

Colin & Nicole — Taste Profile

What we look for · Based on Oakland/Berkeley 2023 + NYC 2025 guides

Neighborhood gems over tourist landmarks. Independent restaurants with backstory and character. Casual first, special-occasion second. International cuisines — especially French, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Uzbeki. No chains, ever. We research like it's a project and stay long enough to find the spots locals actually go to.

Food

- **Cuisine spread:** French, Chinese dim sum, pizza, Filipino, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Uzbeki, Peruvian, Southern, BBQ, Belgian
- **Style:** 77% casual (counter-service, pizza shops, dive bars) · 15% mid-range · 8% upscale (special occasions)
- **What matters:** Regional authenticity over Americanized versions. Immigrant-run spots. Food quality > ambiance.
- **Price sweet spot:** \$-\$ daily, \$\$\$ for a treat (JouJou, Raoul's, A L'Ouest)
- **Beverages:** Natural wine bars, cocktail bars with personality, bubble tea, craft beer. No bottle service.

Experiences

- **Nature:** Coastal hikes, tide pools, lesser-known beaches, volcanic preserves — not crowded tourist spots
- **Culture:** Indie theaters, bookstores, record shops, listening bars, murals — independent over institutional
- **Wine:** Approachable tasting rooms, natural wine focus. Russian River, Paso, Valle de Guadalupe.
- **Music:** Vinyl record stores, HiFi listening rooms, local live music. Colin: audiophile gear + crate digging.
- **Artisan:** Bakeries, olive oil, specialty food producers — the destination IS the craft, not just a pit stop

How We Travel

- Systematic planners — guides organized by neighborhood, researched in advance
- Explore neighborhoods deeply rather than checking off landmarks
- Balance packed days with downtime — not every hour needs a plan
- Scenic routes > fastest routes. PCH > I-5 when time allows.
- Document everything for future reference

What Works for Us

Yes	No
Hole-in-the-wall taqueria	Chain restaurant
North Park dive bar	Gaslamp tourist bar
Torrey Pines hike at sunrise	SeaWorld
Immigrant-run dim sum spot	Americanized fusion buffet
Vinyl shop + listening bar	Generic nightclub
Natural wine at a counter	Bottle service VIP
Artisan bakery detour	Drive-through coffee

Profile from analysis of Apple Maps guides: Oakland/Berkeley 2023 + Nicolin Takes NYC 2025 · skincheese.com/tasteprofile