

Velo Bella's Guide to Dining in the Monterey Area

For cyclists who would rather spend their hard earned money on their bikes, check out Velo Bella's hot picks for great casual and affordable dining, coffee, and treats in the Monterey Area. Forget the high dollar tourist joints that spend more on advertising than for groceries – the identities of the favorites you see here are cautiously guarded by those who live here. Yummm!

Downtown Monterey

Jamba Juice

398 Alvarado
831-645-9036



Some of the best smoothies you'll ever find, with a few other treats. At the end of a hot day on the bike, Jamba Juice hits the spot. Busy downtown location - worth 5 Kitties if the location was safer to park a bike.

Lallapalooza Restaurant and Bar

474 Alvarado
831-645-9036



This is a great place to just hangout and do what Bellas do best...LOOK GOOD. Oh, the Lemondrop Martinis are not bad either. Some nice sandwiches and salads to go with the drinks. Rather pricey, but worth the money. Check it out.

Morgan's Coffee & Tea

498 Washington at Pearl



It's no wonder that Morgan's has consistently been the Apres Velo place to see and be seen for years. Perfect plaza location next door to a local bike shop. With killer coffee, fresh baked scones, cookies, and focaccia, there's no reason to search for another place in Monterey to park your bike and your bod after a long ride. A slight drop in service & treats since recent ownership change, but still good.

Paris Bakery

Washington at Bonifacio



Great breads, pastries, and tarts. Located within a block from both Turtle Bay and Morgan's Coffee. Don't bother with the desserts at Turtle Bay; hustle down to Paris bakery before they close.

Rosine's

434 Alvarado Street
831-375-1400



Busy downtown diner setting, with a complete diner menu and huge desserts. I've heard it has killer breakfasts. Great for a burger or french dip. Not the best location to park a bike.

Turtle Bay Taqueria

431 Tyler at Bonifacio
831-333-1500



Centrally located, usually busy, and always great. Not your typical Mexican cuisine – This food is inspired from Southern Coastal Mexico and Belize. Wide variety of wraps, burritos, soft tacos, salads and bowls, filled with fresh seafood, chicken, charbroiled steak, carnitas or veggies. The Talapia Cancun (wrap or bowl), and charbroiled snapper tacos are amazing. Besides the usual beverages, they also have ice cold horchata and tropical fruit smoothies. The only downsides: they charge for chips and salsa; and the wait to order at the counter can be a pain. Most plates run \$5-7, with rice & black beans.

New Monterey

Casa Linda Restaurant & Grill

638 Wave Street (between Hoffman & Prescott)
New Monterey
831-655-4419



Just off Cannery Row, Casa Linda is hard to miss, right in New Monterey near the Recreation Trail. The criterium course at Sea Otter usually goes right past their front door. While Casa Linda has other typical Mexican offerings, they're known for their large and affordable burritos. Best Bets: Carnitas or Carne Asada Super Burritos. About \$5-7

Gianni's Pizza

725 Lighthouse Ave.
Monterey
831-649-1500



Basic non-nonsense pizza and good beer. Basic selection of toppings. Good meeting place for a crowd. No Credit Cards.

Hula's

622 Lighthouse Ave. (between Prescott & Hoffman)
New Monterey
831-655-HULA



This is one for your family or sponsors to pay for, but well worth it. Casual Hawaiian, with surf movies & background music. Dick Dale would be proud. Great fish (Salmon, Ahi, Ono, Mahi Mahi and Swordfish), Luau Pork, Bali Hai Ribs, Teriyaki Steak, Thai Chicken Bowl, Jerk Tofu Bowl, and some fine Burgers. Good drinks. For Appetizers, the best bets are the sweet potato fries & poke (fish) platter. For the main course; pan fried Ahi with Maui onions; coconut encrusted Ono, macadamia encrusted Mahi Mahi. The teriyaki steak is wicked, and comes with wasabi mashed potatoes. The warm chocolate lava cake, with macadamia nuts sprinkled on top, is worth every calorie.
\$7-11 Lunches; \$9-15 Dinners

The Loose Noodle Pasta House

538 Lighthouse Ave.
New Monterey
831-641-0130



Great basic Italian pasta dinners, ala carte, or as a lunch or dinner with soup and salad. No pizza can be found here, but if you want a basic, quiet and clean Italian restaurant with some salad and a bottle of wine, the Loose Noodle is hard to beat. Nothing special about the soup, but the salads are usually very good, with a wide variety of local greens. Best bets: Spaghetti with Meatballs, Vegetarian Lasagna. Oops, almost forgot - the complimentary bread is a light crusty Francese - great by itself, and even better with a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

Pacific Grove

Caravali Coffee

510 Lighthouse Ave.



Both indoor and outdoor seating. Great coffee & espresso drinks, along with a selection of baked goods and juices. A huge plus in their favor is their Happy Hour 3-5PM Tuesday-Friday, when all espresso drinks are half off (just the thing for a work day or afternoon ride jolt – Yowsa!!!)

First Awakenings

125 Oceanview Blvd. at Eardley (One block from Aquarium)

831-372-1125



Great early morning breakfast. A bit of a wait later in the morning or for lunch on weekends, but the food is worth the wait. Best bets: veggie skillet with eggs over potatoes, blue germ pancakes, omelets, crepes, fresh juices, bottomless coffee. Both indoor and outdoor seating - sit outdoors if possible, with fresh ocean air, patio heaters and a fire pit. Dogs on leash welcome on the patio.

Goodies Delicatessen

518 Lighthouse Ave.



Nice outdoor patio with room for parking bikes, good sandwiches, basic coffee & desserts. Cyclists always welcomed – a favorite post-ride haunt for 8 o'clock Saturday riders.

Pavel's Backerei

219 Forest Avenue (bet. Lighthouse and Laurel)

643-2636



Great cinnamon rolls, oversized biscotti, raspberry shortbread, dipped macaroons, fresh bear claws stuffed with almonds. Their loaves of fresh cinnamon bread are huge, crusty and goopy. Other European breads and cakes. While the coffee and atmosphere is adequate, the baked goods are smokin'. Newsflash! - they also have sandwiches now!

Peppers MexiCali Cafe

170 Forest Ave. (bet. Lighthouse and Central)

831-373-6892



Great casual and slightly upscale Mexican dining. A long-time local favorite, with good beer and margaritas. Can get busy on weekends and evenings. Best bets: tacos al carbon; mushroom & artichoke enchiladas; fajitas. Closed Tuesdays. If Peppers is too packed and you're Jones'n for Mexican, head a couple blocks over to Zocalo's.

Pizza My Way

1157 Forest Ave. #D (Across from Trader Joe's)

831-643-1111



High on the hill in PG (convenient by car, not by bike). Simple friendly atmosphere, with some of the best pizza in the area, along with some rockin' microbrews. Besides the basic toppings, they've got some yummy specialty pizzas, like "Mediterranean Treat", "My Greek Feta", and a nice chicken pesto pizza with red onion and artichoke hearts. Good salads too! Bring along a friend from PG - they usually have coupons for these guys.

Taste Cafe & Bistro

1199 Forest Ave.

831-655-0324



Just up the street from Pizza My Way, this small bistro has a lot of character, atmosphere, great gourmet food and a yuppie attitude. Suenago recommends the squash filled raviolis.

Pacific Grove, contd.

Thai Bistro II

159 Central Ave.
831-372-8700



Just up from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Thai Bistro II is a great bet for authentic, fresh, and consistent Thai cuisine, with several vegetarian dishes. Best bets: Mee Grob Tofu, Satay Chicken with Peanut Sauce & Cucumber Relish, Mussaman Gai Coconut Chicken Curry, and Bill's Special (Veggie combination with basil, chili, garlic and soy sauce, with steamed rice). About \$7-9 per dish

Tillie Gort's Cafe

111 Central Avenue (Right up from the Aquarium)
831-373-0335



Kind of a Berkeley meets Humboldt County atmosphere. While more standard lunch and dinners are available, Tillie Gort's is known for their vegetarian offerings and desserts. Best Bets: fresh veggie pastas; Pasta Alfredo; BlueBird (Turkey Burger w/ Blue Cheese on wheat bun; fresh lemonade; carrot cake or pie.

Toastie's Cafe

702 Lighthouse Ave
831-373-7543



Across the street from the Post Office. Another great choice for breakfast or lunch in PG. Friendly local atmosphere. Easy to find, easy parking for cars, but not for bikes. Best bets: Pancakes, Sour-dough French Toast, White Egg Omelets, Turkey Burgers.

Wild Berries

17th Ave. (bet. Lighthouse and Laurel)



Eclectic converted house; indoor/outdoor seating. Funky coffee house and funkier clientele. Great baked items, breakfast and lunch plates. Bike parking along the side of the house. Best bets: Americano style coffee & espresso drinks; berry muffins; potato dishes; frittatas. Nice apres-velo spot for small groups, especially on those foggy PG mornings.

Zocalo's

162 Fountain Ave. (bet. Lighthouse and Central)
831-373-7911



Simple Mexican diner setting in quiet PG neighborhood. Fresh Mexican fare inspired by recipes of Mexico City – Homemade tortillas, consistent high quality. Best bets: Combination plate with two soft tacos (steak, carnitas & chicken are all great), and a Chile Relleno - Pazzo sez "Best Rellenos I've found north of Taos!" Zocalos hasn't been open long, but the word is spreading. About \$6-10.

Carmel Valley

Baja Cantina and Grill

7166 Carmel Valley Rd
(Mid Valley)
831-625-2252



The Cantina is a little easier on your pocket book than other Carmel Valley restaurants. It specializes in HUGE margaritas that will knock your socks off and regional style Mexican Cuisine. It also boasts unique automobile gas and oil memorabilia.

Cafe Rustica

10 Delfino Place
(Carmel Valley Village)
831-659-4444



Like many restaurants in Carmel Valley, Cafe Rustica is a bit pricey, but the food here is worth every bite. Nice thin crust pizzas, pastas, and salads. Both indoor and outdoor patio seating, with a Mediterranean atmosphere.

Carmel Valley Roasting Company

319 Mid Valley Shopping Center



Right in Mid Valley, toward the coast from Laureles Grade and Robinson Canyon, just off Carmel Valley Road. Just the ticket for a friendly rest stop on longer rides toward or returning from Laureles Grade, Robinson Canyon Road, or points east of Carmel Valley. Great coffee and espresso drinks and nice treats. There's also a deli a couple doors away. Restroom accommodations are sparse.

Kasey's

Carmel Valley Road at Delfino Place
(Carmel Valley Village)



This country version of a 7-11 has a good selection of snacks and drinks, and is located right in Carmel Valley Village (across from the Chevron). If you've just ridden Chachagua Road or over Cahoon Summit and are continuing toward the coast, this is a good location for a snack and a stretch.

P@zzo's Pick: Look for the huge oatmeal raisin or peanut butter with chocolate chip cookies.

The Corkscrew Cafe

55 West Carmel Valley Road
(Carmel Valley Village)
831-659-8888



Not on a cyclist's budget, but for a special lunch or dinner, this is nice without being over the top. Carmel Valley is almost always warmer than the Peninsula, so this is great for a lunch, or a late afternoon or early evening meal. Indoor and outdoor patio seating. For atmosphere, think Santa Fe meets Tuscany. Casual California cuisine, with a wide selection of high end wines. Hey, if someone else is paying, what the hell!

Wild Goose Cafe

18 East Carmel Valley Road
(Carmel Valley Village)
831-659-5052



Run by local cyclist Roxie, this girl knows how to cook! Open 6:30AM-6:30PM. Best bets: hot Irish oatmeal with homemade applesauce, frittatas, focaccias, quiches, bagels, and scones, along with great chai and espresso drinks. Outdoor deck, and Wi-Fi Hotspot access for you techie types who need to transmit training data to CTS.

Seaside & Thereabouts

Baldemiro's Taco Shop

2008 Fremont Blvd. at Ord Grove St. (Across Fremont from Border's Books)

Seaside

831-899-2231



This place may look like a seedy 60's era drive-in, but those in the know swear by their authentic and cheap tacos and burritos.

Jamba Juice

463 Canyon Del Rey Blvd. (at Hwy 68)

831-583-0577



This is a great new Jamba location, near some of the best riding in Ft. Ord, Laguna Seca, and the surrounding areas. Some of the best smoothies you'll ever find, with a few other treats. At the end of a hot day on the bike, Jamba Juice hits the spot. This location also has a nice patio, and features call-ahead ordering and curbside delivery!

Sarita's Mexican Restaurant

1 - 1936 Fremont Blvd.

Seaside

831-394-4407

2 - 342 Reservation Rd. (behind MacDonalDs)

Marina

831-384-0697



SueNago swears by this one (as much as a girl born in South Dakota can swear, dontcha know). A little hole in the wall place, with "the most authentic Mexican food" she knows of. Very economically priced, and free chips & salsa!

Starbucks

Canyon Del Rey Blvd. (at Hwy 68)

Del Rey Oaks



You just can't argue with the quality and convenience of Starbucks. The location and laid back atmosphere of this one makes it a natural meeting place for Bella rides in Ft. Ord or the surrounding areas. Jamba Juice (see above) just opened here too, with their tasty smoothies and treats, making this location even more Bellicious!

Turtle Bay Taqueria

1301 Fremont Blvd.

Seaside

831-899-1010



See the menu description for their Monterey restaurant. Seaside was Turtle Bay's first location. It's a bit cramped when busy, and has a slightly smaller menu of offerings, but every bit as yummy.