

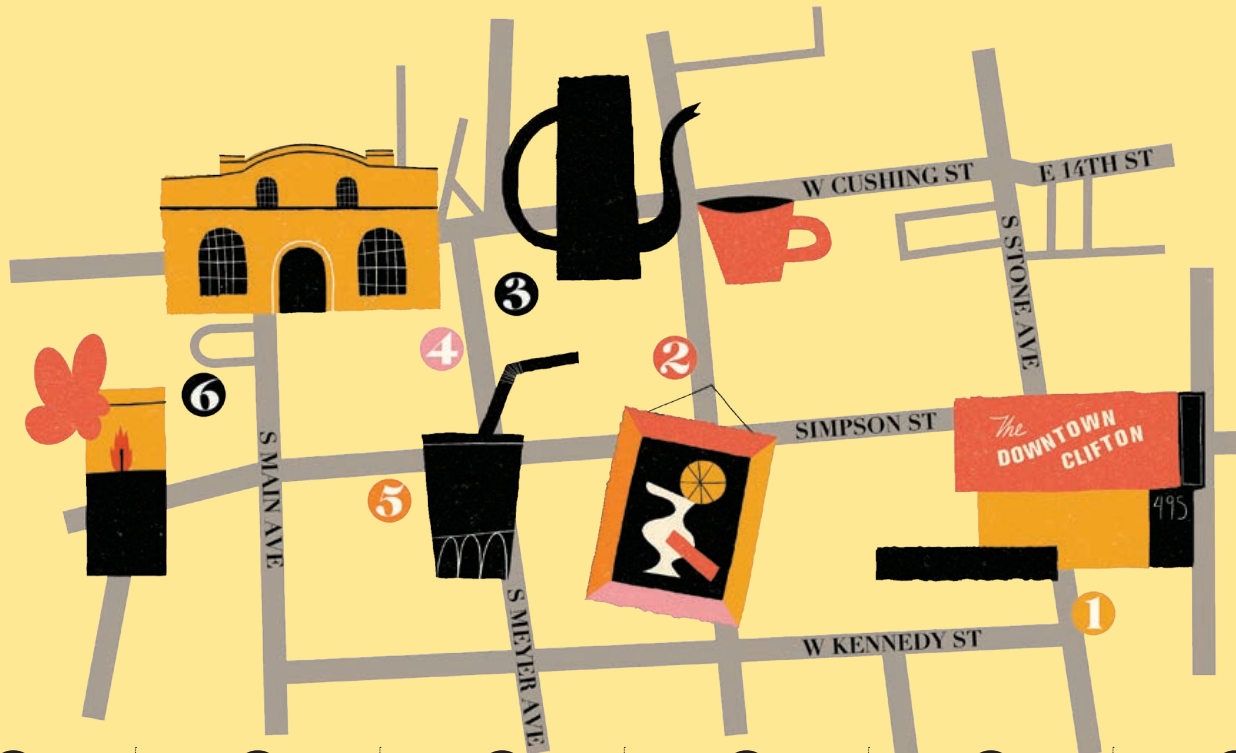
The Neighborhood

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Barrio Viejo, Tucson

Established when Tucson was still part of Mexico, Barrio Viejo was once the city's cultural and economic hub. "Urban renewal" in the late 1960s saw the razing of multiple blocks, but the remaining streetscape still sports the largest concentration of 19th-century Sonoran adobe architecture in the U.S. The area has applied to receive a National Historic Landmark designation, but in the meantime new restaurants, bars, and galleries are making it a contemporary hot spot.



1

The Downtown Clifton

Tucson native Moniqua Lane knew the old motor lodge at the eastern edge of Barrio Viejo had potential the first time she saw it, and she has since transformed the 1948 motel into a charming inn with 30 vintage rooms and a retro bar, The Red Light Lounge. "Barrio Viejo is a place unto itself," Lane says, "and The Clifton has become a launch pad into that community."

2

Etherton Gallery

After four decades in downtown Tucson, Terry Etherton decided to relocate his inventory of post-World War II American and Mexican photography, choosing an airy space on a South Convent Avenue block that has emerged as Barrio Viejo's fine arts hub. "It's amazing to have all these galleries right here," Etherton says. "It feels like this is the place where everything is happening right now."

3

Coronet

A landmark property on the corner of West Cushing Street and South Meyer Avenue houses three spots from Sally Kane and her co-owners: Coronet, a fine-dining restaurant; Nightjar, a chic lounge; and Coronet Café, a counter-service spot. "This property speaks more to old Mexico than to an American eatery," Kane says. "It is serene, beautiful, and historic, and we are so grateful to be its current caretakers."

4

Teatro Carmen

Opened in 1915, Teatro Carmen attracted theatrical troupes from Mexico and Spain before becoming an Elks Lodge and finally being abandoned. The nonprofit Stratford Art Works is undertaking a restoration that's set to include a restaurant and a performance space. "We're helping the community reclaim an important piece of their cultural heritage," says Stratford Art Works president Herb Stratford.

5

Exo Roast Co.

In 2022, downtown Tucson's favorite coffee roaster opened this location in the Barrio, in a homey 1885 adobe building with wood beams and brick floors on the inside. "We're not a strip-mall kind of coffee shop," says co-owner Amy Smith. "The historical nature of this neighborhood really appealed to us." Come evening, the space transforms into Crisol Bar, which specializes in agave spirits.

6

El Tiradito

In a crumbling adobe courtyard stands El Tiradito, aka The Wishing Shrine, dedicated to the victim of a tragic love triangle. It's a Barrio Viejo landmark and a stop on Borderlandia's cross-cultural heritage tour of the neighborhood. "El tiradito means 'the castaway,'" explains Borderlandia co-owner Alex La Pierre. "People come here to light candles and tuck prayer requests between the bricks."