

# S B L S

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REFRESH AND REFUEL



# grab AND go

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*DINING MAY LOOK DIFFERENT THESE DAYS, BUT RECENT CHANGES DON'T SACRIFICE FLAVOR. SO WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO BRING THE RESTAURANT TO YOUR LIVING ROOM OR DINE ON A SEASIDE PATIO, HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR GO-TO'S FOR DINNER TO-GO.*

Little Dom's Seafood Squid Ink Mafaldine  
Candlesticks & glasses, The Blue Door



## Little Dom's Seafood

I nestle myself on a blanket on Carpinteria Beach as the scent of garlic wafts out of my to-go bag. Little Dom's Seafood on Linden Avenue is an expansion of a Los Feliz staple, bringing Italian seafood specialties to Carpinteria. Train horns blare in the distance as I start with my appetizer, roasted Brussels sprouts. You don't have to tell me to eat my vegetables twice; these perfectly charred Brussels are smothered in bacon bits, leaving my tastebuds beckoning for more.

Next, I indulge in squid ink mafaldine, an endeavor that exudes Japanese influence. The black pasta is coated in a glossy layer of uni butter and topped with sesame seeds and green onions. My initial bite is an explosion of unique flavor, culminating with a kick of spice.

My final dish of the evening is a fish piccata served with French beans and glazed in a lemon butter sauce. The golden fillet is flaky and pairs well with the tangy sautéed French beans; it is an understated dish with bold flavor. As the sun sets on my picnic dinner, I head back up the coast and break into the bag of housemade almond biscotti, polenta cookies, and zesty orange ricotta cookies. To no surprise, the treats did not manage to make it through the end of my drive.





Sushi|Bar Omakase

## Sushi|Bar Montecito

My finger presses a small white doorbell as I watch three chefs slicing sashimi through the frosted glass at Sushi|Bar Montecito. I'm presented with my Omakase box, a fine Japanese tradition translating to "I'll leave it up to you." I cozy up on my patio and unpack the moving parts of this elaborate takeout experience: their famous pickles and edamame, an array of sauces and pipette, and welcome and after dinner cocktails. I unveil the Omakase, containing sixteen perfectly-garnished, melt-in-your-mouth pieces of nigiri. Inscribed on the lid is a comprehensive tasting list and dressing menu indicating which condiments (soy sauce, ponzu, chili ponzu, and lemon) go best with each piece. In an effort to preserve the exquisite presentation of the embellished nigiri for a few more moments, I sip on my ginger-saké cocktail.

Pipette in hand, it is finally time to dive into the box. Each piece of sushi is extraordinary in its own uniquely crafted style. They're delightfully fresh and flavored with expertise. The tenderness of the scallop jumps out at me immediately. The richness complemented by the tang of lemon and ponzu leaves my taste buds in awe. The salmon, although a simple nigiri staple, is undoubtedly the best I've ever tasted; it melts in my mouth and lingers with subtle spiciness. As I move through the box, the flavors become more and more exciting. The king crab not only visually radiates with a sweet pink sauce and lemon, but it is bright and flavorful with a wonderful bite to it. Its neighboring piece, escolar, is equally flamboyant. The fish is scored, topped with roe and green onion, and deliciously buttery. The eel, requiring soy sauce, ponzu, and lemon for optimal experience, is a baked classic with a sweet crunch. As I pick and choose my endeavors, I find myself left with my last piece. The "smoked" albacore, a delicate cut of tuna accented with seaweed and topped with crispy onions, is a showstopper. The soft albacore juxtaposes the crisp onion and leaves me wishing I had a second piece to graze on.

Sushi|Bar blew my expectations out of the water (no pun intended). Not only was the top quality nigiri prepared with true artistry, but the take-out experience as a whole was unlike any other. If you choose, you can even watch a YouTube video of Chef Phillip Franklin Lee preparing and explaining each course as you eat. I settle into the remainder of my evening, slowly sipping the post-dinner green tea cocktail. There is nothing more I could ask for in this moment—except to indulge in it all over again.

*“The soft albacore juxtaposes the crisp onion and leaves me wishing I had a second piece to graze on.”*





## Loquita

I dash home as the lingering scent of cinnamon tantalizes me from the back of my car. I arrange my beautifully-prepared take-home boxes from Loquita on the dining table and explore the evening's tapas. I begin with the hongos, a dish composed of maitake mushrooms stewing in mojo verde, an herbed chile pepper sauce. The distinct, earthy taste of the maitake mushroom is gracefully enhanced by the tangy sauce and sherry vinegar, and is complemented by crispy shallots atop. I must admit I've never been the biggest fan of mushrooms, that is until now—I simply can't get enough.

Loquita Mar y Tierra Paella  
Zimmerman dress, zimmermanwear.com  
Candlesticks & playing cards, The Blue Door  
Ceramic bowls, Letter Perfect  
Peachy nails, marmaladenails.com

I venture onto my entrée, the mar y tierra—or the “sea and land” paella. The Spanish classic is prepared with black tiger prawns and grass-fed beef brisket, intermixed with manzanilla olives, roasted garlic cloves, and a pippara pepper aioli—the description alone upstages any old surf ‘n’ turf. I spritz lemon juice across the plate and dig in. The balanced tang of the pippara aioli with the spiced rice is refreshing. The prawns are divine in flavor and texture—slightly sweet and succulent. The brisket has a subtle smokiness to it, and is cooked to perfection.

Last, but certainly not least, I indulge in Santa Barbara's renowned dessert—Loquita's churros. The churros are accompanied by a rainbow of mouth-watering dipping sauces: dark chocolate, dulce de leche, and raspberry vanilla. I grab the first churro (of many) and dip back and forth between the sauces, my favorite being the raspberry vanilla, evoking playful flavors of the county fair. Before I know it the sauces have disappeared and naturally, I am satisfied beyond measure. This at-home tapas dinner was not only impeccably tasting, but fulfilled my craving for an authentic dining experience. \*

