

# Best of Jewish Phoenix

It's wintertime, and the living is easy in the Valley of the Sun. With the temperatures down in the temperate range and snowbirds and tourists flocking to Arizona from all corners of the globe, we thought it was a good time to step back and celebrate the things we love about our community. We picked the winners with help from the invaluable input of our readers, and we hope the list gives you some new information about all metro Phoenix has to offer.

## Best Bagels

Chompie's, three Valley locations  
chompies.com

Chompie's won handily in this category for its chewy, delicious bagels. The bagel menu has flavors and varieties for everyone, including apple cinnamon, chocolate chip, garlic, marble rye, onion, Parmesan, sesame and whole-wheat. Top it off with a schmear of one of Chompie's fabulous cream cheeses, and you've got a little circle of heaven.

*Readers' Choice: Chompie's*

## Best Bakery

Simply Bread  
2117 N. 24th St., Phoenix  
602-244-1778  
simplybread.com

It's not that we can't eat other bread after experiencing Simply Bread, it's that everything else sort of pales in comparison. Everything we've ever tried at Simply Bread is simply amazing, from the challah and the onion rolls to the focaccia and the Funky Monkey, a cinnamon pull-apart bread. It's all kosher, too, which makes it a great addition to any dinner table.

*Readers' Choice: Chompie's*

## Best Deli

Goldman's Deli  
6929 N. Hayden Road, Suite C2, Scottsdale  
480-367-9477  
goldmansdeliarizona.com

A lot of names were on the list for this one ("Save the Deli" author David Sax would be proud of



Gregory and Rozalia Goldman show off the baked goods at Goldman's Deli. *Photo courtesy of Goldman's Deli*

Phoenix for helping keep the deli tradition alive), but Chicago-style Goldman's won out. It's a little pricier than some, but as Sax points out, doing deli right is not cheap. The nourishing matzah ball soup is homemade and tastes it, and the tempting fish platters and deli meats, including pickled beef tongue, don't disappoint.

*Readers' Choice: Chompie's*

## Best Chinese Food on Christmas Eve

Golden Gate Chinese Restaurant  
2640 W. Baseline Road, Mesa  
480-897-1335  
goldengaterestaurantphoenix.com

When Temple Emanuel of Tempe held its Chinese food and a movie night on Christmas Eve, Golden Gate catered. 'Nuff said? The family-run restaurant features reasonable prices, generous helpings and an old-fashioned elegant touch in décor and service. If you're dining in, make reservations a few days early. It's super-busy.

*Readers' Choice: Jade Palace*

## Best Burger

Delux  
3146 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix  
602-522-2288  
deluxburger.com

When you're craving a burger, nothing else will do — and a fast-food patty definitely won't cut it. For the real deal, head to Delux, where the Harris Ranch all-natural, grain-fed beef is ground fresh daily. We like the Standard Classic, which comes with lettuce, tomato, pickles and red onions. (Hold the cheese, thanks.)

*Readers' Choice: In-N-Out Burger*

## Best Special-Occasion Restaurant

Marcellino Ristorante  
1301 E. Northern Ave., Phoenix  
602-216-0004  
marcellinoristorante.com

There's food, there's great food, and then there's those meals that you remember and talk about long after the dishes are cleared. For an Italian dining experience with an off-the-charts "wow" factor, we can't think of a better place than Marcellino's Ristorante. The warm, intimate setting is the ideal backdrop for an inventive and impressive meal. The price tag may make a visit to Marcellino a special treat, but we could eat here every day.

*Readers' Choice: Don & Charlie's*

## Best Kosher Restaurant

Segal's Oasis Grill  
4818 N. Seventh St., Phoenix  
602-285-1515  
segalsonestop.com

In the mood for wonton soup and Kung Pao Chicken? A large bowl of matzah ball soup and a pastrami sandwich? How about a burger and fries? Segal's Oasis Grill offers multiple cuisines, including Mexican food, Middle Eastern and sushi. Kosher restaurants have come and gone in the Valley, but Segal's has been a



Marcellino Verzino, left, shown here with his wife, Sima, creates Italian food to die for at Marcellino Ristorante. *Photo courtesy of Marcellino Ristorante*

main staple at this location since 1984. We're grateful to have this choice of kosher dining in Phoenix.

*Readers' Choice: Segal's Oasis Grill*

## Best Desserts

A.J.'s, 13 Valley locations  
ajsfinefoods.com

Dining at home always ends better with dessert from locally owned A.J.'s Fine Foods. The *boulangerie* offers an alluring array of beautiful, delectable special-occasion signature cakes, pies, pastries and chocolates. Conclude weeknight meals with simpler dessert fare, like fresh fruit from A.J.'s spectacular produce department or a carton of gelato from the freezer aisle.

*Reader's Choice: Chompie's*

## Best Frozen Yogurt

Golden Spoon, 10 Valley locations  
goldenspoon.com

Golden Spoon's soft-serve frozen yogurt delivers the creamy taste of ice cream in a nonfat, low-calorie package. Hit up any of its 10 Valley locations for a great selection of flavors (including peanut-butter cup, cake batter, pistachio, peppermint and our personal favorite, blueberry pomegranate) and toppings in a cheerful atmosphere.

*Readers' Choice: Yogurt Builderz*

## Best Kosher Market

Segal's One Stop  
4818 N. Seventh St., Phoenix  
602-285-1515  
segalsonestop.com

Founded in 1967 by Zalman and Pearl Segal as Segal's Kosher Meat Market, this is the granddaddy of Valley kosher markets. At its current location since 1984, the market and attached full-service restaurant has recently been remodeled by its new owners and boasts the Valley's only full-service kosher butcher department. The store also offers Shabbat and holiday take-out, as well as special event catering.

*Readers' Choice (tie): Segal's One Stop and Scottsdale Deli and Grill*

# FEATURE

## Best New Hangout Spot

Luci's Healthy Marketplace  
1590 E. Bethany Home Road, Phoenix  
602-773-1339  
lucishealthymarketplace.com

Friendly staff, good coffee and healthy dishes make this an ideal neighborhood hangout spot. Luci's also has a weekend omelet bar, made-to-order breakfasts and lunches, "goodies to go," "TV dinners" featuring comfort food and a marketplace of healthy products, many by local vendors. Local musicians perform three nights a week and, starting next month, Luci's will offer cooking classes.

*Readers' Choice: La Grande Orange*

## Best Coffee Shop For a Quiet Talk

Lola  
4700 N. Central Ave., Phoenix  
602-265-5652

Central Phoenix is home to a number of good independent coffee shops. Relative newcomer Lola (owner Daniel Wayne is formerly of Lux and Lola Tapas) gets our vote not only because it offers superior coffee drinks, but because it's a place where you can sit and enjoy your beverage in relative peace. Décor here is hip without trying too hard, the snacks are yummy, and the noise level allows for actual conversation.

*Readers' Choice: Starbucks*

## Best Liquor Store/Wine Store

Sportsman's Fine Wines & Spirits  
3205 E. Camelback Road, Suite 601, Phoenix  
602-955-7730  
sportsmans4wine.com

Sportsman's may be on the smaller side, but for its size, its beer, wine and liquor selection is wonderfully diverse. The staff is friendly, the store is well-maintained, and the reasonably priced full-service café is a nice touch not found in your run-of-the-mill liquor shops.

*Readers' Choice: BevMo*

## Best Place to Buy a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Gift

The Jewish Collection  
10701 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite 105, Scottsdale  
480-368-0001  
thejewishcollection.com



Executive Chef Justin Wolter prepares food at Luci's Healthy Marketplace. *Photo by Leisah Woldoff*

Since opening in 2006, The Jewish Collection has woven itself inextricably into the fabric of the Valley Jewish community. Whether it's customized *kippot*, tallitot, Kiddush cups, Jewish texts or another commemorative gift you're seeking, the store can help you find just the right gift for the *simcha*. It offers online shopping as well.

*Readers' Choice: The Jewish Collection*

## Best Jewelers

Burland Jewelry Center  
6102 N. 16th St., Suite 10, Phoenix  
602-277-7900  
burlandjewelry.com

G. G. Gems  
Scottsdale  
480-860-2266  
gggemsinc.com  
By appointment

Looking for a family-owned jeweler — professionals you can trust to offer quality, value and TLC? Phoenix's Helen and Larry Burland of Burland Jewelry Center, and Scottsdale's Glenna Gibbons of G.G. Gems will treat you like family, whether you're investing in the perfect engagement ring for your beloved, tiny earrings for your granddaughter, redesign of a cherished heirloom or a birthday gemstone just for you.

*Readers' Choice: Moda Fina*

## Best Place to Buy Stylish Modest Clothing

Chico's, 11 Valley locations  
chicos.com

Modern yet modest, Chico's always has a large selection of clothing featuring longer sleeves, lower hemlines and higher necklines. Even in the warm Phoenix weather, some women choose to cover up. Whether for religious, style or health reasons — at Chico's you can find a modest outfit that is comfortable and classy.

*Readers' Choice: Chico's*

## Best Place for Great Clothing Bargains

My Sister's Closet, four Valley locations  
mysisterscloset.com

This blasted recession has put a dent in everyone's shopping budgets. Fortunately, shoppers who want to find great clothes and not pay a lot have My Sister's Closet to sustain them. The local resale chain only accepts the "three Cs — cute, current and clean," so you won't be digging through piles of junk to find your next favorite dress, purse or pair of shoes.

*Readers' Choice: Nordstrom Rack*

## Best Bookstore

Changing Hands  
6428 S. McClintock Drive, Tempe  
480-730-0205  
changinghands.com

We're lucky enough to have one of the nation's top independent bookstores right here in the Valley. At the advanced age of 35, Changing Hands is not the kind of place that rests on its laurels; in addition to a full schedule of visiting authors, the store offers children's events, writing classes and book discussion groups. Best of all, the staff really knows books, and they're happy to talk about them.

*Readers' Choice: Borders*



These are just a handful of Golden Spoon's unorthodox frozen yogurt toppings.

*Photo by Jessica Saval*

## Best Mall to Spend the Day In

Scottsdale Fashion Square  
7014 E. Camelback Road  
480-941-2140  
fashionsquare.com

The largest mall in Arizona is hands-down the best place to while away the day shopping. Scottsdale Fashion Square houses major department stores, trendy teen destinations, stylish home accessory stores and high-end designer shops. It's also a great spot to catch a movie, either at Harkins Fashion Square 7 inside the mall, or by walking across the parking lot to Harkins Camelview 5. And after a hard day exercising your credit cards, you can grab a bite at one of the mall's great new restaurants (we love Fox Restaurant Concepts' Modern Steak eatery).

*Readers' Choice: Scottsdale Fashion Square*

## Best Mall Playground

San Tan Village  
2218 E. Williams Field Road, Gilbert  
480-792-1500  
shopsantanvillage.com

We love the outdoor covered children's play area at San Tan Village in Gilbert. It's an enticing, garden-themed space where children can run, play or climb to their heart's delight. Don't forget to bring along swimsuits for a romp in the pop-jet water fountain. There are plenty of benches, as well, for weary parents or grandparents to rest.

*Readers' Choice: Paradise Valley Mall*

## Best Free Activity for Kids

Burton Barr Central Library  
1221 N. Central Ave., Phoenix  
602-262-4636  
phoenixpubliclibrary.org

Architect Will Bruder's design alone — with the open elevator space called the "Crystal Canyon" and guy-wires, beams and support columns exposed like a giant Tinkertoy — ought to tickle the kids, but Burton Barr Central Library offers more: a huge children's room, story times, homework help and a teen space as well.

*Readers' Choice: McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park*

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## Best Dog Park

Readers' Choice: Cosmo Dog Park  
2502 E. Ray Road, Gilbert  
480-503-6200  
ci.gilbert.az.us/parks/popups/cosmo-park.cfm

A beach at a dog park? Spending time at the dog park has quickly become a favorite pastime for us dog lovers. Dog Fancy Magazine rated Cosmo the top dog park in the entire country in 2007. The park features four fenced acres, lighting for night use, pet drinking fountains and separate areas for active and timid dogs.

*Readers' Choice: Cosmo Dog Park*

## Best Museum to Take a Child

Children's Museum of Phoenix  
215 N. Seventh St.  
602-253-0501  
childrensmuseumofphoenix.org

## Raffle winners

The following Jewish News readers won prizes from local merchants for responding to the Best of Jewish Phoenix questionnaire. Congratulations! Prizes or vouchers for prizes will be mailed by Dec. 31.

**Arizona Bread Co.**, \$25 gift certificate:  
Eileen Eisen-Cohen

**Arizona Opera**, two tickets to "La bohème":  
Ellen Tuckman

**Arizona Spinal Care**, 30-minute massage:  
Rachel Chaskes

**Bon Appetit**, \$25 gift certificate: Susan Polson  
**Center Dance Ensemble**, four tickets to  
"Carmina Burana": Kristy Migala

**Don & Charlie's**, \$25 gift certificate: Roni Zee

**Don & Charlie's**, \$25 gift certificate: Al Grosser

**Don & Charlie's**, \$50 gift certificate: Bobbi Eller

**Kosher Corner**, \$36 gift certificate: Esther Shaw

**Maizie's Café & Bistro**, \$25 gift certificate:  
Greg Kamen

**Phoenix Art Museum**, four guest passes:  
Gene Giesaking

**Phoenix Opera**, two tickets to "Madama  
Butterfly": Linda Zell

**Phoenix Suns**, autographed Harlem  
Globetrotters basketball: Steve Earnhart

**Phoenix Symphony**, two tickets to a Regular  
Classics concert: Amy Bailie

**Phoenix Theatre**, two tickets to "The Light in  
the Piazza": Amy Abernethy

**Residence Inn by Marriott Phoenix Desert  
View at Mayo Clinic**, one-night stay: Cory Shapiro

**Scottsdale Massage 4 U**, \$25 off any massage:  
Heidi Schaller

**Segal's One Stop Kosher Foods and Oasis  
Grill**, \$25 gift certificate: Adam Nierenberg

**Segal's One Stop Kosher Foods and Oasis  
Grill**, \$25 gift certificate: Carole Bennett

**Sophie's, A French Bistro**, \$25 gift certificate:  
Robin Frost

**Stylistics**, complimentary haircut and style:  
Martha Mann

**Suk-Hui**, \$25 gift certificate: Kate Pina

**Your Love Remembered**, \$50 off any service:  
Elliott Fisher

We waited for it for a long time, but the Children's Museum of Phoenix didn't disappoint when it opened last summer. The museum, housed in an old school building downtown, has great activities for young and older children, from an art studio and a "forest" of foam pool noodles to a pretend supermarket, a reading nook and a desert room.

*Readers' Choice: Arizona Science Center*

## Best Kid-Friendly Restaurant

Chompie's, three Valley locations  
chompies.com

Our favorite kid-friendly restaurants are the food equivalent of a really good children's book — in other words, something you might actually want to experience even without the children. At Chompie's, the kids get crayons and a menu they can draw on, you get peace of mind, and everybody gets good food and friendly service. It's a win-win, especially on weekdays, when kids under 10 eat free.

*Readers' Choice: Chompie's*

## Best Sports Venue

University of Phoenix Stadium  
1 Cardinals Drive, Glendale  
Box office: 602-379-0102  
Main line: 623-433-7100  
universityofphoenixstadium.com

University of Phoenix Stadium, home to the Arizona Cardinals and the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, has a retractable dome and field. The grass rolls on a tray to bask in the sun outside. Despite the stadium's size (1.7 million square feet), state-of-the-art audio and Godzilla-size video screens put you in the thick of the action. All this and Wrestlemania, too.

*Readers' Choice: US Airways Center*

## Best Hotel to Hang Out In

Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa  
at Gainey Ranch  
7500 E. Doubletree Ranch Road, Scottsdale  
480-444-1234  
scottsdale.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp

Feel like you're on vacation with a visit to Gainey Ranch. The resort offers beautiful grounds, gondola rides and restaurants that feature Italian cuisine, Southwest fare and sushi. Sip a drink in the inside/outside lobby bar; performances include flamenco music and dancers, jazz, Latin music and Native American dancers.

*Readers' Choice: JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa*

## Best Place to See a Show

ASU Gammage  
Mill Avenue and Apache Boulevard,  
Tempe  
480-965-3434  
asugammage.com

ASU Gammage is our favorite place to catch an award-winning Broadway musical, ASU College of Music performance or presidential debate. The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building is located in downtown Tempe, right near the hustle and bustle of Mill Avenue, which makes getting a pre-show dinner or post-concert drink a snap.

*Readers' Choice (tie): ASU Gammage and Orpheum Theatre*

## Best Park

McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park  
7301 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale  
480-312-2312  
therailroadpark.com

What small child doesn't enjoy carousels and playgrounds? We couldn't think of one, either. Good thing the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park has both of those attractions. And just in case the name didn't give it away, there are some pretty cool trains there, too.

*Readers' Choice: McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park*

## Best Place to Take an Out-of-Town Visitor

Desert Botanical Garden  
1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix  
480-941-1225  
dbg.org

If you've lived in the Valley, you know there's much more to the desert than dirt and heat. The next time you have guests in from out of town, show off the true beauty of the desert landscape with a trip to the DBG. Visitors can learn about cacti and other native plants, catch a glimpse of desert wildlife and view the sculpture of Allan Houser, which is on display until May 31. Besides just the scenery, the DBG also offers a variety of classes on gardening, art and more, and a number of special events.

*Readers' Choice: Sedona*

## Best Place to Work Out

Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center  
12701 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale  
480-483-7121  
vosjcc.org

Want to lift weights? Do water aerobics? Yoga? Krav Maga? All those activities and dozens more are available at the Valley of the Sun JCC. The trained JCC fitness professionals can help you shape up, slim down, get fit and get active. There's even workout programs for kids, too.

*Readers' Choice: Zenergy Yoga*

## Best Place to Take a Homesick Israeli

JCC Alliance 4 Israel  
Co-directors: Steve Rosenbaum, 480-216-4280  
Carol Talmon, 602-265-2251

The JCC Alliance 4 Israel, which has operated under the auspices of the Valley of the Sun Jew-



ASU Gammage

Photo courtesy of ASU Gammage

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ish Community Center since 2007 and is run by volunteers, offers weekly Israeli dancing sessions, frequent movie nights with subtitled Israeli movies and special programs, such as Taste of Israel, a culinary festival.

## Best Unofficial Valley Jewish Historian

Rabbi Albert Plotkin

If you're looking for answers to questions about Jewish history in greater Phoenix, you can go to the Arizona Jewish Historical Society and look through its files. Or you can ask Rabbi Albert Plotkin. At the age of 90, the rabbi not only knows pretty much everything there is to know, thanks to his long and committed relationship with the Jewish community here, but also remembers it and is willing to share. He's a one-man historical society — and a veritable community treasure.

## Best Local Jewish Architecture

Temple Kol Ami  
15030 N. 64th St., Scottsdale  
480-951-9660  
templekolami.org

World-renowned architect Will Bruder, who designed the spectacular Burton Barr Library in central Phoenix, is also the visionary behind Scottsdale's Temple Kol Ami. "The design concept of the Temple Kol Ami worship and learning center," Bruder writes on his Web site, "was to create a metaphorical 'village' in the spirit of the ancient desert communities of Masada and Jerusalem." From the sandblasted masonry of the interior and exterior walls to the play of light throughout the building, Will Bruder + Partners succeeded in creating a place to gather and worship that is elegantly simple.

## Best Place to Meet Other Jews

Synagogue Fair at Valley of the Sun  
Jewish Community Center  
12701 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale  
480-483-7121  
vosjcc.org

If meeting fellow Jews is a numbers game, the Synagogue Fair wins because it draws about 1,500 Jews to the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus year in and year out. The main draw of the late-



Temple Kol Ami

Photo by Bill Timmerman

summer event is the chance to make new connections, and you'll bump into Valley newbies and longtime members of the community alike.

## Best Web Site for Jewish Information

Jewish News of Greater Phoenix  
jewishaz.com

OK, we're prejudiced, but there has to be a reason that jewishaz.com, the Web site of Jewish News of Greater Phoenix, gets more than a million hits a month. We like to think that there's nowhere else on the Web where people can find information from every sector of the Valley's Jewish community.

## Best Place for Seniors to Hang Out

JFCS Center for Senior Enrichment  
Beth El Congregation  
1118 W. Glendale Ave., Phoenix  
602-943-2198  
jfcsaz.org

Often dubbed as a "home away from home," the JFCS Center for Senior Enrichment, run by Jewish Family & Children's Service, attracts about 50 seniors daily for its classes, discussion groups, lectures and special holiday events. In addition, the center serves hot kosher meals on weekdays. Due to recent financial constraints, the center is closed on Mondays until further notice, but it still remains a special place for seniors in the Jewish community.

## Best Jewish Film Festival

Greater Phoenix Jewish Film Festival  
gpjff.org

Film lovers, get ready: Feb. 20-March 4 marks the inaugural run of the Greater Phoenix Jewish Film Festival. The new event represents a joining of forces by the Phoenix Jewish Film Festival and the East Valley Jewish Film Festival, two groups that have been providing local cinephiles with quality entertainment for years. The annual GPJFF will show comedies, dramas and documentaries with Jewish content at Harkins Theatres in Chandler and Scottsdale.

## Best Jewish Library

Bureau of Jewish Education  
12701 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite 206, Scottsdale  
480-634-8050  
bjephoenix.org

Whether you want to study the history of Israel, check out some books for the grandkids or find a new kugel recipe, the BJE library is the place to go. The library offers books, videos and periodicals on a wide range of Jewish topics, and its catalog is now online for easy searching. The library works both ways, too: When you're done with your Jewish books, consider donating them to improve the library's collection.

## Best Community Retreat

Camp Charles Pearlstein, Prescott  
Congregation Beth Israel  
10460 N. 56th St., Scottsdale  
480-951-0323  
camp@cbiaz.org



Cutler Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center

Photo courtesy of Arizona Jewish Historical Society

Located in Prescott and run by Congregation Beth Israel, it's hard to call Camp Charles Pearlstein a retreat when it's been the Valley Jewish community's home away from home since 1975. But Arizona's only Jewish overnight camp can be rented out for a weekend in the offseason, and frequently is used for public school getaways, synagogue retreats and community agency programs.

## Best Young Jewish Event

ShabbatLuck  
shabbatluck.com  
shabbatluck@gmail.com

What could be better than breaking challah together on Shabbat? A grass-roots effort to connect Jewish young adults ages 21-39, ShabbatLuck began in January 2007 when four friends decided to have a Shabbat potluck. The monthly event has grown to about 1,000 participants in more than 50 locations around the Valley.

## Best Community Makeover

Sylvia Plotkin Judaica Museum  
at Congregation Beth Israel  
10460 N. 56th St., Scottsdale  
480-951-0323  
spjm.org

This small but highly regarded museum, one of the first of its kind, has existed in various incarnations since 1967. Recent renovations have reconfigured the layout so that the museum can now be used for community events without having to sacrifice any wall space or the permanent exhibits, including the extraordinary Tunisian synagogue.

## Best Community Restoration

Cutler Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center  
122 E. Culver St., Phoenix  
Arizona Jewish Historical Society  
602-241-7870  
azjhs.org

Plans to restore Phoenix's first synagogue have been under way since the Arizona Jewish Historical Society purchased the site in 2002. After raising necessary funds through a capital campaign, grants and strong community support — the facility was named a Phoenix Point of Pride in 2008 — AJHS plans to open the Cutler Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center to the public in spring 2010; a museum will follow once additional funds are raised.