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14 best new restaurants for breakfast in North Jersey



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The jury may still be out on breakfast.

Scientists say it may or may not be the most important meal of the day. But, goodness knows, we don't need researchers to tell us that breakfast — whether it does or does not help us lose weight, whether it does or does not help our kids academically, whether it does or does not improve our health and whether it does or does not lift our spirits — can be the most delicious meal of the day.

A stack of fluffy pancakes enveloped in maple syrup. A thick piece of toast laden with creamy avocado mash. Soft and velvety scrambled eggs beside crispy hash browns. A buttery brioche stuffed with luscious gelato (yes, if Sicilians call it breakfast, so can we — read on).

The following spots in North Jersey offer the kind of delicious and satisfying breakfasts that you and your taste buds deserve. All you have to do is rise and shine and ... get yourself there.



L'Arte della Pasticceria, Ramsey

Brioche stuffed with gelato for ... breakfast? You bet — at least it's breakfast in Sicily, and chef and co-owner Andrea Guastella of L'Arte della Pasticceria, a beloved, 9-year-old modern Italian bakery, hails from that Italian island.

You'll get no pushback from us. Not when the brioche and the gelato are made in-house. You can opt to have your brioche with home-made granita. Then thank Sicily for this break-the-rules, break-the-fast dish.

If you're more of a traditionalist, consider breakfasting on a flaky, buttery cornetto, Italy's slightly sweeter version of a croissant. Get one as is or get one stuffed with ricotta and mozzarella; a nice little boost for your daily calcium intake.

If a Continental breakfast is not your thing, L'Arte offers egg dishes including one called egg in a basket: two fried eggs served with a slice of home-baked bread and a side salad of arugula, feta and reduced balsamic glaze. "It's not very Italian but people love it," said Guastella. What's not to love?

Go: 109 E. Main St., Ramsey; 201-934-3211, larte.biz.

True Salvage Cafe, Maplewood

When chef Signe Hesserman and her father, David, opened True Salvage Cafe five years ago, their customers didn't know what a classic Jersey breakfast sandwich was. "Most of them were from Brooklyn," she explained. Today the Taylor ham, egg and cheese sandwich is the cafe's No. 1 bestseller.

What makes it such a winner? In addition to using village rolls ("Not Portuguese rolls," Signe emphasized) from Balthazar, the acclaimed bakery in Englewood, she scrambles the eggs — "never fry" — making them fluffy and velvety.

"We won't accept fried eggs as an order," Signe said. "Everything is cooked in a pan; we don't have a flat-top." Running close behind the Jersey breakfast mainstay in popularity is the cafe's thick-cut bacon, cheese and egg sandwich.

The cafe's menu is not frou-frou or highfalutin' in any way, but rather traditional — eggs, cheese and bacon cooked in a number of ways. Plus an avocado toast. But, for that hit-me-with-something-different desire, Signe offers a special dish every day.

On weekends, you can count on The Hangover Cure, a breakfast burrito made with scrambled eggs, onions, jalapeno, cheese and a smattering of chipotle on a crisp tortilla. Another special to look out for: The Jim, scrambled eggs, roasted chorizo, gooey cheddar, caramelized onions on a village roll.

As for your morning cup of joe? "We don't have any lattes, cappuccino, espresso," Signe said. Just good, old-fashioned fresh drip coffee. Another American breakfast tradition upheld.

As for the name of the cafe? Visit it for the best answer (yes, it's decorated with lots of salvaged finds).

Go: 292 Elmwood Ave., Maplewood; 973-327-9939, truesalvagecafenj.com.

Willow & Whisk, Wyckoff

Here we have breakfast with elegance.

Willow & Whisk in Wyckoff, a well-appointed BYOB restaurant, is serious about serving innovative breakfasts in a swanky, sophisticated dining room. The breakfast-and-lunch spot eschews chichi menus but embraces top-notch ingredients. Here your eggs Benedict is served with Canadian bacon and a housemade English muffin; your farmhouse omelet comes with red pepper coulis; and your brioche French toast is accompanied by orange-honey butter. And your dining room is decorated with a tall made-from-silk willow tree.

There's much to satisfy your morning cravings here: zesty shakshuka with fragments of feta; quinoa bowl with corn salsa and baby watercress; avocado toast with pickled red onions; and fluffy lemon ricotta pancakes that are so rich, so big, so hefty (three giant disks as big as their plate) that general manager Anna Bischoff admits she has never seen anyone finish a serving. "If I'm being bad, it's my go-to," she said. "It's so good."

If you fear busting your pants, opt for the mini lemon ricotta poppers.

The staff's go-to breakfast? The So-Cal Bowl, a Tex-Mex/Cali concoction of home fries, black beans, sharp Wisconsin cheddar, housemade tomato aioli and pico de gallo, topped with a sunny-side egg.

Your drinks choices range from masala chia latte to fresh-squeezed orange juice to lavender limonade.

Go: 319 Franklin Ave., Wyckoff; 201-425-9931 willowandwhisk.com.

Cubita Cafe, Nutley

The idea came to chef/owner Gustavo Gutierrez while driving — and eating — in his car.

According to manager Yechiel Malik, Gutierrez, who has worked in a number of restaurants for the past two decades including acclaimed Le Cirque in Manhattan, was enjoying the classic Jersey sandwich when it plopped right onto his lap. He knew then he had a problem that he needed to solve — and then serve at his restaurant. His solution: stuff all that meat, cheese and eggs into dough and fry it. And the breakfast empanada was born. Get it with chorizo or Taylor ham, the latter topped with everything bagel seasonings. Call it the everything empanada.

And of course get a cup of potent espresso coffee; Cubita prides itself on having the best in town.

Breakfast is available all day long; that everything empanada can be dinner, too.

Go: 234 Franklin Ave., Nutley; 973-630-9220, cubitacafenj.com.

AK Cafe, Clifton

Care to take a little trip to Turkey for breakfast? AK Cafe, a 12-year-old Turkish restaurant, can help transport you there with its hearty breakfast. Your choices include a "simit plate," a platter of boiled egg, sheep cheese and mozzarella, olives and tomato slices, surrounding the Turkish sesame bread, simit. It looks like a huge bagel but has a heady nutty taste. And of course a cup of Turkish coffee. Strong, somewhat bitter stuff. But not to worry, it comes with a piece of Turkish delight on the side to help that potent back brew go down.

Go: 415 Crooks Ave., Clifton; 973-340-0060, akcafe.com.

Brownstone Pancake Factory, Englewood Cliffs and Edgewater

Bring your smartphone. You're going to want to snap photos for your social media. Brownstone Pancake Factory, a modern diner, is famous for its humongous, over-the-top pancakes, waffles and shakes.

Bring a hearty appetite too. You're going to need it to make a dent in its pancakes-that-could-pass-for-dessert creations. Among them: fried Oreos cheesecake baked with peanut butter chips and topped with grape jelly; chocolate-covered strawberry pancakes topped with chocolate sauce and whipped cream; and chocolate and peanut butter speckled with peanut butter and chocolate chips and topped with whipped cream, peanut butter and chocolate sauces.

To drink, order one of its equally extreme shakes. Perhaps its waffle ice cream sandwich shake, an otherworldly looking drink of vanilla milkshake studded with mini waffles, topped with a mountain of whipped cream and drizzled with caramel sauce.

Then go home and nap.

Go: 860 River Road, Edgewater, 201-945-4800 and 717 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood Cliffs, 201-945-4800; .brownstonepancakefactory.com.

Butter & Jam, Madison

As the name implies, Butter & Jam offers jams (house-made) and butters (freshly infused). However, it serves much more — pancakes, French toast, omelets, Niçoise salad and croque monsieur sandwich — at its full-service 50-seat dining room. If you're into toasts, you've got plenty to choose from: herb goat cheese and smoked salmon; ricotta and strawberry jam; housemade hummus and tomatoes and cucumbers; and avocado, cherry tomatoes and a dollop of creme fraiche.

Go: 30 Cook Plaza, Madison; 973-261-9213, butterandjamcafe.com.

Toast, Montclair

Prepare to wait on the weekends to get your teeth into one of Amy Russo Harrigan's scrumptious pancakes. Are they the best in the area? Who knows. But order them; nearly everyone else around you will. How can you resist carrot cake pancakes made with coconut, raisins, honey and walnuts? Or, for that matter, about red velvet pancakes served with homemade cream cheese?

But then again, the bennys are pretty terrific too, especially the Irish benny: English muffin topped with divine corned beef hash, perfectly poached eggs and buttery-lemony hollandaise sauce. And, come on, gotta try the grilled cinnamon buns. Take our advice: come hungry.

Go: 700 Bloomfield Ave., Montclair; 973-509-8099, montclair.toastcitydiner.com.

Steven's Cafe, Rutherford

Owner Steven Incekara reports that he is selling lots of breakfast sandwiches at his second outpost; his first is in Weehawken. You can have your breakfast sandwich (that is bacon, egg and cheese) on a roll, in a bagel, on toast, in a wrap. That sandwich can also be made with Taylor ham.

The cafe serves Italian coffee, specialty teas, French pastries from Le French Dad Boulangerie in Montclair, fresh juices and smoothies, hand-rolled bagels from Mr. Bagelsworth in Edgewater and an assortment of flavored cream cheese. Also available are omelets, avocado toast and Nutella toast.

Smoothies and fresh-squeezed juices also offered.

Go: 106 Park Ave., Rutherford; 201- 375-6973, toasttab.com/stevens-cafe-106-park-ave/v3

Terrace Cafe, Teaneck

Terrace Cafe recently moved from Haworth to Teaneck, bringing with it its many well-loved breakfast offerings. Among them: owner Todd Ledo's omelets. Ledo maintains they are so good, food lovers from as far as Hoboken come for them. How does an omelet with spinach, caramelized onions, mushrooms, and cheddar cheese sound? Get it with slices of multigrain bread. And a frothy cup of cappuccino..

Go: 1350 B Queen Anne Road, Teaneck; 201-338-4720, clover.com/online-ordering/terrace-cafe-teaneck.

Review of Brownstone Pancake Factory Brownstone Pancake Factory

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In addition:

Marcel Bakery & Kitchen, Montclair. Chef and owner Meny Vaknin folded the eats once served at his well-loved Mediterranean restaurant Mishmish into his darling Mediterranean-style bakery and cafe named after his grandfather, a Moroccan-Jewish painter. We're talking his awesome shakshuka and his incredible hummus, among other delectable dishes. Also, gotta love a sandwich called The Committed Jew: smoked salmon, cream cheese, pickled onion and dill sauce on a sesame bagel. *631 1/2 Valley Rd, Montclair; 973-842-4088, marcelbakeryandkitchen.com.*