

CAPE COD TIMES

DINING

Brunch on Cape Cod means crab, lobster Benedict, French fare: Readers rank top 6 favorites

Gwenn Friss Cape Cod Times

Published 5:20 a.m. ET March 20, 2024 | Updated 9:57 a.m. ET March 20, 2024

Guy Beringer would be proud.

Beringer is the British writer who, in 1895, called for a new meal, dubbed brunch, to replace the heavy Sunday dinners that left people in a food fog.

More than a century later, the breakfast and lunch combination is so popular that Pain D'Avignon Restaurant Boulangerie in Hyannis – voted Cape Cod's best place for brunch in our poll – doubled its brunch service 18 months ago.

“I'd been bragging about it for years,” Mario Mariani, Pain D'Avignon's chief operating officer, said of the Sunday brunch. “I said to the chef, ‘You're prepping all this food for one day. Why don't we add Saturday brunch?’”

Brunch is served 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in the fine dining restaurant used for dinner. The decor is dark wood with carved room dividers and a warm red bar adding a splash of color.

There is a large window looking into the bakery, where, for those who want to watch the baking, production gears up about 11 a.m. in the off-season and at 9 a.m. in the summer when bread orders increase.

“We have so much wonderful bread,” Mariani said, noting that the freshly made bread and pastry, along with other premium touches, make brunch appealing for people who want an elegant meal during the day.

Those premium touches include all-fresh mixers for cocktails (the Bloody Maria – made with tequila instead of vodka – is gaining popularity) and coffee brewed from beans roasted onsite.

In an aside, Mariani notes that Joseph Leon, hired as a busboy 13 years ago, spent time in his native Argentina learning roasting techniques before taking over the operation at Pain D'Avignon.

In a spring project, Pain D'Avignon expects to open Pizza Lab run by Neapolitan father-and-son pizza makers Stefano and Tomaso Bobbio, at 15 Hinckley Road in Hyannis, where Pain D'Avignon Restaurant and Boulangerie is located, between Route 132 and the Cape Cod Gateway Airport.

The brunch menu includes Croque Monsieur and Croque Madame, variations on a hot French grilled cheese; eggs or l'oeuf in French; chocolate croissant, fried chicken, fish and chips, homemade onion soup and more.

Pain D'Avignon won 46% of the 217 Cape Cod Times readers who voted, with the remaining ballots scattered among 14 other brunch places. Here are the five other top vote-getters.

Red Cottage Restaurant, 36 Old Bass River Road, South Dennis, 508-394-2923

Red Cottage Restaurant, a cozy cottage painted a cheery red, has been owned and operated by the Rosenbach family for 41 years. Chef Dan Rosenbach graduated from Johnson & Wales University. Visit the restaurant's website for a more complete history of the 71-year-old establishment. Red Cottage is a cash-only restaurant so hit the ATM on the way over.

Be sure to try the "Red Cottage Home Fries" described on the website as having "fresh-cooked potatoes, onions, tomatoes, ham, green peppers and mushrooms combined with special spices and topped with lemon Hollandaise sauce. A great upgrade from our regular home fries."

Good Friends Cafe, 83 School St., West Dennis, 508-760-2727

Stopping by Good Friends Cafe is like visiting a friend's house for breakfast or lunch. The cafe is known for its grilled breads and muffins which sell quickly in this cash-only eatery. Chrissy Carr, owner since 2009, can often be found greeting people at the counter. What was once a seasonal spot is now open year-round, closed only for Christmas and, in the off-season, Wednesdays.

Old Yarmouth Inn, 223 Route 6A, Yarmouth Port, 508-362-9962

If you have a hankering for Southern food like white pepper gravy over sausage and eggs, make a reservation at Old Yarmouth Inn. Charming with its own sense of history, Old Yarmouth Inn only serves Sunday brunch from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. so it does get busy. You'll find the white gravy on the Southern Fried Benedict, which also features biscuits.

The Kitchen Cafe, 3671 Main St. in Brewster, 774-323-0244

The Kitchen Cafe is the newish kid on the block, coming to Brewster in 2021 after COVID-19 and remote working killed much of their business in Boston's financial district. They visited the Cape for the first time and found, as did their dog, that they enjoyed the vibe.

Try the Morning Glory breakfast sandwich, stuffed with protein and promising to shore you up for a day of work following a night on the town.

The Kitchen Cafe tied with Sea Street Cafe in Hyannis for fifth place, each earning 5% of the votes.

Sea Street Cafe, 50 Sea St. in Hyannis, 508-534-9129

Sea Street Cafe is a bright sunny spot that is always busy. The menu lists a handful of specialty eggs Benedict dishes: The Cape Cod Benedict sounds good: Two poached eggs on mini lobster cakes topped with lemon dill sauce, served with French baguette.

The cafe tied for fifth place with the Kitchen Cafe in Brewster.

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