



# Morning glory

Author: Ardyn Bernoth  
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From the ultimate "Full English" to brioche and quince, Ardyn Bernoth tracks down Melbourne's best brekkies...

Dukkah poached eggs, \$14

**Social Roasting** Company

307 Racecourse Road,

Flemington, phone 9372 3288

An old coffee roaster squats up the back amid retro dining chairs. The aroma of six different coffee beans filters towards Flemington Racecourse. Josh the assistant roaster sifts through just-roasted beans, flicking away those that are too dark; they will ruin his brew. This passion for all things artisan sums up **Social Roasting** Company. Take their dukkah eggs. The dukkah, an Egyptian blend of nuts, seeds and spices, is house roasted then sprinkled over free-range eggs, which wobble on top of La Madre sourdough (from Geelong), and wilted spinach. On the side is a great beetroot relish and, to round off the carb intake, a crisp hash brown. It may be a non-profit cafe - but it enriches the Melbourne breakfast circuit no end. (m)

The Full English, \$18

Cumulus Inc

45 Flinders Lane, city, phone 9650 1445

Andrew McConnell, super-star chef and part-owner of Cumulus Inc, wanders in around 10.30am and grabs a bacon sarnie. "I love seeing the morning sun stream in here," he says. The light that pours in through industrial windows was part of the reason the Cumulus gang decided to include breakfast in their repertoire; people now start drifting in for from 7am. A weekday classic has become the Full English. At first glance it is nothing spectacular - a couple of fried eggs, some bacon, some black pudding ... well, slightly unusual there. And the bacon is the double-smoked variety from local boutique supplier Istra and it's cut in "farmhouse slabs", and the pudding (daringly called blood sausage here) is house-made from pork blood, pork back fat and apple. But the highlight, possibly, is a smoked baked tomato on the side ... this is a classic brekkie turned up to 11.

Pancakes with maple-glazed bacon, \$12.50

Lawson Grove Shop

1 Lawson Grove, South Yarra, phone 9866 3640

Hidden in the back streets of South Yarra, this villagey little place started life in the 1930s as a communal kitchen servicing the nearby blocks of apartments. A vestige of this utilitarian past remains -

communal tables are still present and some of the seating is no grander than an upturned milk crate. But these days the food is much more savvy, made from impeccably sourced ingredients. Bacon travels down from Wodonga from the lauded Morrison Street Butchers who specialise in smallgoods. It arrives as a large slab, which is thickly sliced then slathered in maple syrup and baked for 20 minutes before it's put into service as part of your breakfast; in this case the rashers crown a couple of light pancakes (made with Hens In Clover eggs) and a maple syrup drizzled scoop of Jock's Ice-Cream - designer (food) labels matter here ... just as you would expect in this part of town.

Goan avocado salad, \$18.50

Pearl Cafe

599 Church Street, Richmond, phone 9427 1307

How often do you feel like eating avocado for breakfast? Never? This will change after eating the Goan avocado salad at Pearl Cafe. Just a tram stop along Church Street from the lauded Pearl restaurant, diners can sample a little Geoff Lindsay lite - the Pearl chef has devised the menu here - for breakfast. Amid options like a killer French toast (a slab of brioche stuffed with poached white peaches), is this "Goan avocado salad", dressed with slivers of red onion, tomato, banana red chilli, coriander, lime and ripped buffalo mozzarella, which is carefully spooned onto a slice of toasted Dench Bakery cape seed toast.

Scrambled egg with goat's curd, tomatoes and truffle oil, \$15

Blue Dish

326 Highett Road, Highett, phone 9939 6641

This cafe in the heart of Highett has an unexpectedly distinguished French pedigree. Chef Alain Blanc (from a town in the French Alps) and business partner Leisa Campbell have been in the industry for decades running restaurants as well as cafes. From a tiny triangle of a kitchen they turn out chicken and leek pies, caramelised onion and mushroom tarts and smoked salmon and spinach quiches. And great breakfasts, like scrambled eggs given a Gallic twist with baked tomatoes and goat's cheese spread onto a crisp slice of olive bread, with a dash of (optional) truffle oil.

Bikini Blowout Benedict (BBB), \$16

Las Chicas

203 Carlisle Street, Balaclava, phone 9531 3699

This cafe is built to be tough. The unadorned brick walls, the concrete floors, the standard issue cafe tables and chairs can withstand a solid beating. Which is just as well, because on weekends this place pumps out 1200 breakfasts. A small warning: at peak periods the queue for tables bumps and grinds its way up Carlisle Street. There are four types of pancakes, three types of porridge and the wildly popular Brekky Burrito (they serve 200 of these a weekend). Then there is the Bikini Blowout Benedict. Delicate eaters need not bother. A bagel comes topped with mashed avocado, numerous rashers of bacon and two perfectly poached eggs. This calorie-laden lot is then smothered in a hollandaise so yellow it could have come from a Dulux paint chart. If you are looking for a hangover cure, join the queue.

Baghdad eggs, \$17.50

Richmond Hill Cafe & Larder

48-50 Bridge Road, Richmond, phone 9421 2808

This is certainly no new kid on the hill, but Stephanie Alexander's cafe legacy (she is no longer involved) still plates some of the best brekkies in town. Neither the name nor the description may instantly appeal, but make no mistake, a dish of Baghdad eggs is a blast. On a plate-sized disc of soft flatbread sit two fried eggs, cooked in a lemon- and garlic-infused oil, then scattered with darkly scented cumin and fresh mint. It's a lively and memorable reincarnation of ordinary old fried eggs. The experience is even more memorable when washed down with a Breakfast Martini - an inspired concoction of vodka, blood orange and marmalade (note: probably not recommended before an important meeting).

Brioche with rosewater quinces and vanilla-infused labne, \$11

The Hardware Societe

120 Hardware Lane, city, phone 9078 5992

There is a much-prized cafe vibe of warmth and homeliness that only comes when the owners have genuine relationships with their regulars. "We know when our regulars have babies, we buy them presents," says part-owner Di Keser. None of the customers would be here, though, if the food (and the Allpress coffee) was not great, like the toasted brioche, caramelised and crunchy, topped with slices of quince poached in rosewater syrup and crowned with labne, made in-house from yoghurt hung for 48 hours then mixed with vanilla bean.

French toast with mascarpone, poached plums and maple syrup, \$15

Liar Liar

90 Kinkora Road, Hawthorn, phone 9818 8864

It's not yet 8am on a cold Sunday in Hawthorn. Dads and their toddlers have filled many of the tables for two (mothers may join them later). A queue has already formed for takeaway coffee. Liar Liar's house-made preserves come with a choice of four different types of breads (five-grain, sourdough, pide or gluten-free). But we recommend a slab of French toast (the ciabatta bread is from Dench Bakery) infused with cinnamon and orange zest and accompanied by poached plums and a creamy mascarpone. It should reinvigorate any desperately sleep-deprived parent.

Your say

Do you have a favourite breakfast? We'd love to hear about it: email us at [theagemelbournemagazine@theage.com.au](mailto:theagemelbournemagazine@theage.com.au) and we'll print a selection of tips in our next issue.

Full article available at:

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