

# The Local's Guide To Eating In Sayulita

## The Best of the Best

**El Itacate.** There's so much to say about El Itacate that I'll spread it out because it makes several lists. Their main thing here is steak tacos, but EVERYTHING on the menu is great. It's THE place to go if you love cheese, because they make a chile and burrito that's wrapped in fried cheese instead of a tortilla. They have a hibiscus taco that vegetarians will drool over and they bring out 3 trays of salsa, beans, fire grilled onions, and pico de gallo for you to top your dishes with. First place I eat at every time I get into town.

**Mary's Tacos.** They have the best and most filling shrimp and fish tacos in Sayulita. Everything is cooked to perfection and topped with so many fresh ingredients.



**Ruben's Deli.** It's right on the main street heading to the beach and serve up some buttery grilled sandwiches with a side of pasta. There are so many good choices like the Reuben, the Patty Melt, and the Pastrami. The cold pasta selection is amazing as well, but I never choose anything except for the Asian noodle salad. For a sandwich place to make this list says a lot.

**Barracuda.** This is one of, if not, the nicest place to eat in Sayulita. They serve up the best cooked seafood of any restaurants in the area. I highly recommend getting the seafood molcajete – a volcanic cauldron filled with giant prawns, octopus, arranchera steak, bacon wrapped peppers, and big slabs of queso all swimming in the most delicious sauce. Come to think of it, it's more of a surf and turf molcajete.



**Organika.** This place makes the list because I love eating all their healthy bowls to break up the heaviness of everything else in the town. I can't believe I'm saying this, because it sounds very LA and San Francisco, but their acai bowls is the best way to start your morning.

**Yolanda's Chicken.** I must eat here at least 3-5 times a week for lunch. It's not a restaurant or a stall, so much as a giant grill on a side street that's constantly firing up whole chickens. For 50 pesos, I get a quarter chicken with rice, tortillas and salsa. It's almost the perfect lunch.

**El Itacate.** Here we go. For a steak place, there are some great options for vegetarians. I highly recommend the hibiscus (jamaica) tacos. The stuffed chilis are great too because you choose to have it filled with a mixed of sautéed vegetables. If you are hungry and love cheese, get the 'Itacate' filled with jamaica. You'll smell and see it before you even sit down because there's also a skillet of cheese being fried for someone's order.

**Loro Cafe.** This place serves up a number of vegan and vegetarian dishes including a take on ramen and pho. They do a mean Vietnamese spring roll.



## Best Seafood In Sayulita

Not only do these places offer the best seafood, they are probably the nicest and priciest restaurants in Sayulita. You don't have to dress up, but maybe put on some shoes or sandals. There's only 3 restaurants on this list, because you'll find seafood at almost every restaurant. These just take it one step up.

**Barracuda.** My favorite of the bunch. The seafood molcajete is why I come, but I like going with others so we can share multiple dishes. The fish is always a fresh catch of the day and cooked to just the right degree of doneness. Every dish will delight. Also, check out the pulpo.



**La Rustica.** This is on par with Barracuda for serving up the most beautiful dishes. I love the blue and white enamel plates and bowls that everything is served in. La Rustica is an Italian restaurant, but they serve up the single best bite of fish taco in Sayulita. The only problem with the tacos are they almost too pretty to eat and a little on the smaller side. I recommend getting the grilled octopus here.

**Don Pedro's.** Definitely one of the splashier place in town. You can sit in the restaurant with a view of the beach or right on the beach in the evening complete with tiki torches and the feet of sand on your feet. Their selection is nothing imaginative, but everything is just done at a high level.

## Best Steak/Chicken In Sayulita

**Trattoria Toscana.** Right across from Barracuda is one of 5 Italian restaurants in Sayulita. I don't much care for their pastas, but this is *the* place if you want a big steak. I get the more reasonably priced 'Cowboy' steak that resembles a mini version of their 1 kg Tomahawk. This is definitely for 2 people. This might actually be the most expensive place in town.

**El Itacate.** My favorite little spot makes it onto another list. While you don't get the whole steak like at Trattoria Toscana, you do get the best meat in any taco or burrito in Sayulita here. The arranchera just melts in your mouth. They serve such generous portions that I always split each taco into two. This is by far the best taco value in town for the amount of meat you get.

**Hotel Oz.** The tapas restaurant the Hotel Oz has a lot of small plate options, but you can get some nice chunks of meat here too.

**Yolanda's.** This is my go to chicken place. I like mine on the bone and fresh off the fire. It's one of the best value in town as well and a local favorite.





**El Pollo Surfo.** This little shack along the row of food installs perpendicular to the river should not be overlooked for its appearance. Their flame broiled chicken is on par with Yolanda's, but sometimes I prefer this place because their tomato salsa is so good.

## Best Places To Eat And Drink On The Beach In Sayulita

**Coco's Beach Club.** When we fancy a nice lounge chair and umbrella with a big margarita in our hands, this is where we go. Whenever we're there, I like to remark that this is what it feels like to be on holiday. They've got a menu that has way too many items, but I highly recommend getting their seafood tostadas and ceviches to snack on while you drink under the sun.

**Azul Pitaya Beach Hotel & Resort.** If there's even a spot that remotely resembles a 'place to be seen', it's here. The new hotel and resort is right on the beach with a nice open terrace to hang out on.

**El Patio.** This is our favorite spot for an afternoon michelada. You get a generous portion of michelada mix with a beer and then can keep topping it off with another beer until you finish the whole thing. They serve up some nice small plates too.

**Bar La Isla.** Cross the river and you get a more quiet and rustic beach spot with one of my favorite margaritas on the sand. Sometimes I just come out here to nap on the beach and then wake up and have a drink and some tostadas. This is sort of a more chill and less crowded doppelganger of Coco's as far as the cuisine goes.

**El Costeno.** This constantly packed restaurant serves up a lot of Mexican tourists. It's on the beach, but very much a no frills type of place that serves up generous portions of grilled fish and the largest margarita you will find in Sayulita. Don't get tempted by the extra grande one. It's like 10 margaritas in one.

## Best Tacos In Sayulita

This is a hard category to crack. I could have easily broken it down into multiple categories, but this list would be ever longer than it is now. The only category that I broke out of this are 'street tacos' which you can find next. Every place on this list serves handmade tortillas. You can't start out any better than that.

**El Itacate.** I don't need to say anything else about El Itacate.

**Mary's.** My second favorite taco place makes the list because of their Baja style fish and shrimp tacos. I like the Sayulita Taco and the Mary's Taco because of all the extra things they put on top. And their chipotle sauce. Sometimes, I just want to bring food from other places and ask if I can use their chipotle sauce.

**Naty's Cocina.** This kitchen serves up a lot of the classic tacos you find in Mexico, but oddly don't find in Sayulita. That's probably because a lot of these dishes take hours to prepare so it's a different type of eating experience. The step up restaurant is almost like a cafeteria, where you choose from the different trays and bowls that include a mole and cactus taco that I can still taste as I'm writing this.

This is probably one of the cheapest tacos in Sayulita and I much prefer it to the street tacos, which only fill me up with tortillas.



**El Conejo.** I should say that this place is not 4th down the list. It's just too hard to rank them. This hidden away restaurant and bar serves up their own brand of tequila and has the best after happy hour taco menu. It's certainly the most unique tacos you'll find in Sayulita. Definitely sit upstairs in their lounge area and enjoy a break from the crowd because a lot of people don't even know this place serves food.

**The Real Fish Taco.** I almost wanted to hate this place because of their name. I came in a little biased, but I came out reluctantly agreeing with their confidence. The tacos are not big, they are not the cheapest, but the fish is sublime.

## Best Street Tacos In Sayulita

I love street tacos in Mexico. I don't really love them that much in Sayulita, to be honest. By street tacos, I mean these carts with a giant rotating 'trompo' of meat. This is Mexico's version of fast food and late night eating. In other parts of the country, you can find these tacos al pastor for as little as 5 pesos. In Sayulita, they run between 15-20 pesos.

**Taqueria El Chappi's.** This is one runs a little 'further' out of the main area, so I almost never see a tourist eating here. I come because they are one of two places that serves tongue, cheeks, and brain tacos. All their tacos cost almost the same as the little street tacos you get around the square, but they taste so much better and you get a lot more along with a big assortment of toppings.

**Tacos al Ivan.** This is one of those places I'm talking about, but everyone eats here when its 3 am and you're taking a breather from one of the nearby bars. It's definitely a part of the Sayulita nightlife experience.

**Rinconcitos.** This is another spot that has been around for as long as I've been visiting Sayulita. These ladies serve up some fast tacos during the day. I think they moved to a more permanent spot that's off the street now.

**Birria Cart.** I don't recall ever knowing the name of this place, but it is a little cart that you'll find a crowd standing around during the daytime near the seafood market and Rinconcitos. They serve up these fried birria tacos that are artery clogging good.

## Best Far East Food In Sayulita

There's enough variety in Sayulita that you don't get bored of the food scene and complain about having too many Mexican meals. These are the places that take you a little further East than the rest of the offerings.

**Zakar.** This restaurant opened a few years ago by a couple from Berkeley, California. They brought down their Moroccan restaurant and offer some some beautiful tagines and stews. I strongly recommend any of their lamb options.

**Achara.** The is another newish restaurant that serves pretty decent Thai food. Their curries and pad Thai are pretty close to what you'd find in most Thai restaurants around the world. It's a little on the upscale side as far as their Sayulita interior decorations go.

**Loro Cafe.** There aren't any proper pho or ramen options in Sayulita, but Loro Cafe comes close with their take on the noodle soups.



## Best Places To Get Filled Up For Less

**Bichos.** This place by the Iguana tree is the type of no-frills taco and quesadilla place you find all over Mexico. Pick your meat and then pile it up with over 15 different salsas and toppings.

**Loncheria Los Nieves.** Surfing takes a lot of energies, so this torta place serves up some carb heavy sandwiches that are priced very low.

**Venezia.** This is the most popular place for pizza in Sayulita. I wouldn't say its the best, but you get the most pizza for your pesos here. 99 pesos gets you a giant pie that you can share for 2 or 3 people.

## Best Places For A Nice Drink In Sayulita

Just because you're drinking barefoot does not mean you're getting anything less than some of the best cocktails, mezcal and tequila in Mexico.

**Escondido.** This place should be more popular than it is. They make the best and most inventive cocktails in Sayulita.

**Cava.** A close second to Escondido, in my opinion is Cava, which delight you with their creative cava and mezcal based cocktails. I'd put this number one if what you're after is a tequila or mezcal based cocktail.

**La Zouave.** A super popular hangout spot for the blondest crowd in Sayulita. I'm just calling it like I see it. Not the best in any one category, but they've got good cocktails, wine and tapas.

**El Patio.** More of a day drinking spot, but this place has excellent micheladas and margaritas.

**Lucid.** If you like a little tucked away spot where you can drink moscow mules out of copper cups, then this is the place to go.

## Things You Have To Try In Sayulita

Lastly, there are a few other things you'll find in different locations around Sayulita. Try these if you bump into them.

**Banana Bread.** You can find these from the people walking around on the beach selling them for 50 pesos. Get it. They are so moist and delicious.

**Churros.** There are a couple of vendors selling freshly fried churros. You can get it 'relleno', where it's stuffed with chocolate or caramel.

**Ceviche.** It might look sketchy being scooped from a plastic bucket on the beach, but so far I haven't gotten sick from these ceviche tostadas.

**Elote.** Hot corn with mayonnaise, butter, chili, and lime. Yum.



## The 7 Best Bars in Sayulita, Mexico



Sayulita may not be known for its buoyant party scene, and it's undoubtedly more laid-back than nearby Puerto Vallarta. But that doesn't mean you'll find yourself at a loss for options when it comes to delicious cocktails and interesting bars. From beach bars with swings to chic lounges and a palapa restaurant-turned-salsa club, these are the seven best bars in Sayulita.

### **La Rústica**

Bar, Restaurant, Mediterranean, \$\$\$

There's no doubt you'll want to visit this place more than once. The contemporary minimalist décor is bound to pull you in from the sidewalk and, once inside, its wood-fired pizzas and craft cocktails will keep you in there for a while. Skilled bar staff prepare unique concoctions with smoky [mezcal](#) and hibiscus flowers that are perfect for day or night. The music tends to be more on the indie rock spectrum, so expect a more laid-back vibe.

### **Escondido Bar**

Bar, Tapas, \$\$\$

Though its name translates into "hidden bar," this gem is located in the [center of town](#). It specializes in wine and house cocktails like the Sayulita Sunset, made with mezcal, fresh grapefruit juice, lime juice, Sprite and fernet. The atmosphere





is laid-back, and the music is chill. Grab a spot in one of the colorful seats, and spend a cozy evening overlooking the main plaza. If you get hungry, try ordering a panini and small bites from the menu.

### **Atico Breakfast Cafe & Bar**

Cafe, Mexican

The highlight of this place is its quirky atmosphere, with swings at the bar that are the most coveted seats in the house. The funky artwork covering the walls and ceiling adds a lot of character to this lively spot, where you can come for breakfast and stay for drinks. Who doesn't want to sip on a tamarind margarita or a smoky mezcal cocktail with chili salt while swaying on a swing?

### **La Esperanza**

Restaurant, Healthy

This health food café, restaurant and bar focuses on clean living and healthy foods. In addition to its organic offerings and meals that cater to vegans and vegetarians, La Esperanza is popular for its margaritas, mezcal cocktails and [artisan beer](#). Its cocktails use only fresh ingredients, and the business makes an effort to develop relationships with local [raicilla](#) masters – an agave distillate similar to mezcal – to promote sustainable practices.

### **El Barrilito**

Bar, Pub Grub, \$\$\$

El Barrilito is a pub and sports bar that serves great BBQ chicken wings, as well as excellent signature cocktails at reasonable prices. It has a very relaxed vibe, and many screens that make it an ideal gathering spot for sports matches. The bar stools on the edge of the street are a quirky addition not to be missed.

### **Bar Le Zouave**

Bar, Tapas, \$\$\$

Decorated in red tones inside and out, this bohemian chic bar at the Moroccan-inspired [Petit Hotel Hafa](#) is the place to head after dark. The grapefruit and habanero chili margarita made with fresh ingredients may be one of the best cocktails you'll ever have, but feel free to ask the skilled bartender for other recommendations. Arrive early if you prefer a quiet, relaxing environment, as it tends to fill up later.

### **Don Pedro's**

Restaurant, Mediterranean, \$\$\$

Located on Sayulita's main beach, Don Pedro's offers a rustic fine dining experience. Sitting under a massive thatched palapa, the restaurant serves Mediterranean-style cuisine with a Mexican twist and amazing cocktails. From October to June, Monday nights are dedicated to salsa dancing starting at 8pm, though you can come at 7pm if you want to have a salsa lesson beforehand. On Thursdays, they have gypsy flamenco at 7pm.

# The Best Vegetarian & Vegan Restaurants- Sayulita



As vegetarian and vegan options have increased across the globe in recent years, travelers to Mexico will have noticed a significant shift towards vegan and vegetarian lifestyles in the country. Despite being a small town, Sayulita in particular has an impressive array of vegan and vegetarian restaurants, so we've picked out the very best of them.

## **Yah-Yah**

*Cafe, Mexican*

The extensive coffee menu is enough of a reason to pay Yah-Yah a visit at its new trendy location, but there are a few good vegan options too. The vegan bagel sandwiches, vegan bliss balls and healthy smoothie bowls are among the highlights of the menu, and pairing them with a cup of strong coffee is guaranteed to set you up for a day in Sayulita.

## **Veggie Land**

*Restaurant, Vegetarian, \$\$\$*

One of the few places in town that fully commits to serving vegan and vegetarian cuisine, Veggie Land is open all day and is influenced by traditional Mexican cooking methods. The owners source fresh produce from local farmers, allowing for a farm-to-table experience that appeals to any type of eater. Some of the menu's highlights include the taco mestizo, an homage to tacos al pastor prepared with soy instead of pork, and a creamy soy-based pasta alfredo.

### **Atico Breakfast Cafe and Bar**

*Cafe, Mexican*

This vibrant café serves vegetarian and vegan breakfasts. The staff are very accommodating, and all vegetarian dishes can be adapted into vegan versions on request. There are delicious dishes like wholemeal pancakes and perfectly poached eggs, but the highlight of this place is its quirky atmosphere. With swing seats at the bar and funky artwork covering the walls and ceilings, this place is the epitome of what you want [Sayulita](#) to be.

### **Coffee on the Corner**

*Cafe, Mexican*

This charming corner café is not fully vegan or vegetarian, but there are enough options to suit everyone's needs. It even serves Bulletproof coffee which is popular with the paleo and keto diet crowd. Some of the best non-animal-product items on the menu are the enchiladas and the potatoes with veggies. The coffee alone is worth the visit.

### **Tierra Viva**

*Restaurant, Mexican, \$\$\$*

This restaurant might not seem vegetarian, but is incredibly accommodating. Want the salmon and avocado maki without the salmon? Just ask. No request is too weird here. There is a diverse range of items on the menu and, though the restaurant specializes in seafood, the vegetarian choices are next level. For lunch, a cheese and avocado panini, or try a feta and tomato bruschetta followed by the vegetarian fajitas for dinner. The breakfasts here do steal the show and it's hard to decide whether to start your day with pancakes or the mixed veggie bowl. Or try two eggs, any style, topped with hollandaise sauce and your choice of tortilla or toast. A really cozy atmosphere with attentive staff and innovative dishes make dining here a pleasure.

### **El Itacate**

*Cafe, Mexican, Vegetarian*

While this taco restaurant does serve a lot of meat-based dishes, the meatless section on the menu takes up quite a bit of space and is truly delicious. Some of the vegetarian tacos on offer include garlic mushrooms, [poblano chile](#) strips with cheese and carrot tinga, a dish normally made from shredded chicken in a chipotle and tomato sauce. Oh, and the hibiscus flower quesadilla is a must. El Itacate is located near the main square, and combined with the reasonable prices and delicious dishes ensures a steady flow of customers.

### **Orangy**

*Juice Bar, Healthy*

This aptly named juice bar exclusively serves vegetarian and vegan options, ranging from what they call "liquid breakfasts" (juice blended with yogurt) and amazing smoothies to a more "solid" menu. The café serves dishes with locally sourced produce and the favourite seems to be Orangy's breakfast bowls, all served with fruit and healthy toppings including chia, flax and granola. It's the ideal healthy start to the day.

### **Yeikame**

*Cafe, Mexican, \$\$\$*

This family-run restaurant serves mostly Mexican dishes, however, Yeikame also pays homage to the local indigenous culture through the murals featuring Huichol elements on its brightly coloured walls. While not strictly vegetarian, the restaurant serves quite a few meat-free dishes, like the blue corn quesadillas and the huevos rancheros. There's also a vegetarian Mexican plate and tacos with poblano strips and corn – all just as delicious as the traditional dishes.

### **La Esperanza**

*Restaurant, Healthy*





An Aztec design and vibrant color palette give a welcoming Mexican boho vibe. La Esperanza is an innovative health food café that creates and serves conscious and nutritious food for the health of their community. Its intention is to educate individuals about nutrition and sustainability, serving a variety of organic superfoods. The attention to detail is apparent in the pristinely presented dishes and it even offers vegan beer.

### **Alquimista**

*Restaurant, Mexican*

Just three blocks from the beach, Alquimista serves Mexican comfort food with simple, fresh ingredients. Again, not a completely vegetarian restaurant, but there are some great choices. For breakfast, it has to be the chilaquiles, which is two eggs, any style, with red or green salsa, beans, avocado, cheese and cream, served with a cup of coffee. For lunch it has to be the vegetarian tacos with sweet potato fries and salsa verde.

### **ChocoBanana**

*Cafe, Mexican, \$\$\$*

Located right on the plaza, ChocoBanana is the perfect place for people watching while enjoying the super tasty food. With vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, this little café offers local cuisine and its huevos rancheros come highly recommended. Open for breakfast, lunch and brunch with outdoor seating, table service, free wife and wheelchair access, the restaurant is very accommodating and the staff only add to the wonderful atmosphere. The carrot cake is the best, especially when enjoyed while sitting outside with a freely brewed coffee as you watch the world go by.

### **La Rustica**

*Restaurant, Italian, \$\$\$*

This sleek restaurant has a monochrome palette and air of modernity, making it stand out for all the right reasons. La Rustica isn't primarily a vegetarian restaurant, but it has some pretty good choices for a pizza place. Vegetarian options include the margarita, veggie and fungi – but if you're not in the mood for something so filling, we recommend opting for a cheese and wine board – the perfect way to end a chilled evening.