

get your sunny side up!

ONTAP'S THIRD ANNUAL BRUNCH GUIDE

As anyone who's crawled into bed in the wee hours after a night of fun - or two or three or oh, who's counting - can tell you, the personality of Sunday demands a meandering approach to the day. Leisure attends every activity. Hence the appeal of brunch and On Tap's third annual Brunch Guide. While not meant to be the definitive list, here are some fun places to sample, including a few recipes to try and a guide to that Brunch must-have, the Bloody Mary. The guide will be up on our web site all year, so you can always refer to it. Bon Appetit!

AUSTIN GRILL

2404 Wisconsin Ave, NW, 202-337-8080
7278 Woodmont Ave., Bethesda, 301-656-1366
801 King St., Alexandria, 703-684-8969
750 E St NW, Downtown, 202-393-3776
8430-A Old Keene Mill Rd, Springfield, 703-644-3111
Saturday and Sunday 11 am to 3 pm

Who knew that a margarita could taste so good for breakfast? Transforming Tex-Mex into brunch, the Austin Grill adds spice to the dining scene, and captured the On Tap Readers' Guide 2003 "Best Brunch" award.

At the Austin Grill, brunch can start with a spicy Bloody Mary of a homemade recipe,

or one of the Grill's signature margaritas. From there you'll find a menu of southwest specialties and a few breakfast classics with a Tex-Mex twist. A Mexican-style breakfast would be incomplete without the standards: Huevos Rancheros—two eggs sunny side up with melted cheese, poblano chiles and red ranchera sauce, served with rice and beans; the Breakfast Burrito—a burrito with scrambled eggs, chorizo sausage, peppers, cheese and onions; and a Migas Plate—eggs scrambled with corn tortillas, green chiles, onions and tomatoes, topped with cheese.

The Grill also offers some creations of their own. The Austin Eggs Benedict is a Canadian bacon quesadilla topped with poached eggs and a green chili hollandaise sauce. The Eggs Benedict "Señor Miller" substitutes the Canadian bacon for crabmeat in the quesadilla. If a more traditional breakfast is your style, try the "Texas" Toast: thick French toast dusted with cinnamon sugar and served with tasty pecan butter and maple syrup; the cornmeal pancakes with the same fixin's and eggs; or a bacon and eggs plate with refried beans and griddle potatoes. Many of the brunch entrées come with beans and rice, but you can just as easily substitute the Grill's southwestern-style griddle potatoes. Other items available on the side include thick slice bacon, cheese grits, or a short stack of the

cornmeal pancakes.

One of the great advantages to brunch at the Austin Grill is the ability to compromise with a non-brunch-lovin' companion. The restaurant's entire regular menu is also available during brunch-time. This includes all the Austin Grill favorites: from Texas Chili, to the famous Austin Chicken Sandwich, to combo platters and grill favorites, thus ensuring an enjoyable brunch experience for all.

Best of all, brunch at Austin Grill is not yet a sold-out event. The wait for a table is usually minimal, and the wait for food is generally less. Though atmosphere varies by location, on the whole the Austin Grill will give you a comfortable place to relax in a cheery environment with staff that is attentive, casual and friendly.

ALICIA WALLACE

BISTRO BISTRO

The Village of Shirlington
Arlington
703-379-0300
Sunday 10 am to 3 pm

One does not have to travel very far or spend a lot of money to enjoy one of the best brunches in the Metro area. Conveniently located in Shirlington Village, Bistro-Bistro boasts one of the largest and best brunch

buffets I have sampled. The buffet offers a large selection of hot & cold items, a made to order waffle and omelet station, and a fresh pastry station with desserts "to die for". Pastry Chef Aida Beaudry has been making fabulous treats from scratch there for over eight years. Of course no brunch would be complete without some bubbly. During brunch hours, you can drink all the champagne or mimosa you desire for \$5.00. No that is not a typo—go check it out.

One of the best things about dining in Shirlington Village is how pedestrian friendly it is. A mini Reston Town Center style, it is a great place to stroll around before or after you have indulged. Almost all the restaurants here boast patios and just like their brunch, Bistro Bistro's is one of the biggest and best. Plenty of seating, well separated from the patio yet perfect for people watching. Want to make a really lazy day of it? The Shirlington theatre is a mere block away, a perfect chance to catch a matinee.

Bistro-Bistro has a casual neighborhood atmosphere that belies its fine dining and elegant style. The Michelangeloesque art that encompasses the dining area compliments the menu items and extensive wine list. Apparently others agree, reservations are suggested, and the restaurant boasts numerous awards in the entryway.

JENNY ROZZELL





You Can
Try This
At Home!

GABRIEL : VENEZUELAN CHOCOLATE BREAD PUDDING

Qty	Ingredients
2 Tbsp	Grated Venezuelan Chocolate (or a quality dark-semi sweet)
1/2 Cup	Dried Cherries
1/2 Cup	Brandy
2 Quarts	Heavy Cream
16	Egg Yolks
half	Vanilla Bean
1 Tsp	Salt
1 & 3/4 Cup	Sugar
7	Croissants (2.5 ounce each)

Directions for Mixture

Marinate cherries in brandy -2 hours
 In a saucepot, add heavy cream and vanilla bean-simmer for 10 min.
 In a mixing bowl, add egg yolks, salt, sugar-mix with whip
 Slowly (temper) add saucepot of heavy cream & vanilla to mixture
 Strain mixture-take out vanilla bean, drain cherries
 Add half of the mixture to the marinated cherries, brandy & chocolate (other half used for sauce)
 Place in oven safe dish with sprinkling of chocolate on top
 Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.

Directions for Sauce

Take second half of mixture place in a double boiler cook until thickens
 Serve desired amount of sauce on Gabriel Venezuelan Bread Pudding
Be the envy of all!

BRUNCH GUIDE (CONT'D) →

GABRIEL

2121 P St., NW
 Dupont Circle
 202-956-6690
 Sundays 11am to 3pm

Bask in the laid back atmosphere and bottomless mimosas of this friendly little bistro in Dupont Circle. Almost better than the food at Gabriel is the seating. When you go out to brunch, it's a loosen your jeans, stretch out and lounge event. The furniture at Gabriel, comfy chairs with enough padding so your bum doesn't fall asleep and a welcoming couch-lined perimeter along one wall, encourages you to do just that. The other great thing about brunch is you have permission to eat all those things usually relegated to the list of maybe-one-piece-after-I-work-out-for-an-hour foods. Bacon, croissants, cheesecake anyone?

The spread at Gabriel offers a little something for everyone. Brunch traditionalists will be happy to chow down on scrambled eggs, bacon (yum...bacon), sausage, grits and home fries. Don't be fooled - I was my first plate up - that the buffet ends at the table laid out with the pastries (why are scones so under appreciated?) and fruit. Oh, no, my pretty. For the more adventurous bruncher, visit the spread of vegetarian-inspired dishes like bean salad, couscous, grilled veggies and more, that's hiding on the other side of the dining room. Dessert is also impressive and makes you

want to embrace the decadence theme. As the Safeway checker is fond of telling me, variety is the spice of life. That lesson is not lost on the dessert table at Gabriel - enjoy everything from the peanut butter cheesecake, cinnamon pound cake, chocolate cake, creme brulee, and mini key lime tarts. Be sure to give it all a healthy dollop of fresh whipped cream.

Connected to the Radisson hotel, Gabriel is a large, sunny restaurant. Surprisingly big, the restaurant maintains a sense of intimacy in its different sections by dividing the space with a square bar smack in the middle. Brunchtime, the bar serves up mimosas, Bloody Marys, and highly recommended mojitos.

Though the food and drinks were delectable, the wait staff buzzes about, sometimes too busy to see to it that drinks are full and plates are cleared. Despite this occasional annoyance, if you're in good company, the inattention allows diners to enjoy the atmosphere and sit back and let the food digest. A little pricey for brunch at \$28 a pop, Gabriel is a classy and quality option. If you're in the mood for a low stress Sunday where you're toughest choice will be between more bacon or a made to order quesadilla, this is the place to splurge.

MOLLY M. CANNON

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BRUNCH GUIDE (CONT'D) →

202-393-4499
Sundays 10:30 am to 2 pm

As a Southerner from Tennessee, I can say that if the Southern food I experienced at home had been like that at Georgia Brown's, I would



BISTRO BISTRO

never have left. Mom never made Blackened Tomato Coulis! Grandma never whipped up a batch of Frogmore Stew! And even though DC claims to be a Southern city, it certainly doesn't offer true Southern cuisine on every corner. Well, it's Georgia Brown's to the rescue.

For brunch, there is probably not a better deal in town than Georgia Brown's. For \$23.95, you can help yourself to a three-part buffet and enjoy a live jazz band. With most of their entrees typically priced above \$21, this is an excellent way to enjoy the fine food at a discount.

As for the décor, it is impressive, featuring lots of fresh flowers, blonde wood, and bronzed scrolling on the ceiling that creeps along like a Charleston Crepe Myrtle. The service stays true to the name, with a very accommodating staff that can gracefully handle any request. I have never had a bad experience with service here, even when someone in my party becomes high-maintenance. But don't think you can waltz right in: Sunday reservations should be made at least 3 to 4 days in advance, and a walk-in group or even couple can expect to cool their heels in the bar/lounge area for a lengthy wait.

Even if you aren't an iced tea fan, you have to try their peach iced tea. I also suggest you don't eat for a couple of days (maybe stop when you make your reservations?) before treating yourself to brunch here, but you'll be glad of your hearty appetite. The first part of the buffet features Georgia Brown's versions of Southern breakfast staples: Creamy grits, French toast with pecan syrup, country ham, and a choose-your-own-omelet bar. Visit as many times as you'd like, and if you're still hungry, move over to the next section and try out one of the entrees from their everyday menu that will be featured there. From Southern Fried Chicken to the famous Charleston Perla, you never know what will await you. Should you fill up and not make it this far, your waitress will box up your selection for you to enjoy later.

Last and certainly not least, don't forget to leave room for the dessert section. Sweet Potato

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ADVERTISER INDEX

Looking for a place to have brunch? These advertisers all offer a brunch, many of them are included in the brunch article. Check their ads or the listings for addresses and phone numbers.

- Austin Grill (multiple locations)
- Bistro Bistro - Arlington
- Chadwicks Old Town
- Cincinnati Cafe
- Clyde's (multiple locations)
- Cowboy Cafe North
- Crystal City Sports Pub
- Fado
- Gabriel
- Ireland's Four Courts
- McFadden's
- Meze
- Murphy's of Alexandria
- Ragtime Restaurant & Bar
- Rhodeside Grill
- Sign of the Whale
- Sign of the Whale - Falls Church
- Siné Irish Pub
- Southside 815
- Whitlow's on Wilson

MAKE MINE A BLOODY!

Along with the Mimosa, the Bloody Mary may well be the quintessential brunch beverage. The perfect combination of "the hair of the dog" and almost a meal in itself, it has helped brunch goers ease into their day since the 1930's. According to the web site cocktails.about.com, the Bloody Mary was first created at Harry's New York Bar in Paris, and originally was made with gin, as vodka was just emerging on the American drink scene. When a bartender from Harry's journeyed home to NYC, he brought the recipe with him, and the rest as they say, is history. Just like your average brunch buffet, the variations on the Bloody Mary are endless. At some bars around town, they let you be the mixologist, providing basic ingredients and all the garnishes you could want. Here is the basic recipe, and a list of a few places that let you make yours to order. Enjoy!



SIGN OF THE WHALE, DC

Basic Bloody Mary Recipe & Garnishes (courtesy of www.cocktails.about.com)

1 1/4 oz. Vodka, Dash of Lemon juice, Worcestershire, 2 or 3 drops Tabasco, Pepper, Salt & Celery salt, Tomato juice

Over ice in a tall glass, add spices, then Vodka, Fill with Tomato juice & Stir, Garnish with Celery stick & Lime wedge or literally, whatever you like!

Where to Make Yours: (addresses are in the bar listings section.)

- Asylum • Adams Morgan
- Sign of the Whale • Falls Church
- Sign of the Whale, DC
- Starboard • Dewey Beach
- Ireland's Four Provinces • Falls Church
- South Riding Inn • South Riding
- Siné Irish Pub • Arlington



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BRUNCH GUIDE (CONT'D) →

cheesecake, along with pies and peach cobbler and ice cream, are worth the extra notch in your already straining belt. If you're looking for a way to impress relatives, wow visitors, or just relax with someone special, Georgia Brown's will answer your call with aplomb, and if you're lucky, maybe even a "Ya'll". **BECKY BUCHANAN**

KRAMER BOOKS AND AFTERWORDS

1517 Connecticut Ave. NW
Dupont Circle
202-387-3825
Friday through Sunday 24 hours!!

Brunch at Afterwords Café is endless—the menu options are endless, the beverages are endless, and the wait is endless. Plus, from Friday to Sunday, they serve Brunch nearly endlessly. This café portion of the legendary Washington bookshop, Kramerbooks, offers not merely a meal in the morning—it's an experience. When you go for brunch at Afterwords, be prepared to linger. The wait for a table is usually a minimum of 15 minutes, sometimes as much as an hour. Luckily Kramerbooks comes in handy with stacks of books to browse through and a bar area to hang in if that first cup of coffee can't wait. You'll be able to hear your table announced from all locations.

Afterwords is a table-service brunch (no buffet line in sight) with a decadent and extensive brunch menu. The café serves brunch on both Saturday and Sunday, but has a more extensive

menu on Sunday with no less than 18 original brunch selections. Favorites and specialties include: the Jumbo Lump Crab Cake Benedicto—a fresh crab cake over basil scrambled eggs, finished with lemon hollandaise, café potatoes (their version of hash browns) and fresh fruit; a wild mushroom omelet—Portobello and field mushrooms sautéed with butter and shallots in an omelet with Swiss cheese; and the Nouvelle Leo—café-cured salmon, scallions and sweet peppers scrambled with eggs and sour cream and caviar. For those favoring a more traditional breakfast taste, morning classics abound here with steak and eggs, blueberry pancakes, French toast (oops, Freedom toast) and several omelets. The Afterwords café is a great spot for a veggie brunch with more than half of their menu options vegetarian. If breakfast here isn't your style, Afterwords offers a brief selection of their normal entrees also available at brunch times—mostly salads and sandwiches.

All items served at brunch at the Café include what I think of as the Afterwords beverage bonanza. When you finally reach your table after a hopefully brief wait, you'll be served a plate of mini-muffins and small glasses of fresh-squeezed orange juice. All meals also come with your choice of cappuccino, latte, coffee, or tea. And you'll also get your choice of a mimosa, strawberry mimosa, or a Bloody Mary; all included in the price of the entrée. You'll have a table full of glasses by the end of the meal, but a complete brunch experience.

Brunch at Afterwords is a city affair with closely arranged tables in their main, extensively windowed dining room and a patio in the summer providing ample view for people watching. The interior is bustling, busy, and chatty but the staff always manages to keep up. **ALICIA WALLACE**

SIGN OF THE WHALE

1825 M Street
Golden Triangle
202-785-1110
Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

What self-respecting Washingtonian has not included a Saturday night spent dancing to the rock anthems of the 80's on the benches of midtown's Sign of the Whale in her (or his) weekend repertoire? Once the Friday and Saturday night revelers have headed home to sleep it off, this midtown pub goes under a transformation, emerging under the bright light of day as ... ok it's still a midtown pub.

SOTW is at heart a bar and not a restaurant. While the food receives a passing grade, the main attraction to its brunch is not the Eggs Benedict or even the famed "Whaleburger". It is the Unlimited Mimosa and All-You-Can-Make Blood Mary Bar for a more-than-reasonable \$9.95 (\$8.95 for Mimosas), that draws in patrons.

A lot of bar-cum-restaurants boast a Sunday brunch Bloody Mary bar, but SOTW



takes this staple to a whole new level. It's not just the way you would make them at home, it's better: with, at last count, six different tomato juice/Bloody Mary mix options, more than 25 hot sauces, a spice rack that rivals any gourmet chef's, celery stalks, carrots, olives, lemon and lime wedges, and almost any other add-ons your heart may desire.

The brunch menu, although short, includes all the heavy hitters, and all are done well enough to accompany the perfect Bloody Mary: eggs any style, omelets, buttermilk pancakes, Belgian waffles, and of course, Eggs Chesapeake, featuring huge lumps of fresh Maryland crabmeat. Everything is served with a choice of breakfast meat and hash browns,



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and the obligatory slice of cantaloupe (just so we can tell our mothers we ate a well-balanced breakfast!).

SOTW's "Whaleburgers", eight-ounce hand patted burgers, charbroiled and served on an onion roll with all the fixings, are just the sturdy bar food you'd expect. Some of the cleverly named variations include the Starbuck burger, with Monterey Jack, American cheese, and two strips of bacon, and the Captain Ahab, with bacon, Bleu cheese and mushroom gravy. For Atkins-devotees, SOTW also offers the Queequeg: no bun, served with garden greens, tomato and your choice of dressing instead of French (err ... freedom?) fries and coleslaw.

The walls are adorned with paintings of whales and the stuffed heads of game animals, and a large fireplace centers the narrow dining room, in which a fire quietly crackles on any day cool enough to warrant it. The friendly staff is never slow to refill your glass, making this the perfect place to spend a lazy weekend afternoon.

Rumor has it that SOTW's Falls Church location, (same name but different ownership) at 7279 Arlington Blvd, in the Loehman's Plaza, offers a more varied menu and more talented

kitchen, for those who demand the whole package.

ANDI FISHER

CLYDE'S TOWER OAKS LODGE

2 Preserve Parkway
Rockville
301-294-0200
Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 3 pm

Who would have imagined that a rustic hunting lodge would be the new hot spot for Montgomery County's elite? The newest Clyde's, known as the Tower Oaks Lodge, has been bursting at the seams with everyone from local businessmen to wealthy singles, and everyone in-between. The sprawling Lodge overlooks the Seneca Creek Nature Preserve, and feels hours away from the madness of Rockville Pike. It's like being at someone's deep woods getaway, only with better service and décor.

Reservations are highly recommended. Even though the Lodge seats 400 between its four distinctive rooms, there is a non-stop flow of people throughout the day. If the weather permits, you can wait for your party on the massive porch and watch the fish in the pond. Or head

into the Main Bar and enjoy a Mimosa, while checking out the duck theme and wondering if you should have brought your hunting rifle. Head towards the back of the restaurant, and you'll not only notice the great view through the massive windows, but the two huge stone fireplaces at either end of the room. This is a favorite place for most diners, and features cozy booths and mounted animal trophies and sporting equipment. Vegans and PETA members will probably not enjoy this room, so keep that in mind when you are being seated!

My favorite area is the Garden Bar, with huge skylights, sliding doors and a light airy feel. Any meal here is like dining in the woods, minus the ants and picnic basket. This serves as the Oyster/Raw Bar for the Lodge, but features the normal menu as well.

For more formal occasions, the Hunt Room should be your choice. With a huge 18th Century fireplace and raised cherry paneling, plus any and everything to do with riding, polo, racing and hunting, it's a masculine place to dine. This is the room to take your extended family if you want to impress them with a more typical DC-establishment style.

Once you've gotten past your

surroundings, the Lodge has a brunch menu that aims to impress. From Clyde's classics like the Hot Steak Salad, Cheeseburgers and great appetizers such as the Crab and Artichoke dip, you can also select their specialty brunch items. Everything from Eggs Benedict to Crème Brulee Stuffed French Toast is featured a la Carte, and will please anyone in your group. Not the type to plan ahead? Some of the brunch items are served during their Saturday lunch, which isn't as busy as Sunday brunch and doesn't usually call for reservations.

BECKY BUCHANAN

WHITLOW'S ON WILSON

2854 Wilson Blvd.,
Arlington
703-276-9693
Saturday and Sunday 9 am to 2 pm

Washingtonpost.com's 'Best Bets 2002' readers' survey crowned Whitlow's on Wilson the top singles scene in the area, featuring live entertainment Tuesday through Saturday, great happy hour specials and more than 10 beers on tap. But it isn't just the good deals and good cheer in the wee hours that put this North Arlington weekend hotspot on the to-

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TASTE. THE DIFFERENCE.

do list: in-the-know Washingtonians come to Whitlow's the morning after, for a little 'hair of the dog' and a leisurely grazing over the generous brunch buffet.

Whitlow's brunch menu features diner favorites like Corned Beef Hash & Eggs in generous portions and at reasonable prices (\$5.95 gets you corned beef, two eggs any style, hash browns and toast!). Other brunch staples include just about every variation of Eggs Benedict you can think of – aside from the traditional, Whitlow's offers Eggs Florentine (w/ spinach), Eggs Neptune (w/ crabmeat and shrimp) and Eggs Nova Scotia (w/ Atlantic salmon); and, catering to the kid in all of us (or the ones in your family!) fruity French toast: two slices of egg bread served with warm strawberry sauce, fresh fruit and whipped cream, accompanied by home fries and your choice of bacon or sausage.

For true brunch devotees, however, the Whitlow's Brunch Buffet is the only way to go. For just \$11.95, Whitlow's offers diners an ample selection of breakfast breads and pastries, biscuits and gravy, breakfast meats (crispy bacon, spicy sausage), a salad bar and omelet station and, topping it all off:

steamed crab legs with drawn butter. Complimenting the buffet is the Bloody Mary Bar, where patrons can mix their own, spicy or mild, with lime or with celery, however you like it.

Even at brunch, Whitlow's is not just about food and drink. The scene includes pool and foosball tables, and more than a few singles seeking to make – or continue – a love connection. And don't forget about Whitlow's patio. Although it may be a bit hard to find – tucked into the labyrinth of connecting dining (and playing and drinking) rooms that make up Whitlow's, this gem of an outdoor space is destined to be one of the hottest spots in Arlington with warmer temps on the way!

If you dawdle over your brunch plates long enough, you'll be treated to another weekly Whitlow's ritual: Open Mic Night begins at 7:00 pm every Sunday with host Kenny Haddaway. Whitlow's is located in the heart of Arlington, on Wilson Boulevard between Clarendon and Courthouse Metro stations. **ANDI FISHER**

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AUSTIN ★ GRILL

On Tap Readers' Guide 2003 "Best Brunch"



BRUNCH MENU

(Saturday & Sunday 11-3 pm)

- Austin Eggs Benedict
- Eggs Benedict "Señor Miller"
- "Texas" Toast
- Mexican Chorizo Burrito
- Avocado & Tomato Omelet
- Bacon & Eggs Austin Style
- Cornmeal Pancakes & Eggs
- Huevos Rancheros
- Migas Plat
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