

If you only have time to eat three meals in Durham, N.C., make sure they’re here

By **Diane Daniel** November 21



In the past decade, the food scene in Durham, N.C., has catapulted from a base of family barbecue joints and a handful of interesting restaurants to a culinary destination where repurposed tobacco warehouses and textile factories house cafes, pizzerias, tapas bars, breweries and bakeries. As you might expect in a city that got a head start on the farm-to-table movement, its Saturday-morning farmers market overflows with local produce, pastries and patrons; the streets around it are lined with food trucks, food carts, bikes and trikes. A sure sign of the dining scene’s maturity is its new wave of activity, with more eateries opening monthly — many of them the second acts from trailblazers.



(Monuts)

BREAKFAST

Monuts (monutsdonuts.com; 919-286-2642; 1022 Ninth St.) epitomizes Durham’s do-it-yourself ethos and focus on social justice. Restaurant co-owner Lindsay Moriarty started out selling natural and often locally sourced handmade doughnuts from the back of a bright yellow tricycle at the farmers market in 2011. Immediate and sustained fandom allowed Monuts to open a small downtown storefront, with customers lined up for such crowd-pleasers as apple cider, glazed and Irish coffee doughnuts. In 2014, Monuts moved again to a larger space in a neighborhood near Duke University, with a cheerfully rustic decor sourced “from thrift stores and crafty friends,” Moriarty said. From there, Monuts grew into a restaurant, adding sandwiches, salads and soups, as well as beer and cocktails. Favorites include a seasonal heirloom tomato sandwich and the brunch offering, “Cheverything,” a sandwich of focaccia bread loaded with chèvre cream cheese, applewood-smoked bacon, egg souffle, greens and maple sriracha, its signature hot sauce that has earned a cultlike following. Incidentally, Monuts’ current address once housed Durham’s late and great Magnolia Grill, the restaurant that birthed the region’s farm-to-table movement and gave the state its first James Beard Award-winning chefs.



(Alex Caterson/The Splinter Group)

LUNCH

A weekly lunch special at Rose’s Meat Market and Sweet Shop (rosesmeatandsweets.com; 919-797-2233; 121 N. Gregson St.) evolved into a bonus for Durham diners. Rose’s opened in 2013 as an improbable but wildly successful butcher shop and takeout bakery. Owners Justin (butcher) and Katie (pastry chef) Meddis, who had lived and cooked in San Francisco, missed ramen, so they started making and serving their own, using bones from butchered pigs. Now, patrons no longer need to line up for the soup specials. In August, Rose’s relaunched as a casual East Asia-inspired restaurant, with the bakery staying intact. In the small storefront downtown, a smattering of high tables and some counter seats create a cozy space and make it easy to peer over to other diners’ dishes, all works of art. Boldly flavored ramen dishes change depending on the local seasonal ingredients. Rice bowls and noodle dishes vary weekly, and all noodles are handmade. Side dishes include curry rice salads, house silken tofu and pork and cabbage gyoza. And don’t leave without a homemade sweet, which could include thick ice cream sandwiches, lavender cookies, chocolate pots de creme or macaroons.

Travel newsletter
A weekly tipsheet for those who love to get away.

Sign up



(Lissa Gotwals Photography)

DINNER

Durham went from having a dearth of downtown hotels to sprouting a trio of boutique options in the past few years. The Durham Hotel, a 2015 arrival, managed to snag one of the area’s most well-known chefs, Andrea Reusing, to develop and oversee the Durham (thedurham.com, 919-768-8831; 315 E. Chapel Hill St.), its lobby-level restaurant, which also has an outdoor terrace and a rooftop bar with indoor and outdoor seating. The lively main space sports bold colors and a retro feel, though the Southern-leaning menu is thoroughly up to date. As the James Beard Award-winning chef and cookbook author did at her first restaurant, the Asian-tinged Lantern in nearby Chapel Hill, Reusing works in harmony with local producers, whose wares are found in breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch items. Dinner is the five-star standout, though, with Carolinian land-and-sea dishes that change with the seasons. On a late-summer visit, offerings included blue crab souffle, roasted oysters, crispy okra, roast pork and a cured meat platter featuring locally sourced ham, pickled wild shrimp, smoked North Carolina snapper salad, lamb prosciutto, pickled ramps and beef-fat toast. For meat lovers, the bone-in, dry-aged steak has become legendary.

Daniel is a writer based in the Netherlands. Her website is bydianedaniel.com.

Most Read Lifestyle


- 1** Which is better, Applebee’s or Cracker Barrel? Our critic ranks America’s most popular chains.
- 2** The most germ-infested places you encounter every day — and how to avoid getting sick
- 3** **Perspective** Carolyn Hax: Feeling overworked at home? Don't hesitate to speak out.
- 4** A timeline of Omarosa Manigault’s greatest — and worst — hits in the Trump White House
- 5** Alabama was supposed to turn Steve Bannon and Breitbart into kingmakers. Now what?


How to Adult

A new video series from The Washington Post




How to buy a car


**How to start a 401(k)**
▶ **Play Video** 2:10


**How to throw a dinner party**
▶ **Play Video** 1:57


Our Online Games

Play right from this page

**Klondike Solitaire**
Card game

**Mahjongg Candy**
Matching game

**Word Wipe**
Word game

**Mahjongg Dimensions**
Arcade game

washingtonpost.com
© 1996-2017 The Washington Post

- Help and Contact Us
- Policies and Standards
- Terms of Service
- Privacy Policy
- Print Products Terms of Sale
- Digital Products Terms of Sale
- Submissions and Discussion Policy
- RSS Terms of Service
- Ad Choices

ADVERTISEMENT