



EMPIRE TODAY
CARPET & FLOORING

OUR BIGGEST SALE!

50% OFF*

Carpet & Flooring

50% OFF*

Padding & Materials

50% OFF*

Professional Installation

Select Styles.

Schedule a FREE In-Home Estimate!

Call **602-607-1434** or visit **EmpireToday.com/newspaper.**

*Discount is applied to the regular price of select styles of carpet, hardwood, tile, vinyl, and laminate, basic installation, standard padding, and materials. Excludes upgrades, stairs, take-up of permanently affixed flooring, non-standard furniture moving, other miscellaneous charges, and prior purchases. Product may not be sold separately from installation. Residential installations only. Promotion is not valid in AL, AR, GA, MN, MS and TN. Not available in all areas. Valid through 2/25/2024. Subject to change.
**On in-stock carpet and flooring styles only in select areas. Excludes floor prep. †A variety of unforeseen conditions, such as subfloor prep/leveling/repair, that may not be identifiable when establishing price estimate, may require additional cost. Sales (in some states) and installation provided by independent contractors. Licensure at EmpireToday.com. CSLB 1047108

© 2024 Empire Today, LLC

FOOD & DINING

WHAT TO EXPECT AT
AWARD-WINNING NEW
SUSHI RESTAURANT

UCHI



Bahar Anoshahr
Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

The long-awaited outpost of Austin-based, award-winning Japanese restaurant Uchi finally opened in Old Town Scottsdale on Feb. 1.

Japanese for “home,” Uchi was named after the first location of the restaurant, a red refurbished house in Austin where sushi master Tyson Cole and his team began service in 2003. The restaurant went on to earn a coveted James Beard Award. Twenty years later, Cole and Hai Hospitality are opening his seventh location, the first in Arizona, in the former Bandera building at the corner of Scottsdale Road and First Street.

The building’s western exterior belies a peaceful, modern Japanese interior. The wooden door opens onto a golden wall set behind the hostess desk, and the 207-seat dining room beyond is softened by curved wooden walls and hanging bubble lamps.

While the aesthetics are important, the real draw is the seafood menu, designed by an unlikely sushi master.

See **UCHI**, Page 5D



ABOVE: Specials at Scottsdale Uchi feature wagyu carpaccio, top left; lamb sirloin, right, and masu crudo. UCHI

TOP: Seating at Uchi, a Scottsdale restaurant by James Beard Award-winning chef Tyson Cole. PATRICK BREEN/THE REPUBLIC

The best places to eat in metro Phoenix for \$20 or less

Endia Fontanez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you have both “try new restaurants” and “stick to a budget” on your list of New Year’s resolutions, you’re not alone. The good news is that of the 100 essential metro Phoenix restaurants on the 2024 list, many of them are super affordable. There are plenty of spots in the Valley that serve mouthwatering food at reasonable prices, from carne asada tacos to classic hamburgers to Italian deli sandwiches.

Everyone’s budget is different, but for the sake of this list, we’ve included restaurants where one person can eat

for \$20 or less, even after a 20% tip.

Here’s your guide to the 20 best budget-friendly dining options in metro Phoenix.

Asadero Norte de Sonora

Asadero Norte de Sonora is a family-owned Mexican restaurant on 16th Street in Phoenix that serves tacos made with grilled beef, pastor, barbecue chicken or beef head for \$1.90 each. You can also get a whole chicken with corn tortillas, salsa, charro beans and vegetables for just \$11.75.

Details: 122 N. 16th St., Phoenix,

See **EATS**, Page 2D

Why Panda Express is going after another small business

Endia Fontanez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

2023 was shaping up to be a great year for Krystal Mack, owner of Trash Panda Vegan food truck.

In February, her business was an approved supplier of the Super Bowl LVII Business Connect program. She applied for a national trademark license in 2022 for Trash Panda Vegan and had big dreams of expanding her small business beyond Arizona.

Then in August, Mack received a cease-and-desist letter from Panda Restaurant Group Inc., the parent company of Panda Inn, Panda Express and

Hibachi-San. The letter asserted that her vegan food truck was interfering with their global fast-food franchise.

The corporation filed a dispute against the pending trademark for Trash Panda Vegan, claiming the food truck’s logo, name and overall business were too similar to Panda Express, and therefore harmful to the brand, according to court documents obtained by The Arizona Republic.

“Never have we been asked if we were Panda Express,” Mack told The Republic. “Not one time has anybody ever confused us with it.”

See **PANDA**, Page 6D



Seating at Uchi, a Scottsdale restaurant by James Beard Award-winning chef Tyson Cole. PATRICK BREEN/THE REPUBLIC



Subarashi is made with Mi Campo Reposado. UCHI

Uchi

Continued from Page 1D

How Tyson Cole became a sushi master

Originally from Florida, Cole wasn't exposed to a lot of international foods until he attended college and, even then, it was only because he needed money to fund his degree.

He took a job at Kyoto, a sushi restaurant in downtown Austin, Texas. Surrounded by staff who were primarily from Japan, he fell in love with the language, cultural aesthetics and the care they put into their art.

"Being a sushi chef is a craft. It's about the knife and how you cut things and how you feed people the perfect bite," he said. "It's taking that craft to every single seat."

Since he wasn't Japanese, they told him he couldn't make sushi. So he moved on to other restaurants where the chefs were more open to teaching him. He ended up at the highly respected Musashino restaurant in Austin, where he worked under chef Takehiko Fuse.

Fuse took Cole to Japan and even taught him to speak Japanese. Cole ended up moving to New York to stage at Bond Street sushi, but then returned to Musashino before setting out to open his own restaurant.

"I had this desire to create something new," he said. "So I'd go to farmers markets, Asian markets and Whole Foods, and what made the most sense with sashimi was fruit. Just combining the texture and the brightness made so much sense."

Now, it's not unusual to see combinations like amberjack and pear or blue fin and pickled apple on Uchi menus.



For his creativity with sushi, Chef Tyson Cole won the 2011 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southwest. UCHI

What's on Uchi Scottsdale's menu

The menu at Uchi includes hot and cool tastings like hot rock wagyu beef and hirame usuzukuri made with thinly sliced flounder, candied quinoa and olive oil. Other sections of the menu include sushi and sashimi,

yasaimono (vegetables), agemono (tempura) and desserts, like a Japanese cheesecake made with plum sorbet, date marmalade and pumpkin seed granola. Hot and cold tastings range from \$15 to \$26, nigiri and sashimi from \$5 to \$30, desserts from \$13 to \$16 and caviar from \$65 to \$95.

The specials at each Uchi location are different. Some Scottsdale specials include Wagyu Carpaccio, prepared with fried jalapeno, cured egg yolk, nuoc mam and chili oil. Masu crudo is made with ocean trout, Japanese sweet potato and makrut lime leaf. And lamb sirloin is served with roast kabocha puree, cranberry ginger relish and spicy pickled kabocha.

One of Cole's favorite combinations is tuna with watermelon and fish sauce. But the one dish he hopes every guest will try is the hama chili (\$24), made with yellowtail, ponzu, Thai chili and orange supremes.

What's on the bar menu at Uchi

Cole describes the drinks at Uchi as herbaceous and seasonal. The kara kyuri is made with yuzu, cucumber, Thai chili and sake, and the Japanese 77 is made with elderflower, lemon, sparkling wine and sake. Cocktails range from \$16 to \$21, while sake, wine and beer are \$7 to \$45.

How to visit Uchi Scottsdale

Uchi Scottsdale opens on Feb. 1. The daily happy hour runs 4-6 p.m. with half off some of the popular menu items.

Hours: 4-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 4-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Details: 3821 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale. uchi-restaurants.com.

Reach the reporter at BAnooshahr@azcentral.com. Follow @banooshahr on X, formerly known as Twitter.

SPECIAL SAVINGS EXTENDED FOR A LIMITED TIME!



Save on Walk-In Showers!



Save on Bathtubs!

\$2024 OFF*
a new
KOHLER LuxStone®
Bath or Shower

plus

NO Payments
NO Interest
for **12 months***

Increased Home Value:

Boost your home's worth with a new, stunning bathroom.

Enhanced Comfort:

Enjoy a spacious, efficient, and comfortable bath space.

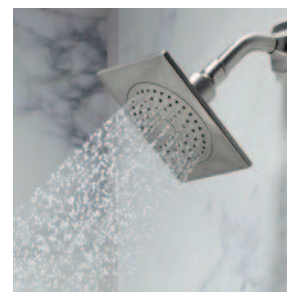
Low Maintenance:

Easy to clean non-porous walls.



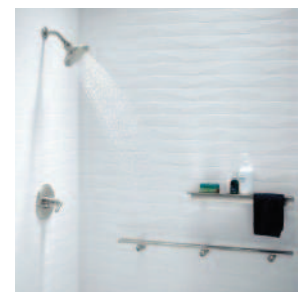
Accessories

Personalize your shower to provide support, seating and extra storage.



Showerheads

Stylish and sophisticated, these showerheads and spray experiences deliver superior performance.



Wall System

LuxStone walls are available in a variety of colors, patterns and combinations.



Call Now! Limited Time Offer!

480-477-5280

Our team is ready to take your call 7 days a week.



DESIGNED & ENGINEERED IN THE U.S.A

KOHLER
Certified Installer

*Ask for details, minimum purchase may be required. Limit one per household. (1) New orders only for appointments scheduled between February 1, 2024, through February 29, 2024. Not valid with any other offer or previous purchase. (2) Financing available with minimum purchase and approved credit. All financing is provided by unaffiliated third-party lenders. Price and payments may vary based on products and time of purchase. (3) Licensed and Insured: OR 213202 | WA PACIFBC810JJ | NV 0086030 | AZ 334398 | ID RCE59346 | IL 2818139 | UT13462431-5501. See website for all offer details. Offers are subject to change without notice until time of purchase.