

# The Worcester Restaurant Guide

## An opinionated guide to mid-scale eating

**Worcester has never featured on anyone's map of culinary hot spots. However, that doesn't mean you can't find good food here—it just means you have to know where to look.**

Your humble editors, Robin Holly and Jonathan Turner (JT), have bravely taken up the challenge. Assisted by a small corps of dedicated volunteers, and in spite of the very real danger that we might enjoy ourselves, we have diligently sampled a selection of mostly-reasonably-priced, mostly-nearby eateries. We've included a few noteworthy out-of-town spots for the car-enabled. The list is by no means exhaustive; indeed, if you discover another place that's worthy of note, please tell us!

Disclaimer: this is based entirely on personal opinions ... and, truth to tell, we are not fussy about food. As long as it meets some fairly modest quality standards, we generally like it. Your mileage may vary.

So what do we like enough to go back to regularly?

- Winner: Tortilla Sam's
- Very close second: O'Connor's
- Honorable mention: Tatnuck Bookseller Cafe

If you're looking for something that's not on here, there are several restaurant clusters in the area:

- On Route 12, north of I-190, you'll find every fast-food outlet known to man.
- Route 9 East in Shrewsbury has many restaurants in the Chili's/Outback/IHOP mode.
- Highland Avenue has a lot of college-oriented restarants for the WPI crowd, including ample pizza/subs.
- There's a cluster of restaurants around Clark University on south Main Street.

**Medical City** is a hospital complex. It has a pizza place and a sandwich shop, at least one of which is open at any time of the day or night. The entrance is on Worcester Center Boulevard, across from the entrance to Applebee's.

**Hotel Restaurant: C. P. Whitney's.** Good food, typical (inflated) hotel prices. Big breakfast menu. Some vegetarian. Hours: Lunch 11:30a - 1:30p all days; M - Th breakfast 6:30a - 11:00a, dinner 5:30p - 11:00p; F breakfast 6:30a - 11:00a, dinner 5:00p - 11:00p; Sa breakfast 7:30a - 11:00a, dinner 5:00p - 11:00p; Su breakfast 7:30a - 1:00p, dinner 5:30p - 9:00p

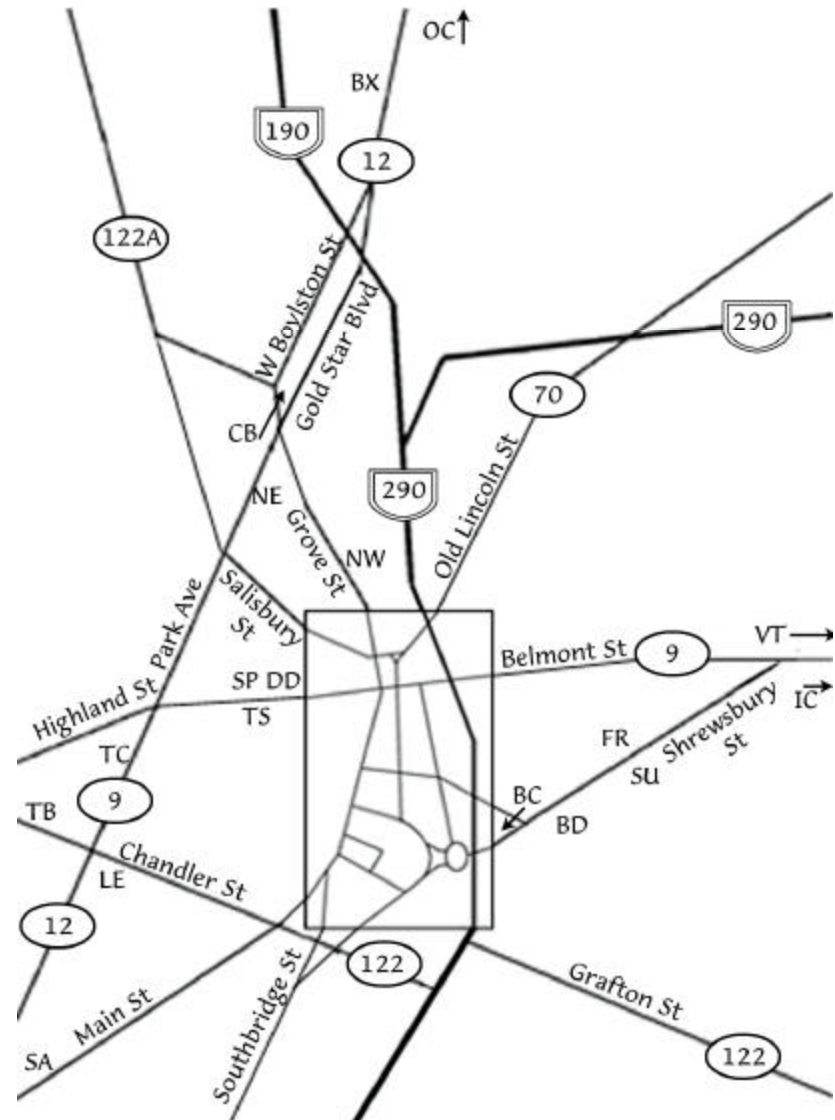
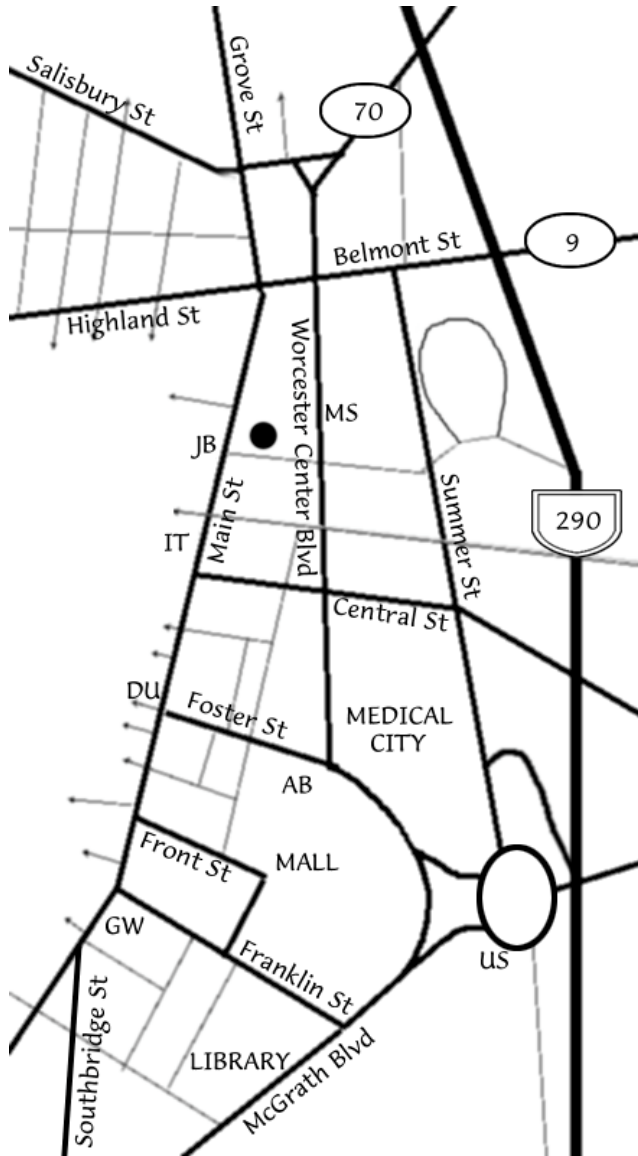
**Special Note: The Aku-Aku.** This is the closest sit-down Chinese restaurant, and we have not reviewed it. Why? Because we had a memorably awful experience, not in the restaurant, but in the so-called "comedy" part of the place. We don't have the nerve to go back; try it at your own risk.

**Distance:** All distances listed were generated using Mapquest. Most if not all the stuff we say is walkable, we have actually walked to.

### Map Key:

AB: Applebee's	FR: Flying Rhino	NE: New England	SU: Surya
BC: Brew City	GW: Great Wall	Roast Beef	TB: Tatnuck Bookseller
BD: Boulevard Diner	IC: India Café	NW: North Works Bar	TC: Thai Cha-Da
BX: Barber's Crossing	IT: Irish Times	& Grille	TS: Tortilla Sam's
CB: Ciao Bella	JB: John's Brazilian	OC: O'Connor's	US: Union Station
DD: Dragon Dynasty	MS: Maxwell	SA: Saigon	VT: Vinny Testa's
DU: Dunkin Donuts	Silverman's Toolhouse	SP: Sole Proprietor	

# WORCESTER MAPS



Note: The closest supermarket to the hotel is the Price Chopper at the northeast corner of Highland St (Rte. 9) and Park Ave. (Rte. 12).

## Concertino 2003 Restaurant Guide

Name (Map Code)/Type	Address/Phone/Website	Hours	Typical Food Prices	Walk?	Veggie Items?	Large Parties?	Comments
<b>Applebee's (AB)</b> American	100 Front St, Worcester (508) 831-9911	M-Th 11:00a-9:00p F-Sa 11:00a-11:00p Su 12:00a-9:00p	\$7-\$12	0.83 miles Yes, 10 minutes	Few	Yes	NOT REVIEWED. Chain a la Chili's, etc. In mall, but with outside entrance if mall is closed.
<b>Barber's Crossing (BX)</b> American	325 West Boylston St, Worcester (508) 852-3435	11:00a-2:00a	\$7-\$15	3.16 miles No	Few	Yes	A Worcester standard, in a good way. Large menu: steak, prime rib, lobster, turkey, some Italian, some seafood. Lots of appetizers, lots of desserts. Good value for money. Not fancy, but classic American cooking done solidly.
<b>Border Grille and Bar</b> Tex-Mex/Creole	246 Mill St, Leominster (978) 840-0194	M-Sa 11:30a-11:00p Su 11:30a-10:00p	\$7-\$12	22.73 miles No	Few	Yes	Good Tex-Mex, Southwestern, Cajun, and Creole choices. 20-30 minutes drive. Substantial to gigantic portions. Can be crowded on weekends. Excellent salsa. JT likes boneless wings with "outback" sauce. Robin likes monster chimichangas.
<b>Boulevard Diner (BD)</b> Diner	155 Shrewsbury St, Worcester (508) 791-4535	24 hours, except 3:00p-10:00p Su	\$3-\$6	0.71 miles Yes, 15 minutes	Few	No	Genuine car-style diner, well-kept-up. Big breakfast portions. Classic diner food (meat loaf, pot roast) plus Italian food. NB: "coffee regular" == "with cream". Crowded for Sunday breakfast.
<b>Brew City (BC)</b> Brewpub	104 Shrewsbury St, Worcester (508) 752-3862 www.brew-city.com	M-Sa 11:00a-10:00p Su Noon-10:00p	Sandwiches \$7-\$9, entrees \$12-\$18	0.62 miles Yes, 15 minutes	Salads only	Yes	Solid brewpub food, well-prepared. Nice BBQ sauce. 130 beers, decent microbrew rootbeer. Good selection of appetizers, pizzas, and sandwiches. Good parking (in back) and handicap access. Smoking and nonsmoking sections. Medium-sized portions.
<b>Ciao Bella (CB)</b> Italian	402 Grove St, Worcester (508) 756-2426	M-Sa 11:00a-10:00p Su Noon-9:00p	Sandwiches \$6-\$7, entrees \$7-\$12	1.99 miles Maybe	Some (pasta)	No (7 tables)	CASH ONLY. Good pasta; also pizza, sandwiches, wraps, subs. Take out and delivery available. Many seafood dishes. Large portions. Some parking; small dining area, often very busy. Restrooms are well-hidden (through kitchen area and up stairs). Multiple recommendations.
<b>Dragon Dynasty (DD)</b> Chinese	104 Highland St, Worcester (508) 755-3810 or 755-5588	M-W 11:00a-10:00p Th-Sa 11:00a-11:00p Su Noon-10:30p	\$5-\$10	0.68 miles Yes, 10 minutes	Yes	No (4 tables)	Slightly better than average food. Mostly takeout.
<b>Dunkin' Donuts (DU)</b> Coffeeshop	426 Main St, Worcester (508) 856-7160	5:00a-Midnight		0.62 miles Yes, 5 minutes		No	NOT REVIEWED. Donuts and coffee.
<b>Firefly's BBQ</b> Barbeque	350 East Main St, Marlborough (508) 357-8883 www.fireflysbbq.com	Su-W 4:30p-10:00p Th-Sa 4:30p-11:00p	\$7-\$15	19.01 miles No	You're kidding, right?	Yes	Good barbeque. Large menu, variety of sauces, fixings bar. 20-30 minutes drive. Try the sweet potato pecan pudding. All-you-can-eat lunch buffet on Sunday, otherwise not open for lunch. Online order for takeout!
<b>Flying Rhino Café (FR)</b> Eclectic	278 Shrewsbury St, Worcester (508) 757-1450 www.flyingrhinocafe.com	11:30a-2:00a	Sandwiches \$6-\$9, entrees \$15-\$22	1.08 miles Yes, 20 minutes	Few	Maybe	Eclectic, often imaginative menu, crossing several ethnicities. Many interesting appetizers, seafood items. Portion size OK, not huge. On the loud side; often busy. Very limited parking.
<b>Great Wall (GW)</b> Chinese	521 Main St, Worcester (508) 799-0803 or 799-7728	M-Th 11:00a-10:30p F-Sa 11:00a-11:00p Su Noon-10:00p	\$4-\$8	0.73 miles Yes, <10 minutes	Yes	No	Mediocre food; sauces on the thin and oily side, not very flavorful. Mostly takeout; delivery w/ \$12 minimum.
<b>India Café (IC)</b> Indian	84 Boston Turnpike, Shrewsbury (508) 754-2200	M-Sa 11:00a-10:30p Su 11:00a-10:00p	\$9-\$13	3.03 miles No	Yes	Yes	Lunch buffet ~\$6; food OK.
<b>Irish Times (IT)</b> Pub	244 Main St, Worcester (508) 797-9599 www.irishtimespub.com	11:30a-2:00p (kitchen closes at 10:00p)	Lunch \$6-\$8, dinner \$13- \$16	0.19 miles Yes, <5 minutes	Few	Yes	Very decent standard pub fare--appetizers, sandwiches, a few entrees. Large portions. Excellent chili, good sandwiches, OK fries. Carries local beers. Large-screen TVs. Bar is smoking and not physically separated from downstairs dining area; upstairs dining room is non-smoking (if in use). Live music, including folk/Irish. "Authentic Irish breakfast" served Sunday 11:30-2:00.
<b>John's Brazilian Food (JB)</b> Brazilian	144 Main St, Worcester (508) 752-0052	Su, Tu-Th 11:30a-5:00p F 11:30a-9:00p Sa Noon-9:00p		0.16 miles Yes, <5 minutes		No	NOT REVIEWED.
<b>Living Earth Garden Café (LE)</b> Healthy	232-234 Chandler St, Worcester (508) 753-1896 www.lefoods.com	M-F 11:00a-8:00p Sa 9:00-6:00 Su 11:00-5:00	\$5-\$8	1.71 miles Probably not	Yes	No	Both a store and a deli/café--store is open slightly longer hours. Good for people with special dietary restrictions, especially if people with different diets want to eat together. Offerings range from cheeseburgers to vegan; gluten-free and other special requirements on request; good vegetarian entrees. Exotic meats (ostrich, bison), decadent desserts, imported cheeses.
<b>Mall Food Court</b> Fast food	Worcester Common Outlets Mall			Yes, 10 minutes			NOT REVIEWED. WARNING: mall closes early! Au Bon Pain, Genji Japan, Burger King, Sbarro, Panda Express, Subway.

## Concertino 2003 Restaurant Guide

Name (Map Code)/Type	Address/Phone/Website	Hours	Typical Food Prices	Walk?	Veggie Items?	Large Parties?	Comments
<b>Maxwell Silverman's Toolhouse (MS)</b> Upscale American	25 Union St, Worcester (508) 755-1200 www.maxwellmaxine.com	M-Th 11:00a-10:00p F-Sa 4:00p-11:00p Su 11:00-2:30p, 4:00p-10:00p	Lunch \$6-\$8, dinner \$15+	0.22 miles Yes, <5 minutes	No	Yes	Beautiful interior: exposed brick, wooden beams. High-quality meats; also seafood, pasta. Open for lunch, but not really a lunch place--smallish menu, service may be a bit slow. Poor handicap access.
<b>New England Roast Beef (NE)</b> Sandwiches	33 Park Ave, Worcester (508) 756-1991		\$3-\$6	1.66 miles Maybe	No	No	Good selection of good sandwiches. Quick, friendly service. Beer-battered fries and onion rings. Very little parking.
<b>North Works Bar and Grill (NW)</b> American	106 Grove St, Worcester (508) 755-9657	M-Th 11:30a-10:00p F-Sa 11:30a-11:00p Su 4:00-9:00p	\$10-\$20	0.80 miles Yes, 10 minutes	Some	Maybe	Largeish menu that mixes classic dishes with more imaginative fare. Tasty food. Free popcorn. Attractive brick-and-beam décor--excellent place for a "nice dinner" at quite reasonable prices.
<b>O'Connor's (OC)</b> Irish	1160 West Boylston St, Worcester (508) 853-0789 www.oconnorsrestaurant.com	M 11:30a-9:00p Tu-Th 11:30a-10:00p F-Sa 11:30a-11:00p	\$7-\$15	6.14 miles No	Few	Yes	CLOSED SUNDAY. Outstanding food, large menu; has earned numerous "best of Worcester" awards. Both traditional and modern dishes. Great desserts. JT recommends shepherd's pie. Very popular--call ahead or be prepared to wait. Ample parking; handicap access pretty good. ~3 miles north on Rte 12, just south of Exit 4 off I-190.
<b>Publick House</b> Yankee	100 Main St, Sturbridge (508) 347-3313 www.publickhouse.com	M-Th 7:30a-8:30p F-Sa 7:30a-9:00p Su 8:00a-8:30p	\$15-\$30 (entrees)	22.20 miles No	No	Yes	NOT REVIEWED. Worcester Telegram says: "Well-prepared classic menu, good-sized portions and huge complete dinners. A New England dining tradition intact since 1771. A destination restaurant well worth the trip."
<b>Saigon (SA)</b> Vietnamese/Chinese	967B Main St, Worcester (508) 799-5250	Su-Th 10:00a-10:00p F-Sa 10:00a -11:00p	\$4-\$8	1.04 miles No	Yes	Maybe	Very good food; try the hot and sour soup. Good value, especially noodle bowls and pho.
<b>The Sole Proprietor (SP)</b> Fish	118 Highland St, Worcester (508) 798-3474 www.thesole.com	M-Th 11:30a-10:00p F 11:30a-11:00p Sa Noon-11:00p Su 4:00p-9:30p	\$14-\$22	0.74 miles Yes, <10 minutes	No	Yes	Good, fresh, slightly upscale. Almost entirely fish (3 non-fish entrees). Excellent fish-and-chips--zero greasiness, and almost a pound of fish. Good parking. Often crowded. Prices may fluctuate with market price for fish.
<b>Surya (SU)</b> Indian	299 Shrewsbury St, Worcester (508) 752-3700	M-Sa Noon-3:00p, 5:00p-10:00p Su 5:00p-9:30p	\$9-\$13	1.14 miles Yes, 20 minutes	Yes	No	All the usual Indian dishes done very well. Sundry pork and seafood dishes, in addition to the usual chicken, vegetarian, and lamb options. Big poofy naan bread. Limited parking.
<b>Tatnuck Bookseller Restaurant (TB)</b> American/Eclectic	335 Chandler St, Worcester (508) 756-7644 www.tatnuck.com	M-W 8:00a-9:00p Th-F 11:30a-10:00p Sa 9:00a-9:00p Su 9:00a-5:00p	Lunch \$6-\$9, dinner \$9-\$17	2.07 miles No	Few	Maybe	Nice restaurant in a beautiful independent bookstore converted from a factory building. Menu is not large, but has a good selection. Some nice desserts. Good parking, good handicap access.
<b>Thai Cha-Da (TC)</b> Thai	264 Park Ave, Worcester (508) 752-2211	Tu-W 11:30a-10:00p F-Sa 11:30a-10:30p Su 3:00p-10:00p	\$9-\$15	1.93 miles Maybe	Yes	Yes	Very good Thai food--one reviewer says it's "the best outside Boston." JT really likes the yum nua. Limited parking.
<b>Tortilla Sam's (TS)</b> Mexican	107 Highland St, Worcester (508) 756-SAMS www.tortillasams.com	Su -M 5:00p-11:00p Tu-Th 11:30a-Midnight F-Sa 11:30a-3:00a	\$7-\$9	0.69 miles Yes, <10 minutes	Yes	Maybe	JT and Robin's favorite restaurant in Worcester. Fresh, flavorful, delicious, good-sized portions (home-made tortillas). Mostly mild, but if they say something's hot, believe them. If you do like hot, try Sam's Spicy Spuds or boneless wings with Sam's Southern Sauce. Also recommended: chicken taquitos (frequent special). Very good about allergies and vegetarians. FREE DELIVERY Th - Sa w/ \$15 order.
<b>Union Station Restaurant (US)</b> American	1 Washington Square, Worcester (508) 831-7800	M-Th 5:00p-10:00p F-S 5:00p-11:00p	\$15-\$25	0.81 miles Yes, 10 minutes	No	Yes	NOT REVIEWED. Upscale. Drop-dead gorgeous interior. Limited menu.
<b>Wong Dynasty</b> Chinese	176 Reservoir Street, Holden (508) 829-2188	Noon-Midnight	\$6-\$12	9.14 miles No	Yes	Yes	Good Chinese food. 15-20 minutes drive.
<b>Vinny Testa's (VT)</b> Italian	7-11 Boston Turnpike, Shrewsbury (508) 755-0900	M-Th 11:00a-10:00p F-Sa 11:00a-11:00p Su Noon-10:00p	\$8-\$12	3.01 miles No	Some	Yes	Huge, monstrous, vast portions. American interpretations of classic Italian (not just spaghetti and meatballs). Pretty large menu. Upscaleness level about equivalent to, say, Outback Steakhouse. Some patio dining. ~1 mile east on Rte 9, just over Lake Quinsigamond bridge on north side.