

FOOD AND FUN AND STUFF AROUND SAN LUIS OBISPO

-list compiled by Vann Masvidal, CCWR President and local resident-

FOOD: There are many franchise eating places near our hotel, and Higuera Street in "downtown" SLO offers a wide range of dining/nightlife options. Here are a few other places I thought worth sharing:

1. **Bon Temps Creole Café**, 1819 Osos St, San Luis Obispo 93401 (805) 544-2100

Lively, casual institution with weekly zydeco music & Southern staples like jambalaya & gumbo, with many vegetarian options. The alligator-themed décor makes this restaurant #1 with the three-year old in the Masvidal household. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner served.

2. **Madonna Inn Copper Café/Alex Madonna's Gold Rush Steak House/Silver Bar Cocktail Lounge** 100 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo 93405 (805) 543-3000

Between San Luis Obispo's two architectural landmarks- the mission building and the Madonna Inn- the Madonna Inn is the indisputable winner in the coolness contest. The hotel, which opened in 1958, is well known for its ornately decorated themed rooms and for a famous urinal which was featured in a Weird Al Yankovic song. Conveniently located a five minute drive or twenty minute walk from the symposium.

3. **Taqueria Santa Cruz** 1308 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo 93401 (805) 752-1016

Since moving here I was quite dismayed to learn the San Luis Obispo area was a Mexican food desert. Most places feature salsa that is essentially Ragu with diced onions, and either think a veggie burrito should be iceberg-lettuce based or have an obnoxious habit of placing pork where one might least expect it (in guacamole, for example). Fortunately Taqueria Santa Cruz is nothing like the other local Mexican fare; here one can find a decent burrito for under \$7, and the salsa bar features a dayglow pink watermelon/habanero concoction that is amazing but should be approached with caution. **Pro tip** for vegetarians: order the California burrito, substituting beans for meat.

4. **Sally Loo's Wholesome Café** 1804 Osos St, San Luis Obispo 93401 (805) 545-5895

Neighborhood cafe named for the owners' pitbull, offering coffee drinks, panini & veggie dishes. A solid choice for breakfast or lunch.

5. **Giuseppe's Cucina Rustica** 849 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo 93401 (805) 541-9922

Offers semi-fancy sit-down Southern Italian cuisine as well as counter service with decent slices, sandwiches, gelato, and the like.

6. **Barrelhouse Brewery** 1033 Chorro Street, Basement Level, San Luis Obispo, 93401

A local brewery whose speakeasy-themed SLO location can be confusing to newcomers, as from the street it appears to be a barber shop- complete with barber and dudes getting their beards or whatever done. But taking the stairs behind the barber chair leads to a subterranean bar where a variety of tasty brews are available for purchase.

FUN:

1. **Sea Otter viewing, Morro Bay Harbor** Morro Rock, google it

Morro Bay hosts a thriving Sea Otter population, often easily visible from the rocky shore on the harbor side of Morro Rock or from the South T-pier nearby. A survey taken last May found 36 adult otters and nine pups, which is a dramatic increase from the five or fewer otters that would frequent the area in the early 2000s. Cute factor: 1,000+

2. **Sweet Springs Nature Preserve** 660 Ramona Ave, Los Osos, CA 93402

Hard to beat birding/wildlife watching location on Morro Bay.

3. **Montaña de Oro State Park** Los Osos, CA

This park features rugged cliffs, secluded sandy beaches, coastal plains, streams, canyons, and hills, including 1,347-foot Valencia Peak. The name "Mountain of Gold" comes from the golden wildflowers found in the park during the spring. Highlights include Spooner's Cove, tide pools at Hazard Reef, and miles of scarcely-visited beaches accessible from the Sandspit parking area. Check it out if you have the time.

4. **Messing Around in a Kayak** Morro Bay, CA

Probably the best way to view the bay. There are several vendors who rent kayaks in the area but a guided tour is recommended- Central Coast Outdoors offers such a service and the owner-operator moonlights as a technician at Pacific Wildlife Care.