



Cold Comfort

Craving cool, refreshing food, drinks and desserts this summer? Just chill. We've discovered 15 of the Valley's tastiest tonics and treats to weather the season.

BY KERIDWEN CORNELIUS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID MOORE





Spanish Mojito
**M-Bar, InterContinental
 Montelucia Resort & Spa**
 4949 E. Lincoln Drive, Paradise Valley
 480-627-3200
 pradolife.com

JUST AS REFRESHING as its Cuban cousin but better traveled, the M-Bar's Spanish Mojito (\$12) melds the flavors of Spain and Morocco – the country for which the bar is named. Bartenders simmer figs, fennel seeds, star anise and sugar into a syrup, then muddle it with fresh mint and lime juices, anoint the mixture with Flor de Cana four-year light rum, and garnish it gorgeously with star anise and a mint sprig. Like all great cocktails, the flavors blend so harmoniously it's almost impossible to distinguish each one. But, surrounded by the bar's dark wood fixings and sybaritic décor, you'll certainly enjoy trying.

Tanuki Peach Martini

Roka Akor
 7299 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale
 480-306-8800
 rokaakor.com

FOR APPROXIMATELY 700 YEARS, the Japanese have been distilling *shochu*, a vodka-like liquor made from barley, rice or sweet potatoes. Roka Akor's Shochu Lounge brings this uncommon alcohol into the 21st century, mixing it into creative cocktails and infusing it in-house with fresh fruits and exotic flora (look for it in colorful glass containers glinting above the bar). Come summer, nothing hits the spot like a Tanuki Peach Martini (\$6 at happy hour). The sweetness of fresh peach purée and peach liqueur is clipped by the dry, almost saline quality of Yokaichi shochu, distilled from barley. And the immaculate, purified, hand-shaved ice lends it an alpine chill. Also ask about the Shochuria (not found on the menu), which follows the structure of sangria, substituting the grape-based alcohols with lighter shochu and sake.

Drinks

Cucumber Refresher

True Food
 2502 E. Camelback Road, Ste. 135
 (Biltmore Fashion Park), Phoenix
 602-774-3488
 foxrc.com/true_food_kitchen.html

THE CUCUMBER REFRESHER (\$4) is as tall, slim and cool as many of the diners in True Food, and it's no wonder: Everything on the menu is designed to promote optimum health while satisfying the most sophisticated foodies. In this full-flavored drink, homemade organic honey lemonade enhances the vegetal sweetness of freshly juiced cucumber, and a splash of soda water adds sparkle. The beverage list is flush with refreshing alternatives, but our favorite is the New Dew (\$4), which blends the rainy taste of honeydew with the coolness of mint. After you've quenched your thirst, try the TLT sandwich (\$9), layered with tomato, lettuce and tempeh doing a tasty impersonation of bacon.

OG Margarita

Café ZuZu, Hotel Valley Ho
 6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale
 480-248-2000
 hotelvalleyho.com

IT MAKES SO MUCH SENSE, it's a wonder everybody doesn't do it. Tequila comes from agave, and agave is a natural sweetener, so why are so many margaritas made with artificial sweet-and-sour? Not the OG Margarita (OG is for "original") (\$10), which goes back to the Mexican basics: Partida Silver tequila, lime juice and organic agave nectar. No orange liqueur, no artificial flavors. The bartenders even squeeze the lime in a traditional Mexican press. Oh, and they consulted a tequila maker, who told them real margaritas are never rimmed with salt, so if you want that Americanization, you'll have to request it. But chances are, you'll find this cocktail so smooth, clean and generously spiked, you won't miss a thing.

Key Lime Martini

Avalon

7707 E. McDowell Road, Scottsdale

480-656-0010

avalon-scottsdale.com

IF EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT US ANYTHING, it's to approach fruity cocktails with caution. But you're in good hands at Avalon, where the key lime martini (\$10) is like a fresh, not-too-sweet version of its namesake pie. Stoli vanilla vodka, lime and pineapple juices are shaken and served in a glass rimmed with graham cracker crumbs and kissed with a meringue cookie. In the equally refreshing Amedalla (\$9), bartender Domenic Lombardo highlights one of his favorite combos: strawberries and fresh sage – a wintery herb whose botanical flavor marries surprisingly well with the fruits of summer. Lombardo is trying to steer the bar menu toward home-made infusions and molecular gastronomy (Chambord caviar, anyone?), because sometimes you have to throw caution to the wind.

Food

Trio of Ceviches

Deseo, Westin Kierland Resort

6902 E. Greenway Parkway, Scottsdale

480-624-1030

kierlandresort.com

D ESEO'S TRIO OF CEVICHERS (\$20) is the Picasso of ceviche: rooted in Hispanic tradition but inclined toward abstract art. It's comprised of three different riffs on marinated fish. In one, raw hamachi (yellowtail) is cured in serrano ham, spritzed with yuzu (a Japanese citrus) and topped with orange slices. Next is lobster *escabeche*, bathed in a barely-there Chardonnay vinegar sauce. The most fun is the "Millionaire Taco," a yuca shell filled with ahi tuna, hamachi and lobster that bursts with flavor from crispy onions, mango, Japanese mayo and pickled jalapeños. In South America, ceviche is traditionally served with corn. Here, it's popcorn – a playful touch that also cleanses the palate between bites. Crave more? Join the free Kierland Epicurean Club and reserve ahead for Thursday night ceviche tastings.

Chilled Edamame Soup

Sea Saw

7133 E. Stetson Drive, Scottsdale

480-481-9463

C HILLED SOUP IS THE NOT-SO-SECRET-ANYMORE answer to surviving summer. Instead of gazpacho, try this green alternative (\$6), as thick as pea soup but perfect for warmer weather. Like many things at Sea Saw, it's minimalist – made of puréed edamame, chicken stock and onions swirled with homemade ginger crème fraiche – but flavored with something totally foreign, in this case a caviar-like dollop of tonburi (broomcorn seed). Wash it down with a Garden Variety Martini (\$9) – a humble name for an extraordinary drink. Charbay green tea vodka, Square One cucumber vodka and Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur transform alchemically into the taste of a dewy Japanese garden.

Deseo's Trio of Ceviches



Fresh Mint's green papaya salad



Tuna Tartare Tacos

The Greene House

15024 N. Scottsdale Road (Kierland Commons),
Ste. 100, Scottsdale
480-889-9494

foxrc.com/the_greene_house.html

FUSION OFTEN PIQUES your interest more than your palate, but The Greene House pulls off this appetizer (\$13) with aplomb. The concept is Mexican but the flavors all Japanese, and the stroke of genius is the fried wonton “taco shells.” They’re drizzled with wasabi aioli (which tames the wasabi’s sinus-burning tendencies into a mere pleasant zing), then filled with avocado and raw tuna splashed with aged soy, topped with Napa cabbage in a miso vinaigrette, and sprinkled with snipped chives and sesame seeds. The taco trio is paired with a nest of seaweed that’s redolent of the ocean and as green as fresh grass. The whole thing is fresh yet bold, with just the right kick of saltiness and a multi-act play of textures.

Ibiza Sangria Chicken Sandwich

Switch Bakery

2603 N. Central Ave., Phoenix
602-264-2295

switchofarizona.com

THERE ARE SLICED GRAPES and apples in this sandwich (\$10). Do we need to say more? Yes, because there are also juicy chunks of roast chicken, a tart smear of goat cheese, a crunchy pile of greens and shredded carrots, two pillows of soft bread and the *pièce de résistance*: sangria dressing. It’s substantial enough for the hefty appetite, yet fresh and light enough that you could eat it beachside in Ibiza without ruining your bikini figure. Obviously, you’re not in Ibiza, but sitting in Switch’s umbrella-shaded, alley-like patio, you can imagine yourself in the café-lined streets of Spain – a vision that gets more realistic with every sip of sangria.

Green Papaya Salad

Fresh Mint

13802 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale
480-443-2556

FOREIGN-FILM BUFFS who saw the luscious Vietnamese film *The Scent of Green Papaya* know how seductive this unripe fruit can be. At the vegan-Asian restaurant Fresh Mint, it’s also beautiful: a colorful tower of light green shavings flecked with carrots and red cabbage (\$8). Cool and crisp but shyly flavored, green papaya takes on the taste of the sauce that saturates it – in this case, a piquant tamarind dressing with an afterthought of hot chile. Sliced basil adds a refreshing fillip, chopped peanuts contribute crunch, and faux beef and thinly-sliced fried tofu provide protein. Wash it down with vegan Thai iced tea, topped with coconut milk that, when stirred in, turns the sweet concoction the color of carrot juice.

Dessert

Green Tea Cheesecake

Yasu Sushi Bistro

4316 E. Cactus Road, Phoenix
602-787-9181

AFTER YOU’VE EATEN THE BEST, melt-in-your-mouth-est sushi in town (about 90 percent of which is jetted in from Tokyo’s famed Tsukiji Fish Market, says owner Yasu Hashino), order dessert. Drag your cute wooden spoon through the dense, earthy cheesecake seasoned with green tea powder imported from Japan (\$7.50); smear it in the green tea ice cream and the squiggle of chocolate sauce; swig a little sake; then nibble on the garnish of *yamamoto* – a Japanese mountain peach that resembles an alien raspberry and tastes like the love child of a raspberry and a strawberry. Is it summer outside? Inconceivable.

Fruit and Herb Ice Creams

Sweet Republic

9160 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale
480-248-6979

sweetrepublic.com

YOU CAN’T GET FRESHER or more local than Sweet Republic’s fruit- and herb-flavored ice creams (\$2.95-5.50). Owners Helen Yung and Jan Wichayanuparp pluck many of the herbs from Singh Farms in Scottsdale, and devoted customers tote in sacks of citrus from their backyards. That, plus unusual flavor combinations, is why their creations often elicit the same response from customers: open eyes wide, exclaim “Wow!”, then devour incredulously. The intensely herbal basil lime sorbet instantly jets you to Italy. Miraculously creamy grapefruit sorbet gets an unexpected berry flavor from strawberry mint, a rare variety of the herb. And the luscious, floral lavender ice cream may be the most sensuous thing you’ll ever spoon. Look for them at the Shea Boulevard shop, Old Town Scottsdale Farmers’ Market and First Fridays in Phoenix.

Raw Pie

Mandala Tearoom

7027 E. Fifth Ave., Scottsdale
480-423-3411

mandalatearoom.com

RAW FOODISTS CONTEND that uncooked food retains its nutrients and is easier for your body to convert into energy. And when it’s 115 degrees, you need all the energy you can get. Mandala Tearoom’s desserts are always organic-vegan and sometimes raw. On weekends only, try the *crème de la crème* of raw, vegan desserts: the raw pie (\$7). Flavors vary, but it’s usually something like the

The Herb Box's honey-pistachio ice cream sandwiches



banana mixed berry, which is what a strawberry banana smoothie would taste like if it were pie. Cashews, macadamias, coconut milk, bananas and berries are whipped into a mousse-like filling, spread over a date-pecan crust and topped with fresh fruit. This summer, Mandala is launching a bakery, so you can order their desserts or look for them in other cafés.

Honey-Pistachio Ice Cream Sandwiches

The Herb Box

20707 N. Pima Road, Stes. 140-145, Scottsdale

480-289-6180

theherbbox.com

NOTHING SAYS SUMMER like fun, frozen finger food. And even though Chef Becky Windels' button-cute, round ice cream sandwiches (\$10) bear no resemblance to the mass-produced choco-vanilla bricks you're used to, they'll still transport you back to your childhood. Windels churns her own pistachio ice cream (a difficult flavor to master), and it's sublime: fresh, genuinely green, opulently creamy, almost alcoholic tasting. It's sliced into two hockey pucks, each bookended by pistachio-freckled honey wafers that crackle when you bite into them. Chilly, finger-licking heaven. For maximum kid-meets-adult effect, sit

at the breezy, open bar of the cool-colored DC Ranch location, dangling your feet from one of the high chairs.

Sarsaparilla Vanilla Bean Float

Saguaro Blossom, Four Seasons Resort

10600 E. Crescent Moon Drive, Scottsdale

480-515-5700

fourseasons.com/scottsdale

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN since you sipped sarsaparilla? For many of us, since we were in the single digits. And there's something ironically satisfying about having it again at the Four Seasons. Especially given that it's made with sharply flavored Sioux City sarsaparilla and handmade vanilla bean ice cream, then crowned with almost transparent crackles of richly honeyed Florentines. The float (\$5) tastes better with every sip, as the vanilla/sarsaparilla flavors meld. Earn your dessert by first ordering the unbelievably fresh-tasting carne asada or halibut tacos, both grill-icious and served with tomatillo salsa that's more like guacamole sauce.

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PM

The Four Seasons' sarsaparilla
vanilla bean float

