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## Corporate conundrum: Finding extraordinary meals in a national chain world

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Corporate restaurants don't have to be synonymous with subpar dining. Sure, the snob in me wants to cringe anytime I hear the word chain and restaurant in the same sentence. Far too often we settle for the strip-mall eatery that has the same, mediocre menu in 150 other locations just like it. They are profit machines sacrificing quality for the dollar.

Thankfully, there are exceptions to the rule. Take a look around Denver and you'll find a few exceptional restaurants that happen to have a corporate address. Here are three great examples of companies taking the chain out of the equation; instead offering a restaurant concept so fresh and good it can succeed in most any market.

Tamayo's bar is a Larimer Square hot spot. [More photos...](#)

### Tamayo (Larimer Square)

#### 12 Richard Sandoval Restaurants worldwide

With success in Vegas, New York, Dubai, D.C., San Fran and Acapulco, Richard Sandoval has become the face of modern, gourmet Mexican cuisine. In Denver alone, his restaurant group runs Tamayo, [Zengo](#) and now [La Sandia](#). Don't believe Mexican and gourmet belong in the same sentence? Hah! Head to Tamayo, order the Tampiquena and a pitcher of sangria for the table, and you'll never second-guess me again. Slices of buttery filet are served with mole cheese enchiladas, chile poblano-potato gratin, guacamole

and more. This plate takes all the wonderful flavors of Mexico and adds a dash of culinary refinement to produce an amazing fusion of flavors and styles. Finish dinner off with a sugary empanada that comes stuffed with delectable bananas, and you'll be booking a trip to Acapulco to try another Sandoval creation.

For more info: [Tamayo](#), 1400 Larimer St., Denver, 720.946.1433.

### The Oceanaire Seafood Room (Lower Downtown)

#### 16 U.S. locations with a 17th about to open

Being an East Coast transplant, I've often longed for a great seafood house. In Denver you can get the best steaks on the planet, but the seafood scene has always lacked. Something about us being landlocked. Apparently The Oceanaire never got the memo that Denver is smack dab in the middle of the country with the nearest ocean being more than 1,000 miles away.



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