

PALM SPRINGS LIFE

Best of the **BEST**

OUR FAVORITE PLACES TO EAT,
DRINK, PLAY, SHOP, AND EXPLORE
IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY.



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WATCH

WHERE TO PEOPLE WATCH, SEE A
COVER BAND, CATCH A DRAG SHOW,
HANG WITH HIPSTERS, AND MORE.



From left: Arrive Palm Springs; The Pink Cabana at Sands Hotel & Spa.

BEST POOLSIDE DINING



Admit it: We all like to watch. We also like to eat. Combine those two with 269 days of sunshine and an abundance of hotel bars and restaurants, and you'll understand why the Coachella Valley is the mecca of poolside dining. Let the waitstaff serve you a tasty meal while sun-worshipping guests serve up the eye candy. From the well-heeled patrons at Sands Hotel & Spa to the lithe bodies on display at Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs, La Serena Villas, and Margaritaville Resort Palm Springs, there's something for everyone. Here are our favorites:

The Colony Club

Sit under the terrace's green and white striped awning, gaze across the pool to the bronze gods and goddesses relaxing in its sparkling water, and you'll know you've landed in the chicest poolside dining spot in town. Against the backdrop of Mount San Jacinto, order a zesty bloody mary and enjoy a brunch of brioche French toast, a prime rib Reuben with Gruyère and creamy coleslaw, or the Cobb salad. After dark, feast on bacon and caramelized onion tartelettes, pan-roasted sea bass, or Valencian-style paella. The centerpiece of The Colony Palms Hotel and Bungalows, The Colony Club is the perfect spot to celebrate a special occasion or to pop the question — in this case, "Can I make a reservation for Saturday night?"

The Pink Cabana

If Martyn Lawrence Bullard's stylish homage to a classic tennis club at Sands Hotel & Spa doesn't transport you to another world (it will), grab an outdoor table and let the pool's Marrakesh-meets-St. Tropez vibe and chef Jason Niederkorn's new menu complete the journey. Come for brunch and start with the roasted tomato gazpacho, which may be the best you've ever tasted, before indulging in the Spanish chorizo and baked eggs or the Sands Benedict with Hawaiian red crab. For dinner, try the arancini with DOP fontina and red wine truffle sauce before savoring the Alaskan halibut with fava beans, corn, and fingerling potatoes. Carnivores will rejoice in the Rosewood Ranch

"Chef's Cut" with thrice cooked tomatoes, farmer's market vegetables and beurre rouge.

Azúcar

This colorful restaurant at La Serena Villas pays loving tribute to Frida Kahlo, whose image adorns the walls of its open-air dining room, which along with limited outdoor seating, provides ample views of the swanky pool. For lunch, tacos are in tall order: Choose between the California halibut, the surprisingly delicious cauliflower, or the filet mignon tacos, all served with Spanish rice. At dinner, the Dungeness crab-stuffed poblano peppers are to die for, as is the surf and turf served with blistered heirloom tomatoes and chimichurri. Save room for the toffee brownie with salted caramel gelato.

Arrive Palm Springs

You needn't be a hotel guest to enjoy a beverage or a hearty breakfast or lunch in this airy poolside spot. The Mediterranean-influenced covered patio and adjacent poolside tables provide ample space for dining and even better people-watching. Start your day with the crunchy French toast or the breakfast burrito. At high noon, try the spicy fried chicken sandwich or the shrimp tacos. Food service stops at 5 p.m., but the bar stays open until 10 p.m. Drop by on Wednesday nights, order a craft cocktail, and for \$10, enjoy a dive-in movie.

The Barn Kitchen

While only one long table offers a poolside view, and registered guests of Sparrows Lodge get first dibs, there is additional seating under the vine-covered arbor. This boutique hotel catering to a 21-and-up clientele makes the list because of its tranquil Carmel-by-the-Sea ambiance and its rustic American cuisine. Try the chicken or hangar steak sandos for lunch and the mole for dinner, and you'll realize why locals keep coming back for more and some guests never leave the hotel grounds. — Michael Arkin