

CANTINA AZTECA & REY AZTECA

COME FOR THE TACOS, STAY FOR THE SMILES

When Ismael Pantoja opened Rey Azteca, it was a one-man operation. Fourteen years later, he and his son Jonathan manage two popular Carmichael restaurants while still keeping sight of what made them successful in the first place: good food, great value and friendly service, whether you're a regular face or a first-time customer.

Calling upon his years of experience in kitchens and corporate management, Ismael opened his own restaurant — Rey Azteca — in 2004. “He would serve, he would cook, he would do everything. On certain hours, it would just be him running [everything];” says his son Jonathan, who today manages the business’ promotion and online presence which have helped it grow from a small business to the epitome of the American dream.

By 2016, business was doing so well, they opened a second restaurant, Cantina Azteca, which features a full bar and more menu options, including breakfast and daily happy hour specials. “You can get margaritas anywhere, you can get tacos anywhere,” Jonathan says. “We’re constantly changing, we’re constantly improving [because] we want to make sure people are happy when they leave here.” One recent improvement is Cantina Azteca’s new menu. While still serving breakfast and classic dishes like tacos, burritos and menudo (seven days a week!), they’ve recently added vegan options like enchiladas and stuffed peppers.

At its heart, Cantina Azteca and Rey Azteca remain local favorites, where staff know the names (and usually the orders) of regular customers who come in for date nights, family dinner and to catch Sunday games. “Pop is still out there greeting customers as they come in,” Jonathan says of his father. “He has a really big soft-spot for the people who were there with him when he opened and saw him do the one-man-band thing. He’s like, ‘It’s because of these guys that I’m doing really well now.’”

DINE-IN OR ORDER ONLINE AT:



CANTINA AZTECA

6400 Fair Oaks Blvd., Carmichael
916-993-8411
www.reyaztecabreakfast.com



REY AZTECA

6140 Fair Oaks Blvd., Carmichael
916-481-4995
www.reyaztecarestaurantbar.com



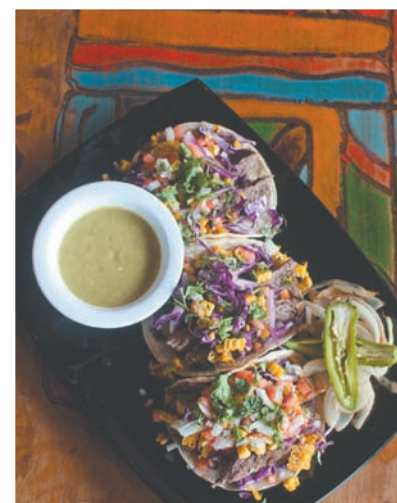
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Jonathan Pantoja

District manager, Rey Azteca restaurants



Cantina Azteca offers diners a full bar where they can enjoy hand-crafted margaritas.



Delicious arrachera tacos feature skirt steak, fire-roasted corn and cilantro with an avocado-tomatillo sauce