

LOS DOS : LOCAL RESTAURANT REVIEWS

MEXICAN / CENTRO

NOTE: Our star qualification system is not intended to be referred to across categories. In other words, a three-star *cocina económica* is in no way meant to compare to a three-star formal dining establishment. The stars should be considered only for the sake of comparison to other entries within the same category.

- **La Casa de Frida**** *Mexican specialties. Open Monday – Saturday 6pm – 10pm. Calle 61 No. 526 at Calle 66. Information: 928.2311.* A bright magenta environment dressed with images of Frida Kahlo and reproductions of her work warmly greets the primarily tourist clientele of this small, charming restaurant. My students and guests who order the *Chiles en Nogada* (a specialty from Puebla) rave about the food; those who don't – don't.
- **El Fogoncito****** *Taquería and grill. Open every day from 1:00pm - 1:00am. Corner of Calle 61 and Calle 62 on the Plaza Principal.* Although this casual hang-out is one link in a chain, the food is fabulous enough to rank a “wow-factor” from all of our out-of-town guests. I lost count of how many *taco* varieties El Fogoncito features but it must be pushing 20, which is a good excuse for trying their *taco* platter with an assortment of five kinds. Or just be experimental and order one at a time. Not to be missed are their *tacos al pastor*, and its sister *taco* – the *gringa* – a *pastor taco* loaded with cheese. Their colorful *salsa* carousel makes for some fun and flavorful variation. NOTE: *El Fogoncito also has larger restaurants on Prolongación Montejo at Calle 7 and in the Altabrisa mall.*
- **Pancho's***** *Mexican and Yucatecan specialties. Open daily 6pm – 2am. Calle 59 No. 509 between Calle 60 and 62. Information: 923.0942.* The first of three links in the Trotter family restaurant chain (the others being La Tratto and Trotter's), Pancho's has been pleasing tourists and locals alike for two decades. Hold on to your *sombrero*, because it is a riotous environment with over-the-top Mexican stereotypical décor (blown up photos of Pancho Villa, get it?) and waiters with gun belts stuffed with wine corks instead of bullets. Mexican meat specialties won't disappoint, especially after enough *margaritas*. Particularly tasty are the plantain chips they use for dips and *guacamole* instead of regular *tortilla* chips.
- **La Parranda***** *Grill and taquería. Open daily from 11:30am – 2 am. Calle 60 No. 502 at Calle 59. Information: 287.8119.* A new branch of the original old-timer on Prolongación Montejo. And what a smart idea so that they can capture all those tourists passing by on popular 60th Street! Think “meat” and you'll be happy here, although I do enjoy their “taco lite” featuring delicately grilled strips of chicken breast. As at other *taquerías*, experiment by ordering one at a time. The waiters are used to it.