

RESTAURANTS

THE BEST PLACES TO DINE DURING A PANDEMIC

Our annual guide to the Best Places to Eat and the 2020 restaurant of the year

This year's Best Places to Eat looks a little different. That's because 2020 changed the way we eat.

Instead of the usual bucket-list ranking, this year's guide is meant to help people connect with restaurants and put food on the table during the pandemic.

Sometimes that means actually going out to eat, places where you can dine outdoors while social distancing. Also

highlighted are the hottest newcomers that opened against incredible odds.

For many people, though, takeout still feels like the smartest solution, so a good chunk of this guide focuses on food prepared to-go by some of the best chefs in the OC, ranging from family-style feasts to special occasion splurges.

One annual tradition that remains in place is the announcement of Restaurant of the Year.



MORE INSIDE

Brad A. Johnson's Best Places to Eat can be found inside today's newspaper. His choices can also be found at [OCREGISTER.COM/75BEST/](https://www.ocregister.com/75BEST/).

It's a very personal pick for 2020. It's the one restaurant in a year's worth of dining that stood out among all the others, and in which I found the most solace in these very trying



PHOTOS BY BRAD A. JOHNSON — STAFF

Tom yum with freshwater prawns from Thai Avenue in Garden Grove for takeout. Brad A. Johnson says you simply won't find better tom yum anywhere in California — maybe in the whole country — than what they serve at this seafood-centric restaurant.



Charred figs, whipped blue cheese and candied walnuts on toast from the takeout menu at Marché Moderne in Newport Beach.

