



LET'S BRUNCH

A Taste of Indulgent Weekend Treats

In Orlando, the all-American breakfast-lunch hybrid is not just a meal but an event. Offerings range from convivial local hangouts to signature hotel dining rooms.

BY RONA GINDIN

Stretch the Sunday of your Orlando visit into a stand-alone holiday, relaxing over a late-morning meal enhanced by a bloody mary or flute of champagne. A gourmet array of brunch foods, specialty beverages and live music enjoyed at an unhurried pace, will ease you into or out of more active endeavors on your visit.

An Affair to Remember

Brunch is a point of pride in Orlando, and several high-end hotels try to outdo each other.

You'll dine beside luxury-loving locals at **La Coquina**, home of Central Florida's most extravagant brunch. Located within the 1,500-acre Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress near Disney World, the \$63.95 meal can easily stretch into day-long culinary adventure. The food is set up in the style of a European market within the restaurant's kitchen. One station may offer guava-glazed pheasant breast or potato-crusting snapper while others feature rack of lamb, caviar, raw shellfish and imported cheeses. Live piano music plays, champagne flows freely,

and dining room views of swans gliding along the lake outside add to the posh atmosphere. *September through June. 1 Grand Cypress Boulevard, Lake Buena Vista, 407-239-3853, hyattgrandcypress.com*

Dress up for **The Boheme's** sophisticated brunch in downtown Orlando. Like the hotel in which it's housed, The Boheme is an urban retreat. The decor is suave, original artwork covers the walls, and, during brunch on Sundays from 10:30 to 2:30, live jazz plays in the adjacent lounge—which features an impressive Imperial Grand Bösendorfer piano. The \$49.95 buffet includes house-cured salmon, Belgian waffles and carved meats. *Grand Bohemian Hotel, 325 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, 407-313-9000, grandbohemianhotel.com*

Diner Chic


Sometimes you just want really good breakfast food in a laid-back atmosphere. Two popular brunch spots borrow the best from 1950s-style diners, twisting in some New Millennium recipe tricks. The people-watching is as fun as the eclectic menu at **Sanctuary Diner**, a new restaurant in trendy Thornton Park in downtown Orlando that gives a boost to typical greasy spoon fare. Besides a really good bacon-and-eggs plate, the Sanctuary gets playful with items such as a breakfast "corndog" of skewered turkey sausage wrapped in a maple-infused pancake and Crispy Soft Shell Crab Benedict. But you may be tempted to order corned beef hash or one of the chef's personal favorites, egg foo young fritters. *101 S Eola Drive, Orlando, 407-481-2250*

The **B-Line Diner** on International Drive, near the Orange County Convention Center, is so much like the coffee shops up north that transplanted locals frequent the hotel restaurant for a taste of home. That nostalgia is served up in a polished retro setting that's a playful take on the diner theme. The brunch food is more adventurous than the originals'. As part of the \$27 price, guests receive the choice of eight entrees including eggs Benedict made with applewood-smoked Canadian bacon, and a spinach, portabello and gruyere quiche. Champagne or mimosa sorbet with fresh fruit begins each meal and desserts are included. *The Peabody Orlando, 9801 International Drive, Orlando, 407-352-4000, peabodyorlando.com*

Eggs with Attitude

While food is the crux of any brunch, some eateries offer surprising twists. Consider the House of Blues, where the slogan, "Praise the Lord and pass the biscuits!" lures the faithful and the curious to the **World Famous Gospel Brunch**—a spirited merging of hallelujahs and honey-baked ham. Located in an intimate club venue with weathered woods, the concert hall features a group of gospel singers every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Between bites of Southern specialties like grits, cornmeal-crusted catfish and pecan squares, diners sway, clap and even sing along with the entertainers. *Walt Disney World, Downtown Disney West Side, 1490 E Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista, 407-934-BLUE, hob.com*

At the spiffy **Cantina Laredo**, the Sunday special takes on the tastes of Mexico. Here they call the classic brunch beverage Bloody Maria and their eggs *huevos*. That complimentary cocktail pairs with choices like a chicken fajita omelet, eggs scrambled with chorizo sausage, and chicken chilaquiles topped with cascabel sauce—named for the rattle-shaped chile pepper that flavors it. *Dellagio, 8000 Via Dellagio Way, Orlando, 407-345-0186, cantinalaredo.com*

The tastes are just as bold at the globally influenced **Dexter's**. You won't need to dress up to eat here. Located in Winter Park's Hannibal Square, this is a destination for hipsters who want to wear flip-flops, have a big plate of robust food, and walk out with barely a dent in their wallets. Raspberry cream cheese-stuffed French toast, fried chicken and biscuits, and make-your-own omelets (try the andouille sausage, grilled portabello mushrooms and/or gouda cheese) all come in at under \$11. *558 W New England Avenue, Winter Park, 407-629-1150, dexwine.com* 



Top: The B-Line Diner at the Peabody Hotel, popular with locals and visitors alike. **Above:** It's hard to find a swankier—or more gourmet—brunch than the one offered at La Coquina at the Hyatt Grand Cypress.