

The Philly Mag Restaurant Club Brunch Guide — February 2009

phillymag.com/brunch

Ants Pants Cafe

2212 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-875-8002
www.antspantscafe.com

Monday through Friday, Ants Pants Cafe is Graduate Hospital's friendly little neighborhood coffee shop. Weekends, the tiny rear dining room fills up — get there before 10 a.m. for shorter waits — with G-Ho residents hungry for the laid-back brunch. That means pint-glass-sized hot chocolates, large bowls of sweet potato fries, cheddar/bacon/green apple egg scrambles, and the hope-your-stomach-is-bigger-than-your-eyes bacon stack.

Café Con Chocolate

2100 South Norwood Street
Philadelphia, PA 19145
267-639-4506
www.cafeconchocolate.com

On Snyder Avenue just north of Passyunk, 12 blocks west of the Italian Market's taqueria stronghold, chef/owner Yoshiko Yamasaki is serving up a menu of authentic — and affordable — Mexican fare. For brunch, order the huevos a la Mexicana (scrambled eggs with tomato and serrano pepper, for a mere \$5.50) and a side of the jalapeño-studded pico de gallo. Or if you're more in the lunch mood, the \$7 chilaquiles (fried homemade corn tortillas doused in fresh mole sauce, then topped with melted queso fresco and a generous mound of roasted pork) are a can't-miss deal.

Café Estelle

444 North 4th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-925-5080
www.cafeestelle.com

Brunch at comfortable Café Estelle feels more like Sunday breakfast at home. With the tabletops collaged with vintage recipes, laid-back waitstaff dressed in housewife aprons, and serve-yourself tea and coffee bar, you'll feel like you never left the house. Although those quince pancakes — the tart fruit softened with honey and a pool of warm maple syrup — do taste a bit better than mom's.

Cafette

8134 Ardleigh Street
Philadelphia, PA 19118
215-242-4220
cafette.com

A haven of comfort food in Chestnut Hill, this modest little bungalow is delightful for brunch: Families with babies and hip dowagers all come for pumpkin pancakes, thick challah French toast with raspberry syrup, breakfast burritos with scrambled eggs or tofu, and classic BLTs.

Cantina Dos Segundos

931 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-629-0500
cantinadossegundos.com

NoLibs' Cantina Dos Segundos margarita-Mexican joint just started serving brunch every day. Our weekend-ordering advice: Forgo a margarita in favor of an extra spicy, hangover-curing Bloody Maria made with one of the bar's many tequilas. Save the savory/sweet tacos al pastor for your next dinnertime visit, and order what could be one of the best French toasts in city — covered with fresh blueberries and strawberries, dotted with whipped cream, and drowning (have a heavy hand with this stuff!) in Mexican maple syrup.

Carman's Country Kitchen

1301 South 11th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215-339-9613

Brunch is served all week at this tiny breakfast spot (open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.) in South Philly, and, yes, there are only four menu options. But that's never a problem when those options include French toast with melted ice cream, perfectly Southern fried chicken, and an invariably delicious kitchen-sink omelet.

Cochon

801 East Passyunk Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215-923-7675
www.cochonbyob.com

At this French BYO in Queen Village, the perfect-for-late-sleepers brunch (served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) is simple and first-rate: Niçoise-style grilled tuna salad is a great deal for \$12, thick-cut and not-too-gooey French toast satisfies bigger appetites for \$9, and two fresh eggs cooked any style with Philly Mag favorite

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Nueske's bacon is a perfectly portioned steal at \$8.

Farmicia

15 South 3rd Street

Philadelphia, PA

215-627-6274

www.farmiciarestaurant.com

Brunching is a Saturday and/or Sunday affair at this Old City spot where wholesome tweaks (organic ingredients, tofu, soy sausage) don't take away from the hits-the-spot dishes like a perfectly sized breakfast sandwich with cheddar and bacon, a cheeseburger with local beef, salads, and a quesadilla with eggs. Happy hour starts at noon and runs to 3, offering beer, Bloody Marys, specialty drinks and Champagne at half-price.

Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia

1 Logan Square

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-963-1500

www.fourseasons.com/philadelphia

Brunch at the Fountain is no doubt a special-occasion affair. Tables are covered with more canapés, appetizers, salads and desserts than you could possibly imagine, all prepared by the Four Seasons's expert hands. Save room for the main event, though, where over-the-top (in the best way possible) entrées range from sinful eggs benedict to grilled salmon to lamb chops.

Honey's Sit 'N Eat

800 North 4th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19123

215-925-1150

Waits abound (for good reason) at this ever-popular NoLib's brunch spot. So much so that during winter, brunch enthusiasts don't mind heading over to nearby overflow site, the Random Tea Room and Curiosity Shop, to warm up while they wait. When your table is (finally) ready, order a fresh-squeezed orange juice and check out the menu of specials before even opening the multi-page regular menu. Cross your fingers for one of their seasonal pancakes that range from pumpkin to walnut.

Jones

700 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19106

215-223-5663

jones-restaurant.com

Yes, there can be a massive wait for weekend brunch at Jones. But inside what looks like the Brady Bunch's living room you'll gorge on a menu of retro-American brunch classics (i.e., gooey monkey bread, heaping bowls of frosted mini-wheats, and biscuit and egg sandwiches with melted cheddar cheese and grilled ham).

Marigold Kitchen

501 South 45th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104

215-222-3699

marigoldkitchenbyob.com

For a quiet Sunday brunch (with little to no wait) head to Marigold's tiny bright dining room, where for just \$10 you can get chef Erin O'Shea's perfectly sweet brioche French toast topped with poached apples and maple whipped cream (no syrup needed!), or Virginia ham and gruyère on a toasted baguette.

Mémé

2201 Spruce Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-735-4900

memerestaurant.com

Rittenhouse residents know to stick to the savory options when dining on chef David Katz's Sunday brunch: The custard-like baked eggs riddled with porcini mushrooms and topped with crusty gruyère; the entrée-worthy biscuits with sausage gravy side. Because come meal's end, you'll easily satisfy your sweet tooth with one of Katz's three dessert options — the sinfully rich chocolate ganache cake is the perfect brunch-ender.

Nudy's East Side Café

292 East Conestoga Road

Wayne, PA 19087

610-687-1345

It's all about the pancakes at the Main Line's go-to brunch spot. Wait you will, but if you're lucky enough to grab a quick seat at the counter, you'll be rewarded with fresh off the griddle hot stacks of the blueberry, pumpkin, chocolate chip/pecan, banana/walnut variety.

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The Pop Shop

729 Haddon Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108
856-869-0111
thepopshopusa.com

With its three separate kids menus (sized for “big squirts,” “little squirts” and “baby squirts”), even the pickiest little eaters will find a brunch staple to enjoy at this kid-friendly Collingswood diner. For parents, there’s six kinds of eggs Benedict, 16 different omelets, and 12 types of pancakes.

Rx

4443 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-222-9590
www.caferx.com

At this former drug store in University City you’ll no doubt find a crowd of Penn students looking to alleviate their Saturday night revelry, and what better cure than the perfectly portioned, savory eggs benedict? But the organic, free-range, and seasonal menu and \$2 endless cups of coffee make this the place to be come Sunday brunch for the neighborhood’s yuppie families and students alike.

Sabrina’s Cafe

910 Christian Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215-574-1599
www.sabrinascafe.com

Both outposts of this cramped-and-casual BYOB — Italian Market and Art Museum area — are easy to spot on Sunday mornings: Even in winter’s cold, there’s a crowd outside waiting for a table in the quirky dining room and some of that unbelievably thick French toast. The brunch menu has its share of savory breakfast specials, too, like a recent South of the Border eggs benedict with black bean potato cakes and a roasted poblano mole.

Sidecar Bar and Grill

2201 Christian Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-732-3429
thesidecarbar.com

This friendly and surprisingly sunny South Philly bar serves up an affordable menu of updated brunch classics. Here, they tuck the best parts of a Philly cheesesteak — two-hour caramelized onions, seared flank steak, and fontina cheese — inside a fluffy three-egg omelet. They hot-press slices of sourdough bread with scrambled eggs,

hickory bacon, and just the right amount of cheddar for a “toastie” egg sandwich. Oh, and did we mention the Bloody Marys and mimosas?

Styer’s Garden Cafe

914 Baltimore Pike
Glen Mills, PA 19342
610-459-2400
terrainathome.com/cafe

The menu changes daily at this sun-dappled cafe inside Terrain, Urban Outfitters’s home and garden center, but it always features light dishes based on local ingredients. At Sunday brunch, the sweet and moist French toast topped with mixed berries is the perfect carb/sugar combo to fuel a post-brunch shopping binge.

Supper

926 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147
215.592.8180
supperphilly.com

The small-plates theme that woos Supper diners during, ahem, supper continues onto Sunday brunch where indecisive eaters can get the best of both worlds that are perfect for sharing: Frittatas, endless cereal bowls, green salads, cheese plates, homemade blintzes and a grilled flatbread with Serrano ham.

Tinto

114 South 20th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-665-9150
tintorestaurant.com

Your waiter will tell you that Tinto’s new \$25 Basque-inspired three-course Sunday brunch is served tapas-style, but after your first course arrives — we suggest the generous cured salmon plate, served with house-made egg salad, chive cream and a garlicky toasted bialy — you’ll have just enough room for your main entrée: Go with the brioche French toast.