

Island-Inspired

Who doesn't love a luau? If you can't swing a Hawaiian vacation, you can still savor the fine flair of the Islands right here in the Valley.



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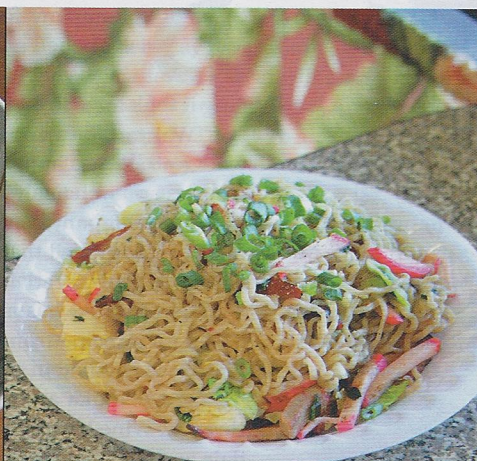
Tryst Café

21050 N. Tatum Blvd., Phoenix
480-585-7978
trystcafe.com

"I LOVE BREAKFAST, but I never get up early enough." That was the lament of a diner, sitting with two of her girlfriends one late afternoon, as they all nodded in agreement. Yet, in front of each sat a beautiful Hawaiian breakfast.

At this cute little strip mall café that just opened in December, the morning meal is served all day. And no matter the time, it just doesn't get more exciting than this tropical combo, which starts with a huge, artistically slanted white bowl of fragrant jasmine rice. Atop that sits crunchy shredded cabbage, mounds of succulent Kalua pork, two fried eggs and three crisp wonton chips the size of tea saucers. You splash on a little soy sauce, stab a wonton chip into the egg to release its golden, yolk goodness, and scoop. Tryst owners Sami and Lisa Khnanisho wrap the meat in banana leaves and slow smoke it for four hours.

If you're craving something even heartier, try the pork piled high on brioche, moistened with "Big Hoss" barbecue sauce, topped with coleslaw and served Island style with a side of potato salad. For even more flavor, you can lounge on the lanai, er, patio.



Aloha Kitchen

2950 S. Alma School Road, Mesa
480-897-2451
alohakitchen.com

RAY AND LYNN TSO brought their Hawaii-Asian flavors to the Valley in 1986, and they continue to pack in the crowds for authentic dishes like *pulehu* charbroiled salmon, doughy *char sui bao* buns (called here by their Hawaiian pidgin term, *manapua*) and fresh, imported *saimin* noodles bobbing in shrimp soup garnished with green onions and Japanese fishcake.

Just like the Islands' beloved streetside stands, Aloha's setting is casual, order-at-the-counter, and some of the most popular meals include the classic "plate lunches." OK, so the mood is white Styrofoam plates instead of gleaming white-sand beaches, but a combo of charbroiled Korean rib eye *bulgogi* and chicken *katsu* is the real deal, served with two scoops of sticky steamed rice and heavily mayo'd macaroni-potato salad.

Come on a Saturday and score the Hawaiian platter specials of tooth-tender Kalua pig with cabbage, or the Lau Lau platter of taro leaf-roasted pork, both served with *lomi* salmon (salmon-tomato-onion salad) and chicken long rice. By the end of your meal, you may be saying *kau-kau* (pronounced cow-cow) - Hawaiian slang for "food." Here's the other word you need to learn: *ono*, which means "delicious."



L&L Hawaiian BBQ

2501 W. Happy Valley Road,
Phoenix
623-434-4119
hawaiianbarbecue.com

ARIZONA IS WAY FAR away from the azure sea and tropical breezes of Hawaii. Yet a stop at L&L, part of the enormously popular Hawaiian fast-food chain, is a true feast of *local kine grindz* (pronounced low-koh kai-n grine-z, a pidgin phrase meaning "authentic food delights").

If you scoff at Spam, it's because you've never had it as *musubi*, the classic fat rice cake topped with a slightly rubbery but savory grilled chunk of chopped pork-shoulder product, slicked with sweet teriyaki sauce and wrapped in a cummerbund of nori. It's surprisingly, scrumptiously addictive. You can also top it with Portuguese sausage, chicken *katsu* or barbecue chicken.

The theme here is lots of food for little money, with loads of flavor. Lau Lau pork comes steamed in taro leaves, while the Kalua pork is slow-roasted with lots of smoke. One of the most decadent dishes is the *loco moco* plate, brimming with two hamburger patties over rice, smothered in brown gravy and topped with two eggs. In true Hawaiian style, don't expect a rush. Dishes are made to order, so relax, *brah*.