

# Breakfast Specials

Our mothers always told us that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Simon Thomsen gives his verdict on Sydney's 10 top ways to start the morning.

In 1993, a cheery bloke with a smile so dazzlingly white you'd never guess he was raised in Melbourne, changed the way Sydneysiders eat. When Bill Granger opened bills in Darlinghurst, few realised he would launch an industry of imitators. Communal tables, ricotta hotcakes and sweetcorn fritters became the lingua franca of cafe breakfasts. And while people might be cutting back on expensive restaurant meals at night, breakfast's popularity continues to grow. After all, it's the perfect way to socialise without it costing the earth. Here are our 10 top picks.

Photography **Jennifer Soo**  
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Blackboard **Doug up on Bourke**

## 1. Best bakery

**Brasserie Bread**, 1737 Botany Road, Banksmeadow. Phone 9666 6845. Does it get any better than a boiled egg with Vegemite soldiers? Well, yes: sourdough pancakes with stewed berries and honeycomb cream (\$12, right) and a Florentine panini (egg, smoked ham) dripping with hollandaise (\$12). We love this warehouse-style mix of bakery and cafe – especially for the Allpress coffee. Toasted quinoa bread with Seville orange marmalade (\$4) if you're good; toasted brioche with chocolate spread (\$6) if not. Croque monsieur or madame (\$10/\$11) depending on your preference. Watch them baking through the glass and grab a walnut-and-fig or sour-cherry loaf for breakfast tomorrow at home. **Also consider: Central Baking Depot**, 37-39 Erskine Street, city. Phone: 9290 2229. The team behind Bourke Street Bakery offers a delicious selection of pastries, tarts and pizza slices in this city spot.



## 2. Best CBD pit stop

**Plan B**, 204 Clarence Street, city. Phone: 9283 3450.

Who said cheesecake isn't the perfect way to start the day? Especially when it's made by the team from two-hat fine diner Bécasse. City workers have no excuse to miss breakfast when they can swing by this bolt-hole for a pain au chocolat (\$4) and Single Origin coffee. There's also a bench inside and a couple of tables on the street if you want to pause, as Italians do, for a croissant, a slice of banana bread, a muffin or the pastry of the day, perhaps poached quince with almond tart (\$4). You can also leave with lunch-at-the-desk sorted plus a little peanut brittle for afternoon tea... **Also consider: Bambini Trust Cafe**, 185 Elizabeth Street, city. Phone: 9283 7098. For a CBD working breakfast with all the trimmings.

## 3. Best Asian

**Kam Fook**, Level 6, Westfield Shopping Centre, Bondi Junction. Phone: 9386 9889. **Also at Level 6, Westfield Shopping Centre, Chatswood.** Phone: 9413 9388. This large, bustling Cantonese-style restaurant makes shopping and shao mai symbiotic. A daily 10am start here means that yum cha gets going earlier than at most Chinatown places so you can be primed with barbecue pork buns before a spot of retail therapy. While Chatswood is a 600-seat barn, Bondi Junction holds an "intimate" 300. There's a ruthless efficiency to the trolley matrons, who are thrifty with the smiles unless you've brought the kids, so gird your chopsticks to hail what you want. The steamer contents always please, especially fluffy prawn or scallop and spinach dumplings (\$7.20) and fried rice noodles with dried shrimp (\$6.40). Barbecue meats and gai lan trolleys pass less frequently. Washed down with green tea and a slightly warm custard tart, you can come back in a few hours for your second breakfast. **Also consider: An Restaurant**, 27 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown. Phone: 9796 7826. Vietnamese pho (noodle soup) from 7am daily.



## 4. Best for blokes

**Deus Café**, 98 Parramatta Road, Camperdown. Phone: 9519 3669. It's about bikes and big breakfasts here, although the inner west's laptop riders also like to hang out at the communal tables in this warehouse-like cafe. Attached to Deus ex Machina, this motorbike (and bicycle) shop is owned by former Mambo guru Dare Jennings. The blackboard menu has its own distinctive style, starting with a mountain of slow-cooked Boston baked beans with AC Butchery pork sausage, spinach and a poached egg (\$17, below), while dill-cured salmon with scrambled eggs and toasted brioche (\$16) should satisfy your pillion passenger. Service is minimal – you order and pay up front – but loose-leaf teas are a treat. **Also consider: Fratelli Paradiso**, 12-16 Challis Avenue, Potts Point. Phone: 9357 1744. Park the Vespa outside the pasticceria for cornetti (Italian pastries) and a hit of Vittoria coffee. Great eggs, too.

## 5. Best newbie

**Spicer Street Cafe**, cnr Spicer and Queen streets, Woollahra. Phone: 9328 2221. As you'd expect in this posh 'hood, there's a panache to this crisp new cafe, tucked around the corner from Queen Street but without the prices to match (it's cash only and you order at the counter). Breakfast (7am-noon) is full of imagination and class, from house-made bircher muesli (\$9.50) to organic porridge with rhubarb (\$8.50) and a bacon and egg roll with cheddar, mayo and roast tomato (\$8.50). The eggs are organic and the sourdough is from Fuel. For something light yet decadent, it's hard to beat vanilla-scented baked ricotta smeared on toasted brioche with poached dried peaches (\$10.50). **Also consider: Sideplate**, 664 Bourke Street, Redfern. Phone 9699 6033. A slip of a cafe by the Plated catering team. Think buttermilk muffins and crepes with ricotta and poached fruit.

## 6. Best Turkish

**Kazbah on Darling**, 379 Darling Street, Balmain. Phone: 9555 7067. There's real Turkish delight in nut-studded sweet couscous with stewed rhubarb and cardamom milk (\$15). Or try a spicy lamb tagine with coddled eggs and lashings of flatbread (\$18). This is a legendary weekend



breakfast, done with aplomb. The food is fascinating but you can still score French toast with figs and double cream (\$16.50). Try a strong di Manfredi coffee or an even stronger bloody mary with harissa. It's a weekends-only institution, crowded and loud, where friends gather to gossip and the young waiters are so cheerful you regret your previous evening's excess. The kitchen slows when the room fills but everyone's having too much fun to notice. Be sure to book. **Also consider: Cafe Mint**, 579 Crown Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 9319 0848. Top-notch chakchouka, merguez sausages and kuneffa.

## 7. Best all-day

**Big Brekky**, Shop 1, 316 Stanmore Road (cnr Albert Street), Petersham. Phone: 9569 8588. Libby Shipway liked her local so much she bought it. The hearty serves and homely approach of this petite corner cafe – which also has a space for the kids to play outside – lives up to the name with a varied all-day breakfast and Campos coffee. Former chef Nim has gone from the kitchen (incumbent Patricia Phillips cooked at bills and with Kylie Kwong) but Nim's signature poached eggs with banana chutney and pesto (\$13) lives on. There's also smoky kippers with chutney on malded sourdough (\$16) or brioche French toast with banana and chocolate (\$13). And best of all, Big Brekky is now open daily, from 7am-3pm.



**Also consider: Cafe ism**, 187 Wilson Street, Newtown. Phone 9519 9665. It's cash only for an all-day breakfast menu that's big on free-range eggs and also offers good vego options.

## 8. Best all-you-can-eat

**Jonah's**, 69 Bynya Road, Palm Beach. Phone 9974 5599. This luxurious eyrie overlooking the ocean is a fine place to bask in the winter sunshine and indulge in whale watching as they migrate north for winter. It's also simply a fine place to enjoy the polished surrounds – white linen tables, freshly squeezed orange juice and polite table service. The talent that earned George Francisco a chef's hat in the *Good Food Guide* is also evident at the start of the day, from buttery croissants to fruit bread with maple butter and granola with poached fruit. Don't miss the elegant

eggs benedict with Springs smoked salmon and the surprise of black sea salt crystals sprinkled on top (left). Eat as much as you like for \$45. It's all very, very good. **Also consider: Park Hyatt**, 7 Hickson Road, The Rocks. Phone: 9241 1234. Watch the sun rise over the Opera House sails at this five-star waterfront hotel with either the buffet (\$40) or hot a la carte breakfast (\$45).

## 9. Best between exercise

**The Bathers' Pavilion Cafe**, 4 The Esplanade, Balmoral. Phone: 9969 5050. Serge Dansereau's no-bookings cafe keeps everyone content. This is breakfast as ritual. Kick off with a basket of pastries (\$7.25 for two) and a "Balmoral sunrise" – orange and lime juice with egg and honey (\$7). After poached rhubarb French toast with figs and honey mascarpone (\$18.50), things gets hearty with baked beans and smoked ham hock (\$19.50). And the chef's Canadian heritage comes out in blueberry pancakes with maple syrup (\$19.80). The day's hardest question is whether to do the waterfront promenade before or after breakfast. **Also consider: Ruby's Diner**, 173-179 Bronte Road, Waverley. Phone: 9386 5964. After a bracing swim – or the Bondi-to-Bronte walk – head up the hill for French toast, poached eggs and fresh fruit at this retro cafe. Or go crazy and start the day with a burger.

## 10. Simply the best

**Cafe Giulia**, 92 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale. Phone: 9698 4424. A blend of bustle and cool, sprinkled with a European vibe, pervades this former butcher's shop with its rambling blackboard menu and open kitchen. If your mood's light, go muffin (\$5.90), perhaps packed with halloumi, tomato and poached egg (above). The broad menu includes Tuscan toast with ricotta and honey (\$8.90), kefte (meatballs) with scrambled eggs and mint (\$15.90), Belgian waffles (\$12.90), omelettes (perhaps Spanish chorizo and parmesan, \$12.90) and boiled bagels (\$2.50). Even when you don't rise until the clock hits PM, breakfast here is a fab start to the day. (s)

Have we missed your top breakfast? Email us at [thesydney@goodmagazine.com.au](mailto:thesydney@goodmagazine.com.au) and we'll publish a list of readers' favourites in our next issue.