'll make your sandwich-lovin', beef-crazed heart go pitter-patter.

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