

Discover the Best Mexican Food at Barrio Star

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Looking for the Best Mexican Food in San Diego? Check out Downtown's Barrio Star!

If you're in the mood for some of the the best Mexican food, you can pretty much find a decent taco and cerveza on just about every street corner in San Diego.



Enjoy some of the best Mexican food this side of the border at Barrio Star!

BUT if you want truly *exceptional* Mexican food there are indeed a few establishments that make all others suffer by comparison. Without question, [Barrio Star](#) is one of those places where you just may have some of the best damn Mexican food (and margaritas!) on this side of the border.

Described as "Mexican Soul Food with an Asian Fusion twist," Barrio Star's [menu](#) is a montage of unique and traditional mouthwatering fare. Seated at our window table we enjoyed watching the world go by while we were happily immersed in the ultra-cool vibe and funky decor of the dining area and bar. We got right to work drooling over — I mean, pouring over — the menu.

This task, of course, required reinforcement from a blood orange margarita, a chilled house favorite, and a classic chips, salsa and guacamole appetizer. Wait. That doesn't do it justice. Let me try again: We started off with perfectly seasoned tortilla chips made on site, homemade salsa with just the right kick of heat and a.ma.zing, fresh guacamole that we quickly polished off with embarrassing speed.



Delicious, hearty and flavorful – the Chicken Tortilla Soup is a must-try!

Having placed our order, we were served a series of salsas to complement our upcoming dishes: A tangy mango salsa, a super fresh pico de gallo and a sweet corn salsa with a kick. It was hard to resist the temptation to just dig into the salsas straight rather than wait for the food pairings, but we managed.

Deciding to start with a “basic,” we ordered the Chicken Tortilla Soup. Unfortunately, our best laid plans to start basic were a failure.

Upon tasting the soup, my date put down his spoon, leaned in, and very seriously disclosed, and I quote, “This is a game changer. I’ll never have any other chicken tortilla soup again.”

Turns out the “top secret” ingredient is a cilantro lime sauce generously drizzled over the soup, taking Chicken Tortilla Soup to a whole new level.

After the soup bowl is dry and the bar is set really high, we move on to what Barrio Star is known for — tacos! We try the steak, carnitas and sea bass tacos on fresh tortillas, with the most incredible side of rice and beans with chipotle and corn.

And now we know why the tacos are the main attraction. The meats are marinated and tender, the toppings are fresh and flavorful and the sauces perfectly complement each taco ensemble. Yep, these are some tasty tacos. Add a Mexican or local craft beer on draft and you have died and gone to culinary heaven.

Speaking of dying ... while not usually a restaurant topic, rumor has it that Barrio Star is haunted. Our waitress tells us stories of lights flickering, candles falling over and sensor cameras turning on when there was “nothing” in the room. Yikes. Needless to say, you should make reservations now for Barrio Star’s “Day of the Dead” party in October, which is one of their favorite [events](#).



Tasty tacos are one of their specialties! Make sure you try them when you visit!

Those stories inspire us to raise our spirits, so we order another round of drinks: The spicy serrano chili and fresh oregano margarita and a flavorful roasted jalapeño blackberry margarita.

We also can't resist an order of one of my favorite Mexican joint standard dishes — queso fundido. However, like everything at Barrio Star we've tried so far, their version of queso fundido exceeds your expectations and is simply off-the-charts delicious.

Delightfully stuffed, our waitress recommends that we try a Brazil Bowl. Our interest is piqued (Brazil Bowl? In a Mexican restaurant??) and the next thing you know a bowl filled with juicy grilled chicken, coconut rice, black beans, steamed greens and mango salsa appears before us. It smells really, *really* good.

Mesmerized by the smell we stare at it mumbling something about how we are too full to possibly eat another crumb, but will concede to try one small bite, after which a joust ensues as our forks battle for every last bite. I think I won.

We sit back, full and happy, and contemplate writing a love letter to Chef Isabel Cruz and her amazing cuisine. Deciding that would be creepy, we instead make plans to return for Taco Happy Hour, which is every Tuesday, and includes beer, wine and margarita specials, plus an array of amazing tacos. We'll see you there!

By: Alisa Kerr