



FOOD

Baja California

You could be forgiven for thinking Tijuana is a low-budget Las Vegas. But beyond its seedy strip is Mexico's fastest-growing gastronomic hub

Best for food truck feasts

The hedonistic border town known to locals as 'TJ' is worth a stop en-route to Baja's beaches. At food truck collective Telefonica Gastropark, head straight to Ta'costeño for crispy clam tostadas with prickly pear cactus. Next door, find modern takes on traditional dishes, such as *chiles en nogada* topped with a walnut-based cream sauce at La Carmelita, named after the grandmother of chef José Rodrigo Figueroa, who trained at Michelin-starred L'Enclume in the UK's Lake District.

Meanwhile, American chef Chad White's bar-restaurant La Justina keeps it cool on the main strip with tempura oysters and refreshing cocktails served in jam jars and glass tea cups.

Best for seafood

A 90-minute road trip south of TJ brings you to Ensenada, where you'll find La Guerrerense — perhaps the best place to sink your teeth into Baja's amazing seafood, such as crunchy sea



urchin tostadas. Just down the road, Muelle 3 (Pier 3) serves classics such as seafood rice and *almohaditas*, pillow-shaped croquettes filled with cheesy prawns. laguerrerense.com

Best for tacos

On your way to Ensenada, stop off at Baja's lobster capital, Puerto Nuevo, for the most incredible lobster tacos and the strange but tasty Pacific geoduck, an enormous sea mollusc.

Best for wine tasting

No trip to Baja is complete without a journey along the Ruta del Vino to the Valle de Guadalupe, where more than 90% of Mexico's wine is produced. Chocolatey, berry-like wines such as La Lomita's Pagano Grenache, are paired with Baja cuisine at trendy new restaurant Bracero, just across the border in San Diego. Plus, there's exemplary sushi restaurant, Encuentro Guadalupe. bracerococina.com

Words: Laura Price, editor, *Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants* theworlds50best.com

From left: Near El Sargento, Baja California Sur; traditional *chiles en nogada*; oysters in soy sauce at Encuentro Guadalupe



EAT & STAY

After a day of wine tasting along the Ruta del Vino, spend the evening at Corazón de Tierra, where chef Diego Hernández-Baquedano designs a six-course tasting menu each day. Stay overnight at La Villa del Valle. Corazón's sister hotel, where the view of the stars in the night sky is second to none. corazondetierra.com lavilladelvalle.com

3 OF A KIND
BAJA-INSPIRED RESTAURANTS

1 COSME, NEW YORK
cosmenyc.com

2 BREDDOS, LONDON
breddostacos.com

3 LUCHA LOCO, SINGAPORE
luchaloco.com



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