

JACKIE TRAN'S 1,000TH TUCSON FOODIE ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS HIS ALL-TIME FAVORITES



JACKIE TRAN

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Howdy folks, Jackie Tran here. You might recognize me as the person in the [video crying while eating insanely spicy wings](#). But I'm also the lead writer and photographer here at Tucson Foodie.

This is the 1,000th Tucson Foodie article that I've written, ayyyyyy.

Back in 2014, I saw a post on Tucson Foodie's Facebook page seeking a food truck correspondent. As a longtime wannabe [Anthony Bourdain](#), I jumped at the chance. I took on whatever assignments came my way; some resulted in me eating cookies from [nine bakeries](#) (not bad) to eating about [\\$400 in burritos in two months](#) (I couldn't touch a burrito for six months after that).

A little over a year later, my day job's company was going under and I was offered a staff position at Tucson Foodie. Suhweet.

Now, with just over three years later as staff, I might be one of the most well-fed folks in Tucson. I've seen and tasted countless highs and lows. But I'll share the highs.

Without further ado, here are my favorite Tucson Foodie articles of all time.

NINE ON THE LINE



While people know CJ Hamm as an owner-chef for **Saguaro Corners** and Mulligans, he wrote for Tucson Foodie at one point. He also founded the **Nine on the Line** column, which asks food and drink professionals around Tucson the same nine questions about their lives. With so many eccentric chefs around town, this results in drastically different answers; where else can you hear the phrase *gastronomic d***-swinging* or an impassioned speech about **Spam's superiority over bacon**?

With permission from CJ, I continued the column after he left. I even **interviewed him as the subject**.

Although the articles don't involve much writing on my end, I get to stage fun portrait photoshoots. It was always fun seeing what type of humor would draw out a genuine laugh and smile from a chef; this ranged from vulgar obscenities to talks about puppies and kittens.

TUCSON FOODIE TRAVELS: EAT YOUR WAY AROUND BISBEE, ARIZONA (SLIDESHOWS)



Jackie Tran looking fly at Bathtub Coffee in Bisbee, Ariz. (Credit: Anna Figueroa)

Although I had taken a touristy trip to Bisbee with friends, this article was an opportunity for me to plan a food-centric day trip with a friend to help me eat as many things as possible.

Planning was a breeze; Old Bisbee's geographic area was smaller than I realized and I was easily able to walk from place to place. Furthermore, every restaurant or cafe had its own unique charm; Bathtub Coffee lived up to the name with a bathtub design for selfies, while Bisbee Hot & Spicy was packed with *picante* sauces and *caliente* jokes.

The best part was finding out that Thuy's Noodle Shop and Cafe Roka had not only lived up to the hype but they had exceeded it. There were plenty of details to appreciate, details you wouldn't find in a casual online review.

I can't wait for my next trip to check out the places I missed out on from my previous visit.

I SPENT THE LAST DECADE GOING TO YAMATO JAPANESE RESTAURANT FOR SUSHI



Owner-chef Noboru Nakajima at Yamato Japanese Restaurant (Credit: Jackie Tran)

This article began a decade ago, before I knew I was working on one.

I had been a regular over the past decade but only recently learned that Yamato is only a couple of months older than me.

Previously, I only had friendly concise chatter with Nakajima-san. He is a quiet person that appreciates focus and concentration on his craft. But for this article, I came in during quieter hours with a notepad and camera ready. I learned more about his history, his family, and his deep appreciation for old school sushi.

APRIL FOOLS' DAY



Don Nguyen engraving a spoon (Credit: Jackie Tran)

If you've ever visited jackietran.com, then you'd know how much of a jokester I am. With Tucson's vibrant culinary scene, it was easy to find topics for satire and farce.

The first one was the [Five-Course Malt Liquor Pairing Dinner at Ermanos April 20](#). The logistics of it required that I purchase five different forties from Axis Food Mart, which resulted in an amusingly curious look from the clerk. I also had to create five bologna sandwich-themed courses and looked up tasting notes for each brand of malt liquor. I must have done too well of a job with the concept since Ermanos kept receiving phone calls requesting reservations for the dinner.

Most recently, we featured local knife maker Don Nguyen in [Custom "Don Nguyen Spoons" Are \\$1,800 & Worth Every Penny](#). The article took his [existing feature article](#) and replaced each instance of *knife* and *sharp* with *spoon* and *scoopy*. We also added an arbitrary quote about spoons at the end for giggles:

“Once you’re used to my spoons, eating cereal with other spoons will feel so forky,” Nguyen said. “Although a wide profile, thin-pronged fork is the best way to eat ringed cereals such as Honey Nut Cheerios.”

Don also spent two hours actually making a Don Nguyen-engraved spoon for the article. I also dedicated time to an over-stylized photoshoot.

COMING SOON: \$50 OF POTATOES



Jackie with \$50 of potato dishes at PY Steakhouse (Credit: Melissa Stihl)

When I was looking at the spring menu for PY Steakhouse, I noticed six separate potato courses. I thought, “wouldn’t it be funny and delicious if I wrote an article dedicated to six potato dishes from the same restaurant?” I pitched the idea to the editorial team and surprisingly received the green light.

Keep an eye out for the article next week.