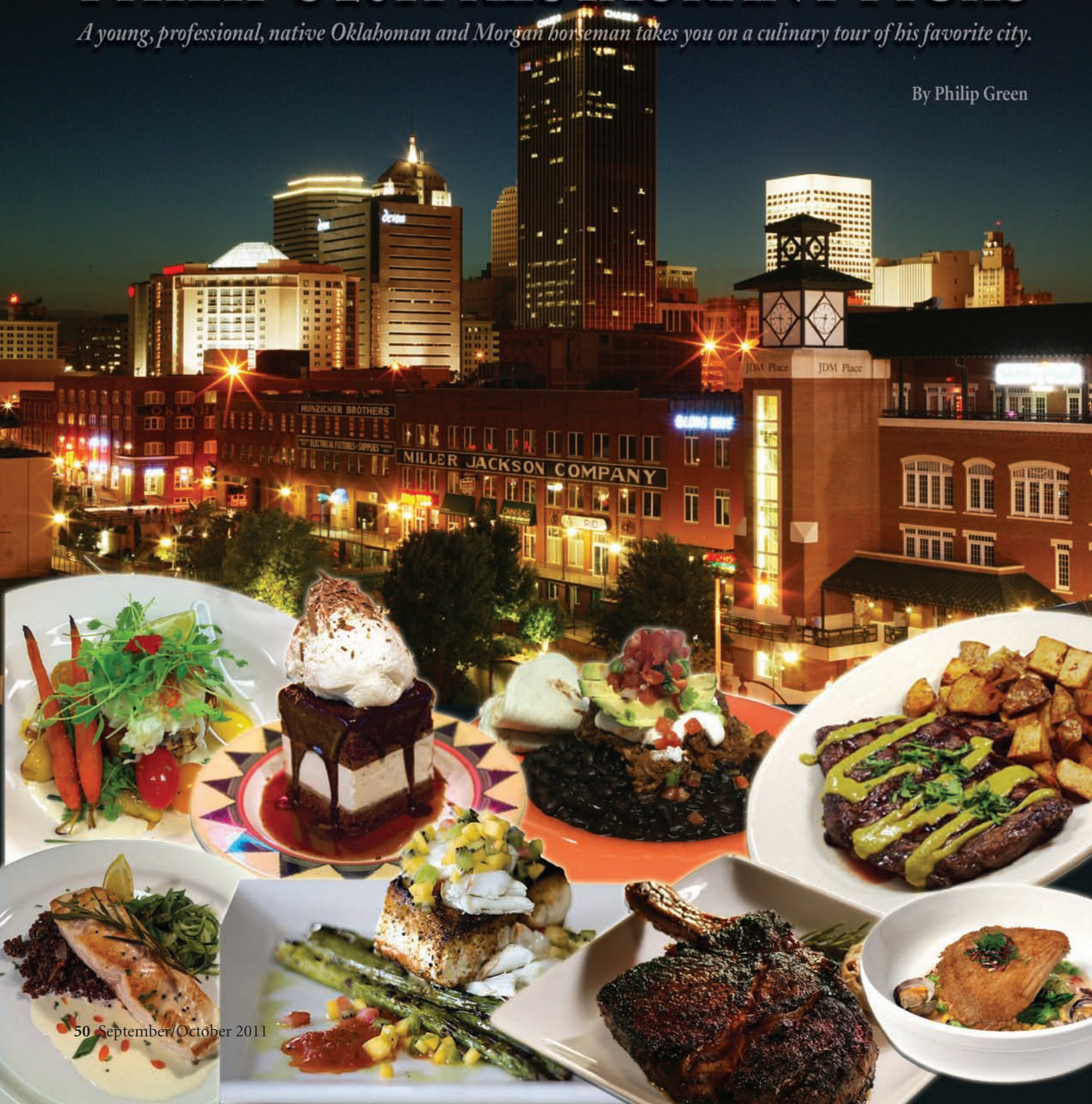


# OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN OKLAHOMA CITY: PHILIP'S 2011 RESTAURANT PICKS

*A young, professional, native Oklahoman and Morgan horseman takes you on a culinary tour of his favorite city.*

By Philip Green



## OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Maybe you know, or maybe you haven't heard, but OKC has transformed itself immensely within the past 10 years. With the advent of large oil companies such as Devon Energy, which is constructing the tallest building in Oklahoma just to the east of the fairgrounds in downtown (11<sup>th</sup> tallest building west of the Mississippi), to Chesapeake Energy which has one of the largest oil-based campuses in the region, Oklahoma City has seen a surge in high-end restaurants, urban hipster dive bars, and metro-chic eateries throughout the downtown and midtown areas to accommodate its growing and demanding workforce. Oklahoma City has had the great fortune of being able to stay rather recession-proof, and has been nearly unscathed by the housing market crash, therefore, people are finding their dollar goes further, thus promoting and cultivating many unique urban restaurants in the wake of continued prosperity among OKCers alike. In other words, the people of Oklahoma have money to spend, and they've continued spending it while other cities have been crippled by the economic downturn. This has given rise to our unique dining and entertainment options for Oklahoma City's citizens. The Oklahoma State Fairgrounds lies within five miles of these incredible restaurants and venues, yet for horse show folk, it's very easy to get focused on the Meridian Avenue area for dinner even though these venues are almost equidistant from the fairgrounds as the hotel areas. The best venturing out can be had by going east of the fairgrounds, instead of west. My hope is to give you a few opportunities and ideas to venture out on your own into the local scene and enjoy these city gems the people in my city repeatedly frequent. Being born and raised an "Okie" in Oklahoma City, I have witnessed firsthand the growth that has been going on in this great city, and I want to let you in on my favorite picks for dining and entertainment so that you too can taste our hidden gems while my state plays host to all of the wonderful horse show people!

Dining in OKC has become far more extensive than just your average chain restaurant. Not long ago we would just be elated about getting our first PF Chang's, or even our first Chick-Fil-A, which by all means you should try if you haven't, but now we have become accustomed to seeing the emergence of local chefs preparing and presenting fare from all sorts of genres and tastes to Oklahoma City. Again, most of these restaurants are located within five miles of the fairgrounds, but offer a different side of Oklahoma City that many of our guests would otherwise not notice unless pointed in the right direction.



**LUDIVINE**  
805 N. Hudson  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 778-6800  
[www.ludivineokc.com](http://www.ludivineokc.com)

One such restaurant is the small urban chic loft style property known as Ludivine. The chef prepares organically fresh cuisine daily using only fresh meats and vegetables, meaning that much

of what is served is locally grown and raised. "From the Prairie to the Kitchen," is one of their slogans. The cuisine is offered with a very small menu consisting usually of a beef, chicken, game, and a pork entrée, though this can change depending on the seasons. You will also notice that the vegetable and fruit pairings will coordinate with the seasons as well. The wine list is extensive, and the décor is modern if not a bit eclectic. Ludivine features an open kitchen and a casual atmosphere, though most people find that a knee length dress for women is appropriate, while it is business casual attire for men. If you are looking for something more casual, you can dine in the bar that is located on the side of the building. It brings with it a great cocktail menu, premium wine and beer, and a great atmosphere full of young urban professionals and old oil execs mixing together over great drinks and great food. Reservations are a must. Ludivine is open for dinner Tuesday-Thursday.



**RED PRIMESTEAK**  
504 North Broadway Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 232-2626  
[www.redprimesteak.com](http://www.redprimesteak.com)

Having attended Nationals last year, I heard many of you talking about RED Primesteak, and yes, this is one of OKC's better steak restaurants. It has a fine dining feel to it, but casual enough you can wear jeans and a nice shirt. A key to OKC is remembering that it gets so hot here during the summer, almost anything casual is acceptable as long as you accessorize to dress it up! One of the unique features of RED Primesteak is you have some say in the way your steak is presented. You are offered different rub combinations coupled with different sauces to dress the steak. The family style vegetables are down home goodness and the drink menu and wine list are off the charts, offering clientele the perfect pairing for any appetizer or entrée. RED Primesteak also has a great bar located at the front of the restaurant that faces historic Automobile Alley. You'll find many corporate executives and attorneys drinking and dining here after a long day of work and meetings. It's a great place to unwind and enjoy time with friends and gossip about all of the great rides and exciting classes to come at the show. The restaurant has a great young urban feel to it with a modern meets turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century atmosphere.



**PACHINKO PARLOR**  
1 Northwest 9th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 601-8900  
[www.sushiokc.com](http://www.sushiokc.com)

Who would have known Oklahoma City could be home to a creative and fun sushi restaurant? Sitting near the train tracks just to the east of Automobile Alley lays Pachinko Parlor, a quaint but humorously modern sushi joint that presents sushi

*Images opposite page, background: OKC skyline at night with Bricktown Entertainment District in the foreground (all rights reserved by Greater Oklahoma City Chamber & CVB); dishes from clockwise top left: Mutts Amazing Hot Dogs, Redrock Canyon Grill, Big Truck Tacos, 1492, Ludivine, RED Primesteak, Paseo Grill and Cheever's.*

## OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN OKLAHOMA CITY

rolls in various combinations that could please anyone's taste buds. Pachinko Parlor is encompassed by a beautiful outdoor porch where you will find many people dining and drinking the night away, often to live music from some of OKC's own bands. The crowd is usually young, but the setting is casual modern with many quiet spots located throughout the restaurant. Quickly becoming a top pick in the Oklahoma City community for sushi, Pachinko Parlor will soothe that midweek itch for something Asian!



**CAFÉ DO BRAZIL**  
440 Northwest 11th Street # 100  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 525-9779  
[www.cafedobrazilokc.com](http://www.cafedobrazilokc.com)

Oklahoma City also plays host to a large international community, the number of foreign nationals moving to the city has been on the increase in the past 10 years, thus bolstering big business for cuisine which hails far from U.S. borders. A great addition to our multi-faceted cuisine is long-time standing restaurant, Café do Brazil. Café do Brazil is located midtown, just north of Downtown OKC in a fittingly Spanish-Mission style building of the early 1900's. One can make a meal just of the appetizer menu, and often that is what I prefer. I enjoy sampling everything from the Jacare Ao Pantanal, which are strips of Fried Alligator served with a homemade honey mustard sauce to the Perfect Martine Ceviche. Of course the entrees, also representative of true Brazilian Cuisine, are to die for. Brazilian owned, the chef travels to Brazil regularly to train with local chefs of the area to keep Café do Brazil's cuisine authentic and fresh. It has become a favorite, both of the deep Latin American community, as well as many young or seasoned culinary veterans.



**CHEEVER'S**  
2409 North Hudson Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 525-7007  
[www.cheeverscafe.com](http://www.cheeverscafe.com)

Cheever's restaurant, located on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Corridor in an old flower shop, has long been a staple of Oklahoma City's palate. The restaurant offers hearty home-style meals with a southwest flair, while incorporating modern techniques and contemporary culinary design. The enclosed flower chillers now house a large collection of wines and spirits throughout the range of tastes. The atmosphere is rough elegance, and goes dressy in the evening, but casual lunches can be had on the patio dining area, weather permitting. The restaurant itself contains many art pieces that span the past century into modern and post-modern works of art, giving the restaurant a new age feel encased in an oil boom icon of a building. Reservations are recommended in advance due to the small-scale size of the restaurant and the high demands in the evening. It is a hot spot among the more established OKCers and is great for people watching.



**BIG TRUCK TACOS**  
530 NE 23rd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 525-8226  
[www.bigtrucktacos.com](http://www.bigtrucktacos.com)

Oklahoma City also hosts many small but unique fast-food style restaurants that are locally owned and operated supplying OKC with an over-the-top take on conventional fast food. Due to the proximity of Oklahoma to Texas, love for Tex-Mex food is deep-seated in Oklahoma culture. Of course, one of the staples of Tex-Mex are tacos, and you need look no further than Big Truck Tacos on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to satisfy your urge for this great native delicacy. Big Truck Tacos inhabits an old 1960's drive-in where you will find anyone from politicians from the State Capitol eating away their lunch hours to area locals grabbing a quick take-out dinner for the family. These, however, are not your basic tacos. The combinations and creations are far from conventional and almost border the bizarre, but they are all exceptional in quality and taste. This is a great place to grab a quick bite in between classes or when you have very little time to spare.



**MUTTS AMAZING HOT DOGS**  
1400 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 525-DOGS  
[www.mutts-hot-dogs.com](http://www.mutts-hot-dogs.com)

So successful is Big Truck Tacos, that the same owners opened a hotdog stand down the street in another 1960's style drive-in building called Mutts Amazing Hot Dogs. And they are just that, AMAZING! The drive-in isn't a drive in anymore, but a sit down restaurant that pipes in TV Land reruns all night long while serving you the best and most unique hot dogs that include meats such as Bison, Italian Sausage, Lamb Sausage and Andouille Sausage in vegetable and condiment combinations that rival any high-end restaurant. These aren't your average dogs, these are Mutts Amazing Hot Dogs! Mutts is a great place to grab a quick bit and head back to the barn, or call ahead and bring EVERYONE a gourmet hot dog. Trust me, one of these dogs goes a long way!



**REDROCK CANYON GRILL**  
9221 Lake Hefner Parkway  
Oklahoma City, OK 73120  
(405) 749-1995  
[www.redrockcanyongrill.com](http://www.redrockcanyongrill.com)

I might have lied when I said everything that I recommend is within five miles of the fairgrounds. I do have to mention one fabulous restaurant, if only for the outdoor dining and scenery. If you haven't made the trip to Red Rock Canyon Grill, it is a must if you have a few extra minutes of driving time. It takes about 15 minutes via the Lake Hefner Parkway to get from the fairgrounds to Red Rock Canyon Grill, but if the weather is nice, the outdoor dining is worth every one of those minutes. A favorite weekend place of Northwest Oklahoma City and Nichols

Hills residents, Red Rock Canyon Grill is located on beautiful Lake Hefner, which has become the athletic and outdoor center of Oklahoma City. Lake Hefner has always been Oklahoma City's watershed, however, recently the city has poured in a large amount of funds to make this the city's northern recreational center surrounding the lake. Large wooded parks and trails surround the lake, and Red Rock Canyon Grill is located in the middle of the walking trails with the deck of the restaurant hanging at the edge of the wharf. Some of the best Oklahoma City red dirt cultivated sunsets can be seen from here looking across the lake, and you can enjoy the typical flat landscape of the city by looking out for miles to the north and west across the lake. Oh, and the food is great too! Serving up hearty American Cuisine, typical of Oklahoma, it will be sure not to disappoint your eyes and mouths. October is the perfect month for this restaurant, especially with a nice breeze coming off the lake. Reservations are not accepted at Red Rock Canyon Grill, so be sure to allow some wait time.

# 1492

1492  
1207 North Walker Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73120  
(405) 236-1492  
[www.1492okc.com](http://www.1492okc.com)

If you are looking for the city's best in Latin Food—and my favorite, a very nice, minty Mojito—you are most assured to be impressed with 1492, a Latin and Spanish themed restaurant located in Oklahoma City's revamped Midtown Historical District. Midtown has come to life with various eateries and bars as one of Oklahoma City's premier nighttime spots for locals. 1492 is the creation of the Chavez brothers from Dallas, Texas who sought to bring Oklahoma's finest Latin-American eatery into the city. 1492 offers its guests incredible Latin food combined with contemporary elegance. It has a great range of food, from Tex-Mex to broad areas of South America with a very heavy Spanish empire influence and proposes

great offerings of seafood, typical to such regions. The wine list is extensive, particularly in Latin-American regions, and the presentation is artistic at the least. Don't forget to take a stroll up to McNellie's Irish Pub while you are in the area for a nightcap or a chance to watch some sports on their large TVs. You can make a complete night of it in Midtown. Midtown is also within walking distance of the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, and the Oklahoma National Memorial.




PASEO GRILL  
2909 Paseo Suite A  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 601-1079  
[www.paseogrill.com](http://www.paseogrill.com)

Rounding out my top 10 picks for 2011 is the formidable Paseo Grill, located in the


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historic Paseo Arts District just north of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Enclave. Upon entering the small Paseo Arts District, you'll notice the change in architecture to Spanish Mission Style buildings. Throughout this popular area known for young, locally grown artists and their galleries are also small shops and several wonderful restaurants. At the bottom of the curved avenue lies Paseo Grill. It's a very small restaurant, but devotes a great amount of privacy and service to each table. The food selection is one of the best in Oklahoma City. While the menu may not be broad, the quality and presentation of their culinary masterpieces have garnered this restaurant one of the top picks among OKC locals. Indeed it has always lived up to its reputation, and judging from the crowd, both young and old, it has something on its menu to achieve the allegiance of every one of its patrons. The cuisine is typical American, but there is nothing typical about the taste or presentation. My personal favorites are the Tuna Tartar appetizer coupled with the Fresco Chicken Farfalle, which is a sautéed chicken breast, dynamically combined with hearts of palm, prosciutto, mushrooms, artichoke hearts, and parmesan cheese curiously tossed with farfalle pasta in a champagne cream sauce. It is heavenly. Be sure to make reservations, especially on a weekend night. If you happen to be in the area and are looking for something a little lower key, try Picasso on Paseo. Great for the locals, I can tell you it offers one of the best southern style lobster bisques in the city. They have wonderful sandwiches too, and you can't beat the young crowd!

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I will leave you with a list of other notable mentions. Please head out and enjoy my city as a local does. The people of Oklahoma City welcome our guests with open arms, as any Southern city would, and I love having all of you together in my city, and I wanted to share with you my favorite restaurants so that you may fully enjoy, at least your dining experiences, while you are visiting our growing little oil town! Enjoy the show and best of luck to all exhibitors and their families! ■

### MEXICAN/TEX-MEX:

**Iguana Mexican Grill**  
9 Northwest 9th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 606-7172  
[www.iguanamexicangrill.com](http://www.iguanamexicangrill.com)

### MODERN/SUNDAY BRUNCH:

**Museum of Art Café**  
415 Couch Drive  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 236-3100  
[www.okcmoa.com](http://www.okcmoa.com)

### Stella

1201 North Walker Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 235-2200  
[www.stellaokc.com](http://www.stellaokc.com)

### Rococo

2824 North Pennsylvania Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 528-2824  
[www.rococo-restaurant.com](http://www.rococo-restaurant.com)

### BARBEQUE:

**Iron Starr BBQ**  
3700 North Shartel Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
(405) 524-5925  
[www.ironstarrbbq.com](http://www.ironstarrbbq.com)

### Leo's BBQ

7 Harrison Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104  
(405) 236-5367

### CHINESE/PAN-ASIAN:

**Grand House**  
2701 North Classen Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106  
(405) 524-7333  
[www.grandhouseokc.com](http://www.grandhouseokc.com)

### VIETNAMESE:

**Pho Lien Hoa**  
901 NW 23rd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106  
(405) 521-8087

### Lido

2518 N Military Ave # 101  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106  
(405) 521-1902

### GERMAN/EUROPEAN:

**Ingrid's Kitchen**  
3701 North Youngs Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
(405) 946-8444  
[www.ingridskitchen.com](http://www.ingridskitchen.com)

### INDIAN:

**Gopuram**  
4559 Northwest 23rd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73127  
(405) 948-7373  
[www.gopuramtasteofindia.com](http://www.gopuramtasteofindia.com)

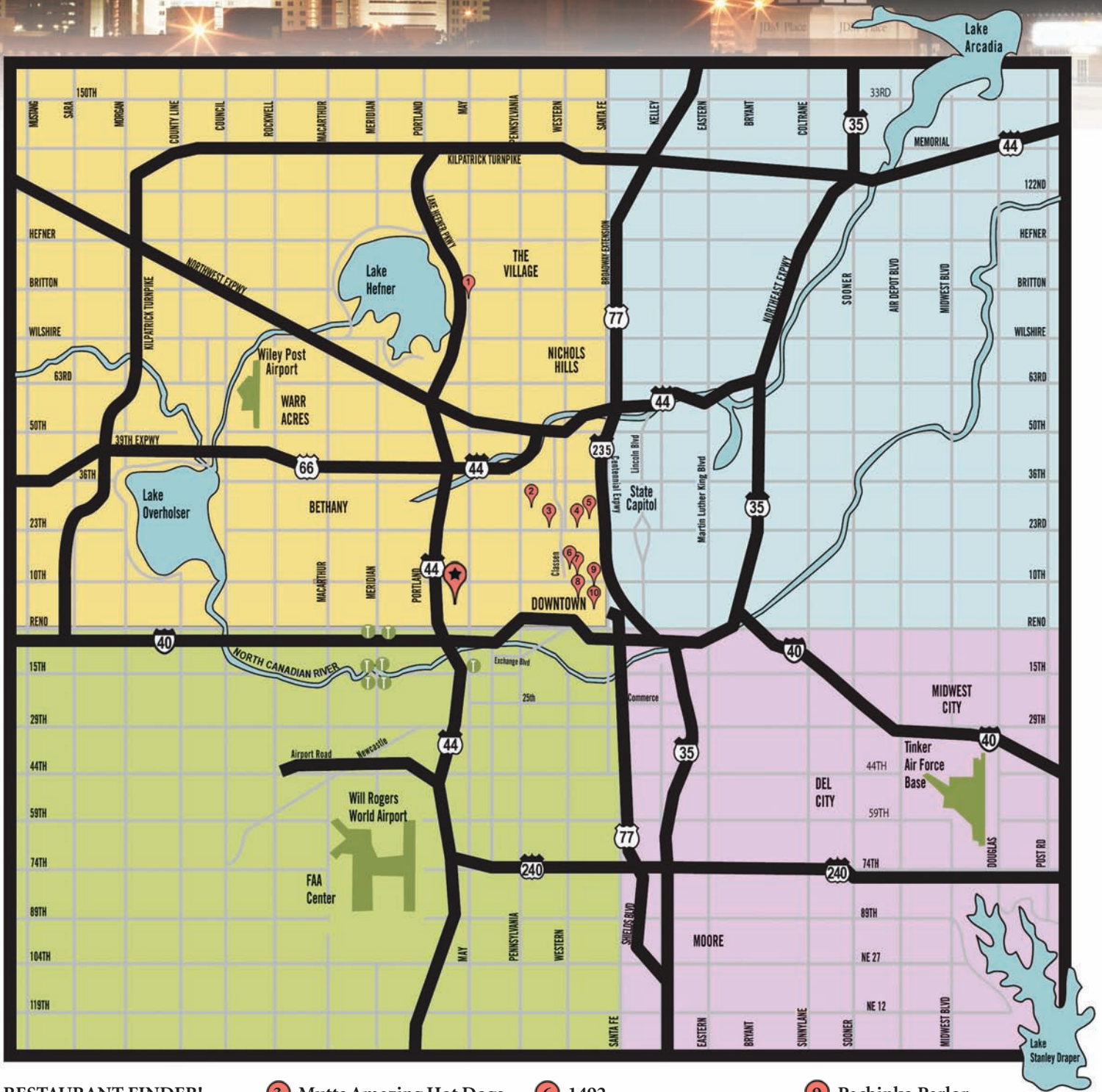
### PIZZA:

**Sauced**  
2912 Paseo  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 521-9801  
[www.yoursauced.com](http://www.yoursauced.com)














Paseo Arts District

# OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN OKLAHOMA CITY



## RESTAURANT FINDER!

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p> <b>Grand National</b><br/>State Fair Park</p>                                      | <p> <b>3 Mutts Amazing Hot Dogs</b><br/>1400 NW 23rd Street<br/>(405) 525-DOGS</p> | <p> <b>6 1492</b><br/>1207 North Walker Avenue<br/>(405) 236-1492</p>               | <p> <b>9 Pachinko Parlor</b><br/>1 Northwest 9th Street<br/>(405) 601-8900</p>    |
| <p> <b>1 Red Rock Canyon Grill</b><br/>9221 Lake Hefner Parkway<br/>(405) 749-1995</p> | <p> <b>4 Big Truck Tacos</b><br/>530 NW 23rd Street<br/>(405) 525-8226</p>         | <p> <b>7 Café do Brazil</b><br/>440 Northwest 11th St., #100<br/>(405) 525-9779</p> | <p> <b>10 RED Primesteak</b><br/>504 North Broadway Avenue<br/>(405) 232-2626</p> |
| <p> <b>2 Paseo Grill</b><br/>2909 Paseo Suite A<br/>(405) 601-1079</p>                 | <p> <b>5 Cheever's Cafe</b><br/>2409 North Hudson Avenue<br/>(405) 525-7007</p>    | <p> <b>8 Ludivine</b><br/>805 N. Hudson<br/>(405) 778-6800</p>                      | <p><i>(All rights reserved by Greater Oklahoma City Chamber &amp; CVB)</i></p>   |