

Thursday, December 31, 2009

The best from a year of eats

By [Tom Angleberger](#)

Whew, have I have ever eaten at a lot of different restaurants this last year!

I already was writing occasional restaurant "field guides" when The Roanoke Times asked me to write a restaurant review every week. Since then, I've tackled buffets, buffalo burgers, calzones, pizzas, tacos, salads, desserts and foods of many lands.

Now, honestly, some of those places I'll never go back to. But along the way I discovered -- and rediscovered -- some places that I really loved. Here's a list of some of my favorites:

Excellent Table: This Ethiopian restaurant in downtown Blacksburg serves up a take-out box of the tastiest food you've ever had. No silverware needed, just scoop it up with the flat bread that comes with every meal. Be bold and get the spicy stuff. And don't miss the wonderful sweet tea.

Kimono: Pulaski's comfortable Japanese restaurant is just right. The food is terrific and the atmosphere is casual enough for kids.

Country Cookin and **Country Kitchen:** Often confused, these are two very distinct restaurants on opposite ends of Christiansburg. Country Cookin' is part of a small chain. Great service, great prices and a great salad/sides/dessert bar make it our go-to restaurant. Country Kitchen is perhaps the best Southern cooking restaurant I've ever tried. And when they put it all out on the buffet, it's hard to control yourself. Fried chicken and catfish, coleslaw and glorious macaroni and cheese.

Alejandro's: The valley's newest Mexican restaurant may be the best yet. Once you've tried the salsa bar, it's hard to go back to basic red.

Roma Pizza and **Backstreets:** It's a tough call to make, but Roma Pizza on North Main Street in Blacksburg, might have the best cheese pizza around. Meanwhile, Backstreets in downtown Blacksburg wins the buffet contest hands-down.

And then there are a few favorites which I didn't review, but already loved:

Kal-Bee, in Pembroke, where you get to pick between country favorites and Korean dishes. Either way, make sure you order the kim-chee.

Due South, in Christiansburg, where the barbecue starts out great and just gets better when you start squirting sauce on it from the array of bottles on each table.

Boudreaux's, the Cajun food capitol of Blacksburg.

Souvlaki, where town and campus meet to peel (never unwrap) great Greek food.

1/15/2010

The best from a year of eats - Roanok...

And, of course, **Hale's**, Shawsville's venerable Southern diner. We may eat elsewhere from time to time, but Hale's is where our heart is.

Bottom line: I'm stuffed.

THE ROANOKE TIMES
roanoke.com

Copyright © 2010