

COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

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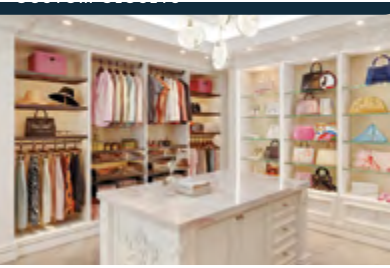
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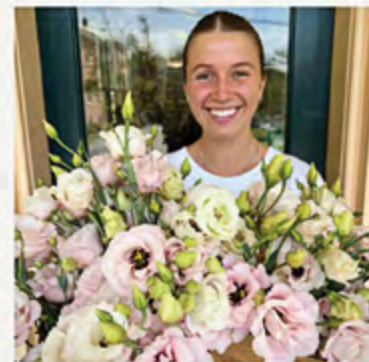
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from the
EDITOR

Happy New Year! As we welcome another year, let's take a beat to think about what and where we plan to eat in 2026. For 22 years, *County Lines* has celebrated local restaurants in our "Best of the Best" coverage in our annual Dining Guide, and this year we've got more places to highlight.

Our 2026 "Best of the Best" collection focuses on local dining spots that consistently offer delightful, delicious and dependable meals — 100+ restaurants, eateries, bars and more that are so well-loved, locals come back again and again. Whether it's their recipes, ambiance or friendly service, these spots have continued to please their patrons and contributed to building our community.

Look for more ideas for your next meal in our "Dining Guide 2026" and "Food Events," with a full calendar of festivals, restaurant weeks, wine tastings and more. Sample one, two or more.

For home chefs, Mimi Liberi's "What's Your Taste in Cookbooks?" has suggestions for all tastes, from plant-forward plates to chocolate desserts. Shannon Montgomery offers easy meal-prep ideas with rotisserie chickens in "Winner, Winner, Rotisserie Dinner," while registered dietician Kim Beazley gives advice on the current protein craze and separates hype from facts in "Protein."

In "Give Me the Simple Life," our food editor Liz Tarditi remembers her first tastes of pheasant, explaining that luxury foods often begin with something deliciously ordinary. And in "Hearth to Hearth," Kim Andrews looks at colonial cooking traditions and where you can find them today.

For drinking in 2026, we suggest a new direction initiated by the caffeine-cautious. "After Dry January" explores swapping your morning's java jolt for a cozy pot of tea — for health and mindfulness.

As always, we have ideas for family fun and more things to do in our Best Local Events.

Thank you for reading this month and every month. Our best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Jo Anne Durako
Editor

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Fine Home: John Milner Designed Property

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Home Resource Guide • Education Focus

Western Brandywine Valley • Saunas

COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

January 2026

Volume XLIX Number 5

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Christine and David, life well-lived together



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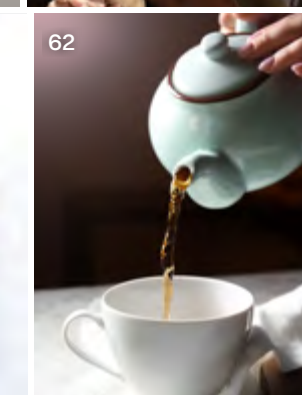


CONTENTS

Volume 49, Number 5 • January 2026

COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

- 20 **FOOD EVENTS**
Edited by Marci Tomassone
- 24 **BRANDYWINE STORIES**
Hearth to Hearth: Colonial Cooking in Chester County
Kim Andrews
- 26 **WHAT'S YOUR TASTE IN COOKBOOKS?**
We have a selection for you to sample
Mimi Liberi, Wellington Square Bookshop
- 28 **PROTEIN**
Separating the hype from the facts
Kim Beazley, Chester County Hospital
- 30 **WINNER, WINNER, ROTISSERIE DINNER**
Elevate a grocery-store staple with recipes to warm the coldest weeknight
Shannon Montgomery
- 33 **BEST OF THE BEST**
Our annual review of the best local dining
County Lines Staff
- 34 New Places to Try
- 35 Italian / Mediterranean
- 36 Asian Options
- 36 Casual Spots
- 37 New Wine, Spirits, Beer
- 38 Best Places to Eat Like a Local —
Morning, Noon, Night and More
- 52 **GIVE ME THE SIMPLE LIFE**
The elevation of peasant food in today's cuisine
Liz Tarditi
- 55 **DINING GUIDE 2026**
Great places to dine out
Edited by Marci Tomassone
- 62 **AFTER DRY JANUARY**
2026 is time for low-caf and no-caf teas
Laurel Anderson



departments

11 GOOD TO KNOW
13 JANUARY PICKS

14 BEST LOCAL EVENTS
23 SENIOR HAPPENINGS

66 INDEX

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[Good to Know]

Just a few things we'd thought you'd like to know this month

Hangover Helper. January 1 marks, fittingly, **National Bloody Mary Day** — the day we all appreciate a famous hangover cure after a long New Year's Eve. Chester County has no shortage of great options, but local favorites include the house-made version at Roots Cafe in West Chester, the popular flight at Station Taproom in Downingtown and the spicy pour at Chester Springs' Bloom. Wherever you go, it's the perfect way to start the year restored. Cheers! RootsCafeWC.com; Station-Taproom.com; BloomSouthernKitchen.com

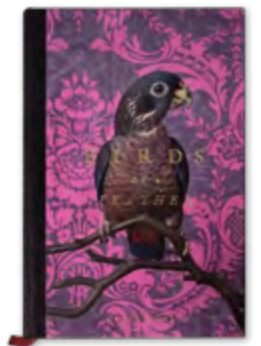


Wander On. Doomscrolling got you down? Havertown's Kristine Mascione has developed an app designed to get you off your phone and out exploring. Launching this month, **Vondern** (meaning to roam, wander or hike in German) is a social media platform that will help you find fresh experiences around the Philly area. Follow friends' picks for small businesses, parks, activities, local events and more, then showcase your own adventures through photos and recaps. Vondern.com

Nibble Nirvana. Hosting an event — or just craving stylish snacks? **Olive & Meadow** recently opened a brick-and-mortar shop in historic Dilworthtown, next to Ground Provisions. At their new digs, order Instagram-worthy custom grazing boards, brunch boards, salads, sandwich trays and more charcuterie goodies — in cups, cones, boxes, even a tower of champagne coupes. Need something quick? Grab-and-go options await in the cold case. 1388 Old Wilmington Pk., Unit 100, West Chester. OliveAndMeadow.com



Winged Wonders. Brighten your coffee table with the latest book by local artist Claire Rosen. **"Birds of a Feather"** features portraits of live birds set against opulent, historically inspired backdrops, drawing from scientific illustrations and Victorian wallpaper. Spanning a decade of work, the tome's 120 color photographs — of parrots, songbirds, owls, hawks, eagles, chickens, ducks, pigeons — and historic quotes weave together ornithology, art history and ethical questions surrounding human-animal relationships. Signed copies available. Claire-Rosen.com



Healing Connections. If your family is overwhelmed by the impacts of addiction, you don't have to face it alone. Local nonprofit Be a Part of the Conversation has added new sessions of its virtual **Family Recovery Course**, a three-part, peer-led program developed in collaboration with licensed clinicians. Modules include Addiction 101, Family Foundations and Family Recovery. Each small-group course is limited to 12 participants, ensuring a supportive, intimate learning environment. Enroll online. Conversation.Zone/FRC

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best Local Events

Greater Philadelphia Spring Home Show January 9-11



a.m. to 5 p.m. \$10. Free passes at GreaterPhillyHomeShows-VF.com

Be inspired, motivated and excited for your upcoming home improvement project, whether it's a minor renovation or a major remodel. *Valley Forge Casino Resort, 1160 1st Ave., King of Prussia. Fri., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sun., 10*

A Grand Night for Singing January 9-18

This revue offers a fresh and innovative take on the songs of Rodgers & Hammerstein. Complete with a live orchestra on stage accompanying some of SALT's finest singers and dancers, this not-to-miss experience will leave you feeling full of nostalgia & beauty. *1645 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Times and tickets, SaltPA.com*



KATS Annual British Panto "Robin Hood and His Merrie Men" January 23 & 24



Step into the magic, mischief and mayhem with the Kennett Amateur Theatrical Society, where the jokes are silly, the villains are boo-worthy and the heroes always win ... eventually! Fun for the whole family. *Kennett High School, 100 E. South St., Kennett Square. Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 2 & 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$20. Call KATS.org*

January Picks by Marci Tomassone

Red Carpet Premiere - Dare to Declare January 26, 28, February 10

The Chester County Community Foundation announces the release of *Dare to Declare*, a powerful short film commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, with three red-carpet community premieres: *Jan. 26*, Uptown!



Knauer Performing Arts Center, 226 N. High St., West Chester, 5 p.m.; Jan. 28, The Colonial Theatre, 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville, 6:30 p.m.; *Feb. 10*, Kennett Library, 320 E. State St., Kennett Square, 6 p.m. Each event will feature the screening of the short film and an opportunity to connect with community members who helped bring this project to life. Free. A250Friends.org

Magical Mystery Doors — A Tribute to The Beatles, Zeppelin & The Doors January 29



Journey through time with this tribute act that blends the music of three legendary bands to create something new and unique. MMD also enhances the audience experience with a visual presentation and a stunning array of lighting, allowing this act to create an environment where the music comes to life. *Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, 226 N. High St., West Chester. 7:30 p.m. \$50-\$60. UptownWestChester.org*

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH JANUARY 11
Garden Railway at Longwood Gardens. A multi-level world in miniature, complete with a seasonally changing plant palette. The Garden Railway features a collection of models that represent and recreate many of Longwood's features in miniature—including a new Chimes Tower and Waterfall model. *1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Daily, 10 am to 11 pm. For timed tickets, LongwoodGardens.org.*



JANUARY 10 & 11
Greenberg's Train and Toy Show. Explore the fascinating world of miniature railroading at the train show. You'll see hundreds of trains, accessories, scale models and collectible toys for sale as well as huge operating exhibits, activities for kids, free seminars and educational opportunities and much more. *Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Daily 10 to 4. \$10. PhillyExpoCenter.com.*



JANUARY 10 & 11, 17 & 18
Uptown Studio presents "Pinkalicious"



The Musical." Too many cupcakes turn everything pink in this sweet tale of color, chaos and embracing what makes us unique. *226 N. High St., West Chester. Sat, 1 pm; Sun, 3 pm. \$12–\$25. UptownWestChester.org.*

JANUARY 18 & 24
Treats on the Trail. Themed hikes designed for children ages 3–8 (but great for the whole family) combining exploration, education and tasty treats to create memorable experiences. *Jan, 18, Oakbourne Park, 1014 S. Concord Rd., West Chester, 11 am. Jan, 24, Willows Park, 490 Darby-Paoli Rd., Villanova, noon. \$16. HikingHoundAdventures.com.*

JANUARY 20
Family 2nd Sunday at Delaware Art Museum. Join this hands-on art experience where kids and their grown-ups can unleash their creativity in a space filled with colorful, quirky materials. There are no rules—just pure imaginative play. All ages. *Delaware Art Museum, 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 10 to 4. \$6–\$18, under 6, free, DelArt.org.*



JANUARY 24–25
Ice On State in Media. Mark your calendar for a winter weekend in Media. Artists from Ice Sculpture Philly create sculptures that will be unveiled at noon on Sat, live carvings are scheduled for noon and 4 pm at Plum and State Sts. with live music at 6 pm. Sunday features family activities, music and interactive sculptures. Sculptures are removed at 4 pm. Presented by Visit Delco. Free. *VisitMediaPA.com.*



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS.....
THROUGH JANUARY 1
Holidays at Hagley. Returning this year with Holiday Home and Garden Tours is the annual Gingerbread House Contest. Hagley's Library & Soda House, 298 Buck Rd., Wilmington. Daily (closed Wed) 10 to 5. \$10–\$20. Hagley.org.

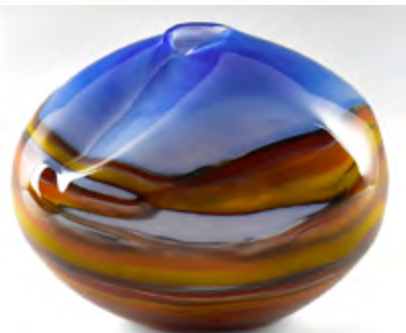
THROUGH JANUARY 3
Chester County History Center—Season of Lights. A display of the rich culture of Chester County's diverse population. Twinkling lights, festive displays, decorated trees, international cuisine and multicultural activities for all. 225 N. High St., West Chester. MyCCHC.org/SeasonOfLights.

THROUGH JANUARY 3
Yuletide at Winterthur. Yuletide charm meets contemporary creativity in the historic mansion. Delight in beautifully decorated trees inside and out and marvel at a large-scale gingerbread house and 18-room dollhouse. Enjoy enchanting decorations and outdoor lighting inspired by the woodlands of Winterthur. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. Tues–Sun, 10 to 5. \$9–\$30. Winterthur.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 11
A Longwood Christmas. This Christmas, the Gardens are transformed into a living jewel box as twinkling lights dance, hues of emerald green to ruby red to bold sapphire shimmer, and every path leads to a new treasure. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. \$20–\$42. Timed tickets required. LongwoodGardens.org.

ART, CRAFTS & ANTQUES.....
THROUGH JANUARY 1
Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market. Local artisans, designers, crafters and jewelers offer their holiday-inspired handmade goods and gifts. Dilworth Park, west side of City Hall, 1 S. 15th St., Philadelphia. Sun–Thurs, noon to 8; Fri–Sat, noon to 9. MadeInPhila.com.

THROUGH JANUARY 24
CraftForms 2025, 30th Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft. Show-



casing works in basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather. metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art, wood and 3D printing. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. Mon–Fri, 10 to 5; Sat, 10 to 4. WayneArt.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 1
Bryn Mawr Rehab's 30th Annual Exhibition and Sale. A showcase and marketplace for talented artists, educating the community about the remarkable abilities of people with disabilities. Open daily during visiting hours. Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital, 414 Paoli Pk., Malvern. Main-LineHealth.org.

JANUARY 2
Art Is Tasty: "Queen's Closet" at Delaware Art Museum. Join in a discussion of this work of art by Richard Cleaver, then enjoy lunch in the Kaffaina Cafe. Arrive by 11:45 to preorder lunch. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Noon to 1 pm. \$18. DelArt.org.

AUTO SHOWS.....
JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 8
Philly Auto Show. Hundreds of the latest vehicles to hit the market will be on site as well as dozens of classics, exotic rides and more. *Jan. 30,*

Black Tie Tailgate, Fueling Hope, benefits Children's Hospital, 7 pm. PA Convention Center, 12th & Arch Sts., Philadelphia. Sat, 10 to 9; Sun, 10 to 8; Mon–Thurs, noon to 8; Fri, noon to 9. \$15–\$20. PhillyAutoShow.com.



DANCE.....
JANUARY 16
"The Sleeping Beauty" at The Playhouse.



Experience this timeless fairytale told through breathtaking choreography, Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score and a truly magical stage design. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

MUSEUMS.....
THROUGH JANUARY 25
Delaware Art Museum. "Warm Room: Photographs from Historic Greenhouses by Peter A. Moriarty," historic greenhouses worldwide, capturing their light-filled architecture in gelatin-silver prints. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed–Sun, 10 to 4. \$14–\$25. DelArt.org.

THROUGH MAY 31
Brandywine Museum of Art. Through Mar. 1, "Jerrold Gibbs: No Solace in the Shade." Through May 31, worldwide museum debut of a rediscovered masterpiece by Jasper Francis Cropsey not seen in the U.S. since it was painted over 150 years ago. 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Wed–Mon, 9:30 to 4:30. \$8–\$20. Brandywine.org.

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT.....
JANUARY 8–16

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 Easttown • Henrietta Hankin (Chester Springs) • Honey Brook • Kennett • Malvern • Oxford • Paoli
 Parkesburg • Phoenixville • Spring City • Tredyffrin • West Chester

The Grand in Wilmington. *Jan. 8*, “The Conspiracists,” comedy mockumentary; *Jan. 10*, Thea Vidale; *Jan. 16*, A Tribute to the Bee Gees. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.



JANUARY 9–FEBRUARY 5
The Keswick Theatre. *Jan. 9*, Rich Vos & Jim Florentine; *Jan. 10*, A Celebration of Neil Peart: Bubba Bash 2026; *Jan. 16*, Joe DeVito; *Jan. 17*, The Song Remains The Same—50th Anniversary Celebration Lez Zeppelin; *Jan. 22*, Hellenic Music Ensemble; *Jan. 23*, A Live Band Tribute to Taylor Swift—Let’s Sing Taylor; *Jan. 31*, The Bob Seger Experience: Hollywood Nights; *Feb. 1*, The Uncle Louie Variety Show; *Feb. 5*, The Man in Black: A Tribute to Johnny Cash. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Times and tickets, KeswickTheatre.com.

JANUARY 9–FEBRUARY 7
At The Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville. *Jan. 9*, Colonial 54: An Immersive Disco Experience; *Jan. 17*, The First Laughs Comedy Show; *Jan. 17*, Dead On Live; *Jan. 18*, Broadway at the Colonial Theatre; *Feb. 5*, Drew and Ellie Holcomb Never Gonna Let You Go Tour; *Feb. 7*, John Waters: Going to Extremes. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. Times and tickets, TheColonialTheatre.com.



JANUARY 15–FEBRUARY 8
Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. *Jan. 15*, Joe Conklin with special guests Norm Klar and Brendan Donegan; *Jan. 16*, Bostyx: The Ultimate Boston/Styx Tribute; *Jan. 20*, Glen Tickle Tries to Be a Person comedy show; *Jan. 23*, Sugar Mountain—A Tribute to Neil Young; *Jan. 31*, Dan Tyminski. Blue-

grass Legend; *Feb. 6, 8*, Rachel Harris—One Woman Over the Line. 226 N. High St., West Chester. Times and tickets, 610-356-2787; UptownWestChester.org.



JANUARY 16–18
Lancaster Symphony Orchestra Concert: All Prokofiev. Pianist Natasha Parem-ski brings electrifying brilliance to Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto. Also featured are “Lieutenant Kijé” and “Romeo and Juliet.” Gardner Theatre, Lancaster Country Day School, 725 Hamilton Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, LancasterSymphony.org.

JANUARY 22–FEBRUARY 7
American Music Theatre. *Jan. 22*, Hank Azaria and The EZ Street Band: A Springsteen Celebration; *Jan. 23*, Bill Engvall; *Jan. 24*, Elvis Birthday Bash with Mike Albert & Scot Bruce; *Jan. 25*, Mike Albert’s Elvis Gospel Show featuring The Stamps Quartet; *Jan. 31*, The Sixties Show; *Feb. 5*, Brett Young 2.0 Tour with special guest Jenna Davis; *Feb. 6*, TUSK: The Classic Tribute to Fleetwood Mac; *Feb. 7*, Little River Band with Seals & Crofts 2. 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. Times and tickets, AMTShows.com.



JANUARY 23
Live Comedy Special at Media Theatre—“A Trip Down Academy Lane.” Come out and show some hometown love and support for local comedian/author Chris Nee, filming a live comedy special. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, MediaTheatre.org.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....
THROUGH FEBRUARY 16
Flight on Ice. This pop-up outdoor ice skating rink brings a season of family fun, including

Local Farm Markets



- Artisan Exchange**, 208 Carter Dr. West Chester. Sat, 10 to 1. ArtisanExchange.net
- Berwyn Farmers Market**, 511 Old Lancaster Rd. Jan–Apr, 2nd and 4th Sun, 9 to noon. BerwynFarmersMarket.com
- Bryn Mawr Farmers Market**, Lancaster Ave. Bryn Mawr train station lot. Jan–Mar, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sat, 10 to noon. LMFarmersMarkets.org/ BrynMawr
- Downingtown Farmers Market**, Kerr Park, Log House Field, 28 E. Pennsylvania Ave. Jan–Apr, 2nd, 4th Sat, 10 to noon. GrowingRootsPartners.com
- Eagleview Farmers Mkt.**, Eagleview Town Ctr., 570 Wellington Sq., Exton. Jan, 2nd, 4th Thurs, Feb–Apr, 1st, 3rd Thurs, 3 to 5pm. GrowingRootsPartners.com
- Farmer Jawn Farm Store**, 1225 E. Street Rd., West Chester. Tues & Wed, 10 to 6; Thurs–Fri, 10 to 7; Sat–Sun, 9 to 5. FarmerJawn.co
- Kennett Square Farmers Mkt.**, 600 S. Broad St. Fri, 3 to 5:30. KSQFarmersMarket.com
- Lancaster County Farmers Mkt.**, 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed, Fri & Sat, 6 to 4. LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.
- Malvern Farmers Market**, Burke Park, 26 S. Warren Ave. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. GrowingRootsPartners.com
- Media Farmers Market**, Edgemont St. between Front & State Sts. Dec–Apr, 1st and 3rd Sun of the month, 10 to noon. MediaFarmersMarket.com
- Oxford Village Market**, 193 Limestone Rd. Thurs, 8 to 6; Fri, 8 to 7; Sat, 8 to 5. OxfordFarmMarketPA.com
- Phoenixville Farmers Market**, 200 Mill St. Jan–Apr, Sat, 10 to noon. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org
- Thornbury Farmers Mkt. & CSA**, 1256 Thornbury Rd., West Chester. Thurs–Fri, noon to 6; Sat, 9 to 6; Sun, 11 to 5. ThornburyFarmCSA.com
- West Chester Growers Mkt.**, Chestnut & Church Sts. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. WestChesterGrowersMarket.com
- Westtown Amish Market**, 1165 Wilmington Pk., West Chester. Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7; Sat, 8 to 4. WestChesterAmishMarket.com
- For more visit the [ChesCoPlanning.org/Agriculture/FarmGuide.cfm](https://www.chesco.org/Community/Planning/Agriculture/FarmGuide.cfm)

ice skating sessions, fire pit lounge areas, local entertainers and DJs, and food and beverages. Proceeds benefit the Delaware County Veterans Memorial Association. Energy Transfer Veterans Memorial Rink, 4901 West Chester Pk., Newtown Square. FlightOnIce.com.



THEATER.....
THROUGH JANUARY 4
“A Christmas Carol” at People’s Light. Experience the magic of Dickens’ enduring classic in this music-filled adaptation. “A Christmas Carol” is a must-see for the whole family, full of humor, heart and holiday magic. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, PeoplesLight.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 4
“Elf—the Musical” at Fulton Theatre. This modern-day holiday classic is sure to make everyone embrace their inner elf. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 4
“Annie” at Media Theatre. Bring the whole family to see the classic story of the little orphan who could. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, MediaTheatre.org.

JANUARY 14–FEBRUARY 15
“Steel Magnolias” at People’s Light. Six unforgettable women command the stage in this hilarious and heart-wrenching masterpiece under the direction of Abigail Adams. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, PeoplesLight.org.

JANUARY 21–FEBRUARY 1
“Draw the Circle” at Hedgerow Theatre. A regional premiere, this autobiographical work is the story of a suburban girl named Shireen and a Brooklyn man named Deen, and the things we do to be together. 64 Rose Valley Rd., Media. Times and tickets, HedgerowTheatre.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS
DECEMBER 31
Midnight in the Square. Celebrate New Year’s

Eve in Kennett Square under the sparkling mushroom and enjoy live bands, lasers and a photo booth. Admission is nonperishable food donation, which will be collected for Kennett Area Community Service. Starts at 8:30 pm. MidnightInTheSquare.com.



DECEMBER 31
New Year’s Eve Ball Drop in Media. Make sure you’re in the center of Media for the countdown to midnight at the intersection of State Street and Jackson Street. Live DJ gets the party started at 11:30 pm. Free. VisitMediaPA.com.

JANUARY 19
MLK Celebration Kennett Square. This year’s celebration also marks the local launch of America250, the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States. The day will feature the 25th annual fellowship breakfast, keynote speaker and “Be A King” Volunteer Fair. Kennett High School, 100 E. South St., Kennett Square. MLKCommunity.org. ♦

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A New Year, A New Chapter

Discover What's Happening in Our Community

Step into the new year with excitement and possibilities. Our community is always buzzing with extraordinary events, meaningful connections, and opportunities to live life to the fullest. There's never been a better time to explore all that we have to offer and most importantly to start planning for your future living needs. Whether you are looking for vibrant activities, a welcoming neighborhood, or peace of mind for the years ahead, we're here to help you make it happen. Let this year be the one where you take the next step toward the future you deserve. *It's never too early to join the Wait List. Contact us to start planning for your future living needs.*



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JANUARY 7-28

Reads & Company. Jan. 7, The Big Reads Book Group: "A Guardian and a Thief" by Megha Majumdar. Jan. 8, Live in Phoenixville: (at Bistro on Bridge), Carl Radke, author of "Cake Eater." Jan. 14, International Voices Book Group: "Death and the Penguin" by Andrey Kurkov. Jan. 21, Kiss and Tell Romance Book Group: "Get a Life, Chloe Brown" by Talia Hibbert. Jan. 27, Book Release Party: "Dear Debbie" by Freida McFadden. Jan. 28, What's the Tea? Book Group: "In Tongues" by Thomas Grattan. 234 Bridge St., Phoenixville. ReadsAndCompany.com



JANUARY 7-29

Main Point Books. Release Party: Jan. 7, lunch with Pam Jenoff celebrating the release of "Last Twilight in Paris" held at Jin Ding Restaurant, Bryn Mawr. Fiction Book Group: Jan. 20, "Orbital" by Samantha Harvey. Non-Fiction Book Group: Jan. 29, "Every Valley" by Charles King. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. MainPointBooks.com

JANUARY 7-FEBRUARY 4

Wellington Square Bookshop. Classics Book Club: Jan. 7, "My Antonia" by Willa Cather; Feb. 4, "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Non-Fiction Book Group: Jan. 8, "Papyrus: The Invention of Books in the Ancient World" by Irene Vallejo. Fiction Book Group: Jan. 21 & 22, "The Lion Women of Tehran" by Marjan Kamali. 549 Wellington Sq., Exton. WellingtonSquareBooks.com

And be sure to check out your local branch of Chester County Library System for book groups there. CCLS.org

Stay in the know with everything going on in *County Lines* country. Sign up for our Events Newsletter (sent twice monthly) at Newsletter@ValleyDel.com.

Send a description of your activity to Info@ValleyDel.com by the first of the month preceding publication.

For more events visit:

CountyLinesMagazine.com

100 Years and Counting

This year, Dunwoody Village celebrates 100 years of caring, first as the Dunwoody Convalescent Home that opened in 1924 and then, in 1974, as one of the first continuing care retirement communities in the Delaware Valley. It takes fortitude and vision — and adaptability — to withstand the test of time. While we pay homage to our cherished past, we celebrate our enduring commitment to excellence, forging a legacy that will endure for generations to come. We invite you to become a part of our vibrant community. Contact us today.

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Arsht Hall, 2700 Pennsylvania Ave., Wilmington, DE 19806
Spring classes start February 2.

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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

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windswept by Rick Crosswell, OLLI member

Food Events

2026

Mark your calendars for these fantastic food & beverage events. Many have a ✱ because dates have not yet been set, so check websites and our monthly events section in the magazine, online and in our Events Newsletter for updates and details.

January

10, Birds and Brews | Rushton Coffee House Pop Up

Take a hike through Rushton Woods Preserve and enjoy a warm cup of Bird Friendly to learn about why sourcing bird-friendly coffee matters so much to migratory songbirds. Rushton Conservation Center, 915 Delchester Rd., Newtown Square. WCTrust.org

15, Taste of Phoenixville

Good Samaritan Services fundraiser. Franklin Commons, 400 Franklin Ave., Phoenixville. GoodSamServices.org/Taste-Of-Phoenixville



24, 20th Annual Lemon Ball

Fundraiser at Springfield Country Club, 400 W. Sproul Rd., Springfield. AlexsLemonade.org

24, Philly Chocolate, Wine & Whiskey Festival

An indulgence of chocolate, whiskey and spirits. Gtr. Philly Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. ChocolateWineWhiskey.com



✱ Monthly Afternoon Tea at the Mercantile & Café

An invitation to pause and enjoy the comforts of the season each month. Check website for dates. Life's Patina Co. Mercantile & Cafe, 1657 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. LifesPatina.com

February

7–March 1, Wine & Chocolate Pairings Wines paired with gourmet chocolates at Penns Woods Winery, 124 Beaver Valley Rd., Chadds Ford. PennsWoodsWinery.com

14–15, Berks County Chocolate & Wine Pairing Weekend

Pairings from Berks County. BerksCountyWineTrail.com

22–March 1, Annapolis Restaurant Week

Participating Annapolis restaurants offer prix fixe menus. DowntownAnnapolisPartnership.org

28, Kennett Winterfest

Winter brews from unique breweries, live music and food trucks. KennettBrewfest.com

22–March 1, West Chester Rest. Week

Culinary masters create special multi-course, prix fixe menus. DowntownWestChester.com

March

3, Chester County Community Foundation's Sweet Charity

Giving never tasted so good, annual fundraiser. Downingtown Country Club, 85 Country Club Dr., Downingtown. ChesCoCF.org

3–14, King of Prussia Restaurant Week

Prix fixe lunch and dinner menus. Benefits CHOP. KOPRestaurantWeek.com

5, Field to Feast Demonstration Dinner

Demonstration dinner featuring three courses of locally sourced menu items, inspiring late winter dinner ideas to cook for family and friends. Rushton Conservation Center, 915 Delchester Rd., Newtown Square. WCTrust.org



5, ACTnow Annual Chef's Best Food Truck Event

Vote for your favorite offerings from competing food trucks. Benefits ACTnow, formerly ACT in Faith of Greater West Chester. Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester. AssistingNow.org

22–26, Media Restaurant Week Specials at area restaurants. Visit-MediaPA.com

28, Rails and Ales

Craft beer tasting event with food trucks. Railroad Museum of PA, 300 Gap Rd., Strasburg. RailsAndAles.org

April

26, Delaware Hospice Jazz Brunch

Great food, beverages, silent and live auctions, and music. Harry's Savoy Grill, 202 Naamans Rd., Wilmington. DelawareHospice.org

26, Annual Celebrity Chefs' Brunch

Benefits Meals on Wheels. Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. MealsOnWheelsDE.org

26, Brandywine Backyard BBQ Festival

BBQ, burgers, wine, beer, dessert food trucks. Benefits Scouting America. New Garden Township Park, 8938 Gap Newport Pk., Landenberg. CCCScouting.org

30, Notable Kitchens Tour & Chefs' Tastings

Tour special kitchens, enjoy chefs' small plates and view floral and table displays. Fundraiser hosted by the Philadelphia Orchestra. NotableKitchens.org



✱ City Restaurant Week in Wilmington Prix fixe lunch and dinner menus at premier restaurants. CityRestaurantWeek.com

May

May–September, Wednesdays

Media's Dining Under the Stars Restaurants offer outdoor dining on State St. VisitMediaPA.com

May–October, Third Thursday on State St. Kennett Sq.

Outdoor dining, live music, shopping and family-friendly activities. KennettCollaborative.org

May–October, Food Truck Tuesdays—King of Prussia Eat to the beat with live music

and food trucks.

VisitKOP.com/FTT

May–October, PXV Inside Out

Dine outside or enjoy a drink with friends in downtown Phoenixville. PhoenixvilleFirst.org

May–October, Open-Air Market in West Chester

Shopping and dining in the street. DowntownWestChester.com

✱ FlavorFest at Mt. Hope Estate & Winery

Wineries, diverse food options, artisan crafts. PARenFaire.com

✱ Willistown Cons. Trust Barns & BBQ

Celebrating 30 years of land conservation with a unique barn tour and locally sourced dinner at a surprise location. WCTrust.org

June

June–August, West Chester TAPS

Borough-wide Happy Hour with appetizer specials. DowntownWestChester.com

June–August, Pop-up Biergartens at Historic Sugartown

Beverages, food trucks and live music. 260 Spring Valley Rd., Malvern. HistoricSugartown.org

June–September, Field to Fork Guest Chef Dinners at SIW Vegetables

Dine on the farm and enjoy just-picked produce in an idyllic setting. SIWVegetables.com

✱ Great Chefs Event for Alex's Lemonade Stand

Fundraiser. Urban Outfitters HQ, 5000 S. Broad St., Philadelphia. AlexsLemonade.org

✱ Kennett on Top

Food, music, beer, wine, signature cocktail on a garage rooftop. 100 E. Linden St., Kennett Square. KennettSquareRotary.org

✱ Kennett Summerfest Wine and Food Festival

Local wines, culinary delights, live music. 100 S. Broad St., Kennett Square. KennettCollaborative.org



✱ New Castle County Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Festival

Great food, ice cream, music. Rockwood Park, Wilmington. VisitWilmingtonDE.com

✱ Rotary Clubs of Thorndale & Downingtown's Mac-n-Cheese Cook-Off

Benefits the Rotary clubs. MacNCheeseCookOff.com

7–13, St. Anthony's Italian Festival

A virtual tour of Italy. Fundraiser for St. Anthony of Padua in Wilmington. [On Facebook](http://OnFacebook)

✱ Wilmington Greek Festival

Authentic food prepared before your eyes. [On Facebook](http://OnFacebook)

July

11, Blues & Brews Maryland Feast

Savor the taste of a summertime feast. Mt. Hope. PARenFaire.com

✱ Phoenixville VegFest

Vegan food and street festival with live music and vendors. PhoenixvilleVegFest.com

August

✱ Delaware Burger Battle

Top chefs compete at Rockford

Tower in Wilmington. DEBurgerBattle.com

✱ Lancaster Craft Beerfest by Decades

Beer garden, food court and music stage in one festival experience.

100 block of N. Queen St., Lancaster. LancasterCraftBeerfest.com



September

✱ Chester County Restaurant Festival

60+ restaurants, caterers and food vendors gather in West Chester. DowntownWestChester.com

✱ Historic Odessa Brewfest

Craft beer, live music, local gourmet food. Wilson-Warner House, 202 Main St., Odessa, DE. OdessaBrewfest.com

✱ Kennett Square Mushroom Festival

Fundraiser in Kennett Square. MushroomFestival.org

✱ Oktoberfest in West Chester

Participating restaurants offering

food and beverage specials. DowntownWestChester.com

✱ Shugart's Sunday BBQ and Blues

Historic Sugartown hosts with all the fixings. HistoricSugartown.org

✱ West Chester's "Up on the Roof"

Music, hors d'oeuvres, desserts, beer, wine and martinis. Downtown WC Found. fundraiser.

DowntownWestChester.com

October

✱ Chocolate Walk in Lititz

Benefits children-focused charities in Lancaster County. LititzChocolateWalk.com

✱ Kennett Brewfest

Craft breweries and cideries, live music, food trucks and food pairings. KennettBrewfest.com

✱ Taste! Philadelphia

Exhibitors offer tastings and demos. Valley Forge Casino Resort, 1160 1st Ave., King of Prussia. PhillyTasteFest.com

✱ Thorncroft Equestrian Center "Lobstah" Bake

Fundraiser. Malvern.

610-644-1963; Thorncroft.org

✱ Unite For HER Harvest Chef & Wine Tasting Event

Fundraiser at Phoenixville Foundry, 2 N. Main St., Phoenixville. UniteForHER.org

✱ West Chester Chii Cook-Off

Hometown cooks and nonprofits bring their best chili recipes to this fundraiser.

WestChesterChiliCookOff.com

November

✱ Tavern Night—Historic Dinner at Newlin Grist Mill

18th-century foods and beverages based on period recipes. 219 S. Cheyney Rd., Glen Mills.

NewlinGristMill.org

✱ Good Food Fest

Celebrate local food and agriculture. Kimberton Fair Grounds, 762 Pike Springs Rd., Phoenixville. GoodFarmsGoodFood.com ♦

Visit our website, CountyLinesMagazine.com, for monthly listings or sign up for our twice-monthly Events Newsletter.

Barclay Friends

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Admissions Open House

Sat. Jan. 10 | 10:00-Noon

Sun. Feb. 8 | 1:00-3:00 P.M.

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Scan to view the 2026 event calendar.



WhiteHorseVillage.org | Newtown Square, PA
Independent Living | Personal Care | Skilled Nursing | Memory Support






Senior Happenings

Retirement communities often hold events that are open to the public. Here are a few. Visit websites for hours and registration.

◆ Acts Retirement-Life Communities

Multiple locations. 888-675-5091; AboutActs.com/County

New Year, New Beginnings

Discover all the options, amenities, and Life Care that make Acts-Retirement Communities such a great choice for active seniors looking to live the life they love in these informative presentations all starting at 10:30 a.m.

January 15: Granite Farms Estates, 1343 W. Baltimore Pk., Media 844-229-6413

January 22: Cokesbury Village, 726 Loveville Rd., Hockessin, DE 855-982-0584

January 29: Country House, 4830 Kennett Pk., Wilmington 844-996-4474

◆ Kendal-Crosslands Communities

1660 Street Rd., Kennett Square

844-907-1800; KCC.Kendal.org

Take a peaceful stroll through their beautiful Level 1 Arboretum, where nature's beauty is always in bloom. This serene space is open to anyone who wishes to visit, learn about over 400 marked trees, and enjoy the seasonal highlights. All visitors must check in at the front desk upon arrival. You'll get a detailed map to help you navigate the Arboretum with ease and discover all its hidden gems.



◆ White Horse Village

535 Gradyville Rd., Newtown Square

610-558-5000; WhiteHorseVillage.org

Taste & Tour

January 8, February 10, March 19

Experience vibrant senior living at White Horse Village with a guided tour of their amenities and a residence, followed by a chef-prepared lunch with residents who share why they love calling this community home. All begin at 10:30 a.m.

CCRC's Unveiled



January 20



Navigating your path to an excellent choice, presented by Anderson Elder Law. Presentation at 11 a.m. in the auditorium, lunch to follow in Steeplechase dining room.

Rightsizing Presentation

February 27

Breakfast at 10 a.m. in Steeplechase, presentation at 11 a.m. in the Auditorium.

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Hearth to Hearth

COLONIAL COOKING IN CHESTER COUNTY

Kim Andrews

1

IF YOU'D STEPPED INTO A Chester County kitchen 250 years ago, the first thing you'd notice wouldn't be the food — it would be the sound. Iron hooks creaking under the weight of kettles. Logs crackling as the cook judged the heat by instinct. Wooden spoons tapping against earthen bowls. The hearth wasn't simply where dinner happened — it was where the day unfolded.

In 2026, as the 250th celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence approaches, that colonial rhythm of fire and handwork echoes again across the region. From restored taverns to living-history kitchens, cooks and interpreters demonstrate how ordinary meals shaped extraordinary times. Their work reminds us that revolutions were sustained not only by courage, but also by what was on the table.

FOOD HISTORY

Modern diners chasing “farm-to-table” freshness might be surprised to learn colonial cooks invented it centuries ago. They

wasted little, ate what was harvested and preserved abundance by pickling, drying, smoking and salting as a hedge against lean months. Their kitchens were laboratories of resilience, while their tables were social centers where news, jokes and politics mixed as freely as ale.

Few people know the hearth more intimately than Susan McLellan Plaisted, proprietress of *Hearth to Hearth* Cookery in Bucks County. A food historian, interpreter and educator, Plaisted has spent decades studying and demonstrating cooking traditions from the 17th through 19th centuries. Her programs, taught at historic sites across the Mid-Atlantic, range from cheese-making and chocolate to shipboard rations and Lenape foodways.

Plaisted traces her passion for historic cookery to her New England childhood. “My interest in food history began in Maine with a father who had a goal of visiting all the United States presidents’ homes and a nana in South Windham, Maine who taught me essentially all my housewifery

skills prior to the age of 10,” she said. “So my father’s love of history, interest in the cooking hearths at 18th-century homes, and my early teaching and interest in my nana’s use of produce from the garden, preservation and cooking is what started my journey into food history.”

Through her hearth cooking demonstrations at Pottsgrove Manor and other sites throughout the region, Plaisted now shares that journey with audiences of all ages, reminding them that early American kitchens were places of chemistry, endurance and community. Her work helps connect the past to the curiosity of the present.

TRADITIONS CONTINUE

In Chadds Ford, hearth cookery is demonstrated as the art of using fire as both stove and teacher. Volunteers at the John Chads House coax loaves from a beehive oven, the same design that once perfumed village air with yeast and hardwood smoke.

At Black Powder Tavern in Wayne, the line between history and hospitality blurs

deliciously. In partnership with the Paoli Battlefield Preservation Fund, the restaurant’s third-Tuesday Historical Dinner Series turns an evening meal into an edible lecture. Guests fill plates with roasted salmon, Madeira chicken, potato cakes and root vegetables before hearing local historians unravel tales of the War of Independence.

“It’s food that connects you to place,” said General Manager Bernie Bottmeyer. “When people sit down to dishes that echo what might have been eaten here 250 years ago, they start to picture life in real detail: who grew the food, who cooked it and who sat around the table.”

The General Warren in Malvern still channels a convivial spirit. Long before it poured wine by the glass, the tavern (then the Admiral Vernon Inn) poured courage and camaraderie along with 18th-century libations. Its candlelight and paneled walls recall an era when strangers became allies over cider and stew, proof that history’s strongest bonds were often forged around food.

As the nation prepares to mark America250, Chester County’s kitchens offer a quiet commemoration. While battles will

always claim the headlines, it was meals that sustained the Revolution — the quiet labor of cooks who fed soldiers, neighbors and families through scarcity and fear. Every loaf pulled from a beehive oven, every stew thickened over embers, was an act of endurance and belonging. In their firelight, independence wasn’t an idea — it was something you could smell, taste and share.

As Chester County looks toward the semiquincentennial, the invitation is simple: come hungry. Step into a kitchen still alive with the scent of woodsmoke and baked bread. Listen for the echo of spoons on pewter and laughter around the fire. These hearths feed both memory and imagination. ♦

Kim Andrews is an A250 Friends Outreach Officer of the Community Foundation and nonprofit consultant. She wrote this article to raise awareness of Chester County’s role in our nation’s fight for freedom and build engagement for 2026, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. To get involved, contact America 250 Friends at the Chester County Community Foundation, A250Friends.org.



2



3



4

Where to Taste the Past Today

Hungry for history? These kitchens keep the fire burning. With these colonial foodways, the stories of 1776 still live where the fires burn low and supper is shared. Experience them at:

- **Black Powder Tavern (Wayne):** Revolutionary dinner series on third Tuesdays through 2026.
- **Pottsgrove Manor (Pottstown):** Bake-oven demos and 18th-century cookery.
- **Historic Sugartown (Malvern):** Hands-on hearth workshops and domestic-arts programs.
- **John Chads House (Chadds Ford):** Beehive-oven bread and living-history days.
- **Goschenhoppen Historians (East Greenville):** Summer Folk Festival of Pennsylvania German foodways.
- **The General Warren (Malvern):** Traditional food with occasional historic programs.
- **Pennsbury Manor (Morrisville, Bucks County):** Kitchen demos on third Sundays by *Hearth to Hearth* Cookery.



The General Warren

PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ TILDEN1876

1. Engraving of a colonial kitchen with a woman spinning, 1885
2. 18th-century food demonstration at Pottsgrove Manor
3. Thousands of loaves of bread are baked in the beehive oven of the John Chads House each year
4. Preparing beans and a bake in the hearth

PHOTO CREDIT: SUSAN MCLELLAN PLAISTED/HEARTH TO HEARTH COOKERY

What's Your Taste in Cookbooks?

HERE'S A SELECTION TO SAMPLE

Mimi Liberi, Wellington Square Bookshop



THIS YEAR'S SELECTION OF COOKBOOKS has something for all tastes. Whether you want to introduce a more plant-focused diet, cook with the seasons, shorten your time in the kitchen without sacrificing flavor, or end your meal with a new sweet treat, you'll find plenty of inspiration in these recommendations and on the shelves at your local bookshop.

Happy reading, happy cooking and happy New Year!

"Justine Cooks"

by Justine Doiron

"Justine Cooks" was named a Best Cookbook of the year by NPR, "The Today Show" and Food & Wine. Doiron is not only a cookbook author but also a popular blogger and social media storyteller with over 1.2 million followers at @Justine_Snacks. She's known for her funny, inspiring and validating stories about the way we connect through food.

The book includes over 100 plant-forward recipes, spanning salads, snacks, vegetables, seafood, tofu and more. Plus a whole chapter dedicated to beans, which will delight vegetarians. One reviewer wrote, "No one can get me to eat my vegetables like Justine."

"Justine Cooks" is a wonderful addition to any kitchen, especially those looking to add more plant-based recipes to their diets.



"BraveTart" by Stella Parks

The title alone is brilliant, but wait until you get your hands on this treatise on American iconic desserts! The book was the winner of the James Beard Foundation Award for Baking and Desserts and named Best Baking Book of the year by the "Atlantic," "Wall Street Journal," "Bon Appetit" and many others.

Trained as a pastry chef at the CIA Institute, Parks' dedication to relying on the science of her passion for the history of desserts is quite evident. Many of these desserts date back hundreds of years, and recipes are accompanied by vintage advertisements. It's culinary time travel with timeless treats that will evoke many a childhood memory. Think pecan sandies, Twinkies and Little Debbie's.

Not only are there classic American brands, but there are also classic American desserts such as cookies, candies, cakes and pies. Each recipe includes a "Mix It Up" section where Parks offers optional ways to alter as needed (vegan, gluten free or even a different pan).

You'll be a better baker for owning this book.

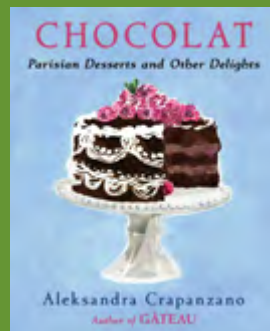


"Chocolat" by Aleksandra Crapanzano

A James Beard Award-winning food writer, Crapanzano wrote a dessert column titled "A Little Something Sweet" in the "Wall Street Journal." She's the author of several cookbooks, including her most recent, "Chocolat."

This book is an homage to France, to chocolate and to their enduring love affair. She offers a succinct history of chocolate in France and how many of our favorite desserts were invented there. Enjoy 100 easy-to-follow recipes, fine for a beginner. A bonus to this delicious collection is Parisian artist Cassandre Montoriol's stunning illustrations sprinkled throughout the book.

Instead of gifting a box of chocolates, give the book "Chocolat," a treat to be enjoyed again and again!



"Sabzi" by Yasmin Khan

Yasmin Khan's bio states she's an author, broadcaster and storyteller whose work explores how culture, identity and justice intertwine — or more simply, her work sits at the intersection of food, travel and politics. "Sabzi" (Persian for herb) is her fourth cookbook and my first to review. And yes, buy the book!

"Sabzi" is a collection of over 80 plant-forward recipes inspired by Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and South Asian food and flavors. Khan invites us (the home cooks) to eat better for our health and the planet and to celebrate other cultures. She shares this message with pictures that are stunning and vibrant! Her rich voice as a storyteller shows through as each recipe is introduced with its inspiration, tips in shopping, preparation and storage.

Kahn believes making and sharing food with others is one of the most life-giving acts you can undertake as it nourishes the body and soul.

May this collection do just that for you and help you fall a little more in love with vegetables, too.



"Sally's Baking 101" by Sally McKenney

McKenney started her baking career in 2011 by posting her most popular recipe on a blog she created. Thousands of people tried it and loved it. With her rise to fame with over 1.1 million social media followers and her fourth cookbook, "Sally's Baking 101," recently released, she's enjoying a moment.

Discover 101 recipes, including new "Sweet and Savory" and "Fan Favorites" sections, each marked with the required skill level and easy-to-follow directions. McKenney teaches us the how and why of the recipes to build confidence of home bakers. And

photos she took herself accompany each delicious treat.

While growing up watching her grandmother and mother, McKenney learned the power of scratch baking and how it can bring comfort when life gets loud, hectic or confusing. So, start preheating your oven and begin baking from this wonderful book to bring a bit of joy to yourself and others.



Wellington Square Bookshop welcomes both local patrons and many from around the world to a curated shop with an excellent staff. There's a coffee and tea bar, comfortable spaces to curl up with a good book, plus monthly book clubs and a poetry group. On Instagram; WellingtonSquareBooks.com. 549 Wellington Square, Exton.

"Milk Street Shorts"

by Christopher Kimball

Here's a short review of the latest cookbook, titled "Shorts," by the Milk Street founder Christopher Kimball — a short review compared with Kimball's vast catalog of accomplishments. He's authored countless cookbooks and published many magazines, and you may know him from "America's Test Kitchen" and his three Milk Street television shows.

The man clearly knows what he's doing when it comes to cooking and baking, so his latest compilation of 150 simple-yet-powerful recipes comes highly recommended. The subtitle

"Recipes that Pack a Punch" is right on the cover page!

There's something for all skill levels of cooks, from the simplest recipes at the start of the book, progressing just as the cook will.

A nice addition to your Kimball collection.



"Six Seasons of Pasta"

by Joshua McFadden

McFadden sure has a talent for writing cookbooks. He won a James Beard Award for his first effort, "Six Seasons: A New Way with Vegetables," and this third book has been named a 2025 Best New Cookbook by "Bon Appetit," "Eater," "Epicurious," "Saveur" and many more.

Most people enjoy eating pasta — such a comforting and satisfying meal — and eat it often. Yet McFadden transforms the way we cook and eat this staple we thought we knew so well. There are 125 recipes organized by season when flavors are at their peak. A bonus — McFadden uses store-bought dried pasta! His recipes are creative yet with clear instructions, and the photos are all about the food, highlighting enticing brilliant colors.

If you're looking for a big, beautiful tome on pasta, this is the book for you! Buon appetito! ♦





PROTEIN:

Separating the Hype From the Facts

Kim Beazley, RD, LDN, CDCES, Chester County Hospital

THERE'S A LOT OF NOISE about protein these days. Protein is shouting out from grocery store shelves, added to products such as pancake mix, oatmeal, granola bars, pretzels, cereal, pasta and more! Even popular coffee brands have unveiled protein cold foams and lattes this past autumn.

These products are catching customers' attention for their perceived health benefits, as 57% of consumers check nutrition labels specifically for protein content. So, what is the deal? Are there really health benefits in adding additional protein to every meal, or is it just hype?

WHY EAT PROTEIN?

Protein is indeed an essential, versatile and satisfying nutrient. People are noticing that they feel fuller longer, which can increase satiety and reduce overall calorie

intake. Adequate protein intake can also help preserve our metabolic rate during weight loss.

With more people using anti-obesity medications, such as GLP-1 medications, there's a growing concern about maintaining muscle mass. Protein helps prevent muscle loss during weight reduction efforts. Even without those medications, one of protein's main roles is to support lean muscle mass growth and repair.

Protein also helps to stabilize blood sugar. This is especially relevant for people with diabetes, prediabetes or insulin resistance. According to the 2021 Center for Disease Control (CDC) data, of America's adult population, 38% have prediabetes and 11.6 % have diabetes. That's 136 million people!

Of those individuals, approximately 90% have insulin resistance. Those with

this condition are encouraged to choose a carbohydrate and protein every time they eat. When looking at a nutrition label, individuals should look for at least 7 grams of protein to get that blood sugar leveling effect. This includes breakfast and snacks, which are often more carbohydrate-rich treats and sweets — think cereal, pastries, bagels, pancakes and the like.

Prioritizing protein can also help combat sarcopenia (age-related muscle loss) and support bone health. In adults 65 and older — about 17% of Americans — these risks increase, which can significantly impact an individual's quality of life and increase the risk of falls and injuries.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO WE REALLY NEED?

A simple way to estimate your daily protein goal is to start with your body weight

in pounds. Aim for roughly half that number in grams of protein each day.

For example, if you weigh 150 pounds, aim for 75 grams of protein per day (unless, of course, your doctor prescribed a different number).

Can you get too much protein? Absolutely! Excess protein can put a strain on the kidneys, especially for those with preexisting kidney conditions. Even in healthy individuals, overdoing protein can lead to imbalances.

Focusing too heavily on protein could be at the expense of other essential nutrients, such as fiber, vitamins and healthy fats. Any extreme can throw off the possibility of a well-balanced diet. Quality matters, too. For example, red and processed meats are linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease. To minimize saturated fat, prioritize lean and plant-based proteins.

WHAT ARE HEALTHY PROTEIN SOURCES?

When choosing red meat (beef, pork), the leaner cuts are rounds and loins, such as ground round, sirloin and tenderloin. For poultry (chicken, turkey, duck), the white meat without skin is a leaner choice. Fish and seafood are healthy choices and are a protein option that often has the benefit of including fish oils or omega-3 fatty acids, which also helps lower our lipids (such as cholesterol) and decrease our risk of heart disease.

Eggs are yet another excellent source of protein. And now that the old belief that eggs raise cholesterol levels has been debunked, feel free to add them to your

diet. Research now shows that saturated fat, not dietary cholesterol, is the primary factor in raising LDL cholesterol levels.

In addition, low-fat and skim dairy products, such as milk, yogurt (particularly Greek yogurt), cheese and cottage cheese can also be great sources of protein.

WHAT ABOUT PLANT-BASED PROTEIN?

There's growing interest in plant-based protein sources due to environmental, sustainability and health concerns. Some options include:

- **Legumes:** including lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, soybeans
- **Whole Grains:** like quinoa (complete), brown rice, oats, barley, bulgur
- **Nuts and Seeds:** all kinds of nuts and nut butters, chia seeds, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds
- **Soy Proteins:** such as tofu, tempeh, edamame, soy milk
- **Vegetables:** options like spinach, broccoli, peas, Brussels sprouts (lower in protein but contribute)
- **Plant-Based Protein Powders:** choose pea protein, rice protein, hemp protein

Protein is worth prioritizing as part of a well-balanced diet. If you're falling short, try adding protein into your snacks or experimenting with plant-based protein options that you might not have tried before. A hearty bean soup is a great place to start and can be a perfect meal!



1. Healthy sources of protein include eggs, fish and white meat without skin
2. Choose pea protein, rice protein and hemp protein-based powders
3. Plant-based protein sources include legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds

For inspiration, check out recipe resources such as: *EatingWell.com*, *MeatlessMondays.com*, *ForksOverKnives.com* and *RealFoodDietitians.com*. ♦

Kim Beazley, RD, LDN, CDCES, is a registered dietitian and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist at Penn Medicine Chester County Hospital. She's a member of the Nutrition and Diabetes Services outpatient team, providing both individual and group education, and a lifestyle coach in the Diabetes Prevention Program. Learn more about improving your nutrition and Penn Medicine's Chester County Hospital's Outpatient Nutrition team at ChesterCountyHospital.org.



WINNER, WINNER, Rotisserie Dinner

ELEVATE A GROCERY-STORE STAPLE WITH RECIPES
TO WARM THE COLDEST WEEKNIGHT

Shannon Montgomery

AS WINTER STRETCHES ON AND POST-HOLIDAY fatigue sets in, the nightly question of “what’s for dinner?” can feel downright daunting. Enter the rotisserie chicken: that fragrant, pre-seasoned, already-cooked lifeline tucked into warming shelves at grocery stores everywhere.

Sure, many of us are perfectly happy to douse it in jarred gravy and serve with a hastily prepared box of Stove Top stuffing — or, in the case of one famous Philadelphian, devour it with his hands before a cheering crowd.

But this humble bird is more versatile than you think. Pull the tender meat from the bone, shred or chop into bite-size pieces, and you’ve got a head start on a delicious weeknight meal. If you’ve snagged one of those jumbo Costco birds, you might even stretch it into multiple dinners. And don’t forget to save the bones for home-made stock — just pop the whole carcass in the freezer until you’re ready to simmer.

Let us help you discover four flavorful recipes where rotisserie chicken truly shines, from a 15-minute salad to mouthwatering enchiladas. Each promises to brighten a dark winter evening and, with luck, pull you out of your meal-planning rut. Get inspired — the possibilities are endless. And quite tasty!

Rotisserie Chicken Salad with Arugula and Herbs

Inspired by an NYT Cooking “no-recipe recipe,” this flexible salad invites you to improvise with whatever’s on hand — or whatever looks good at the grocery store — to create a bright, nourishing bowl. It’s perfect as a

light yet satisfying dinner and just as easy to scale down for a vibrant side salad, especially if you’re using up leftover chicken.

Serves 4

Salad:

Rotisserie chicken, shredded

10 oz. baby arugula

3 scallions, sliced

1 large bunch cilantro or other soft herbs (such as parsley, basil or dill), chopped

1–2 avocados, sliced (optional)

Lime-garlic dressing (see below)

Dressing:

Juice of 1 lime

1 clove garlic, minced or pressed

Olive oil

For the salad:

Combine chicken, arugula, scallions, herbs and avocado slices, if used. Drizzle dressing over top and serve.

For the dressing:

Mix lime juice and garlic, and add olive oil to taste. Season with salt and pepper.

Easy Chicken Stir-Fry

This quick chicken stir-fry leans on two weeknight heroes — rotisserie chicken and frozen veggies — to deliver fresh, vibrant flavors with minimal prep. The sauce comes together in minutes, letting the veggies stay crisp-tender and the chicken soak up every savory note. Enjoy it as is for

a light, speedy supper, or spoon over warm rice or noodles for a heartier, more comforting meal. Adapted from Chelsea’s Messy Apron blog.



Serves 4

Stir-Fry:

1 T. toasted sesame oil

½ large yellow onion, sliced

2, 10–12-oz. packages frozen stir-fry vegetables

1 T. minced garlic

2 T. ginger paste

Rotisserie chicken, sliced or chopped

Stir-fry sauce (see below)

Scallions, sliced (optional)

Sesame seeds (optional)

Sriracha (optional)

Stir-Fry Sauce:

2 T. cornstarch

1 T. soy sauce

1 T. toasted sesame oil

1 T. oyster sauce

¾ C. chicken broth

1 T. light brown sugar

For the stir-fry:

Heat sesame oil in a large wok or pan over medium-high heat. Add onion and saute for 2 minutes. Add frozen stir-fry vegetables and cook according to package directions. About 1 minute before vegetables are finished cooking, stir in garlic and ginger.

Once vegetables are fully cooked but still crisp, add chicken and sauce. Gently toss together until sauce thickens and coats everything, about 2 minutes. Salt to taste.

Garnish with scallions, sesame seeds and a drizzle of sriracha, or preferred toppings.

For the sauce:

In a small bowl, whisk cornstarch and soy sauce until smooth.

Add sesame oil, oyster sauce, chicken broth and brown sugar, then whisk again to combine.

Creamy Tuscan Tortellini Soup

This viral TikTok recipe has earned over 8 million views — and for good reason. Creamy, cozy and perfect for chilly winter nights, this soup delivers

instant comfort in a bowl. For an easy upgrade, add a Parmesan rind while it simmers — a simple touch that infuses rich, savory depth. If your local deli sells rinds, it’s well worth seeking one out.



Serves 6

3 T. olive oil

½ white or yellow onion, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

Red pepper flakes

½ C. dry white wine (optional)

1, 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes

4 C. chicken stock

1 Parmesan rind (optional)

1, 12-oz. package tortellini

1 C. heavy cream

Rotisserie chicken, chopped or shredded

1 bunch Tuscan kale, chopped

Shaved or grated Parmesan for garnish

Fresh basil leaves for garnish

In a large pot over medium heat, heat olive oil. Add onion, celery and garlic, and saute until slightly golden and fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add a pinch of salt and red pepper flakes to taste and stir.

Optionally, add white wine to deglaze, scraping the bottom of the pot, and let cook for 2 minutes.

Add crushed tomatoes and chicken stock, then stir to combine. Bring to a simmer and, if desired, add Parmesan rind. Simmer for 30 minutes uncovered.

Once soup has reduced and thickened slightly, remove Parmesan rind, if used. Add tortellini and cook in broth according to package directions. Stir in heavy whipping cream. Add rotisserie chicken and kale, stirring just until kale is wilted. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Garnish with Parmesan and fresh basil, and serve with a side of crusty bread.

Chicken Enchiladas with Salsa Verde

Enchiladas are one of those dishes we love to eat, but don’t often have time to tackle. This streamlined version delivers all the zesty Mexican flavors you crave with a few shortcuts. Start, of course, with rotisserie chicken, then choose your own adventure: make a quick, tangy salsa verde from

scratch, or reach for your favorite jarred salsa to keep things effortless.
Adapted from NYT Cooking.

Serves 4 to 6



Enchiladas:

- ½ C. neutral oil (such as: canola, vegetable, sunflower, grapeseed, safflower or refined avocado oils)
- 12 yellow corn tortillas
- Salsa verde, homemade (see below) or store-bought
- Rotisserie chicken, shredded
- 1 C. crumbled queso fresco or cotija cheese
- 1 C. Mexican crema or sour cream

Salsa Verde:

- 1 lb. fresh tomatillos, husked, rinsed and cut into quarters, or 11 oz. canned tomatillos
- 1 small white onion, chopped

- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 2 serrano peppers, seeds removed (if you prefer it less spicy), stemmed and roughly chopped
- 4–5 stems fresh cilantro, roughly chopped

For the enchiladas:

Preheat oven to 375°. In a medium saute pan over medium-high heat, heat oil until it begins to shimmer. Using tongs or a wide spatula, place tortilla gently in the hot oil. Heat for about 10 seconds per side, until soft and lightly browned. Remove tortilla and set on a rack set over a baking sheet. Repeat with remaining tortillas, working quickly.

Ladle about ½ cup salsa verde in the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and spread out a bit.

Roll a few tablespoons of rotisserie chicken and about a teaspoon of salsa verde into each tortilla and place seam-side down in the pan, nestling tortillas against each other. Ladle salsa verde on top of tortillas and sprinkle with about half of the crumbled cheese.

Place in oven and bake until sauce bubbles and cheese is melted, about 15 minutes. Top with crema and remaining cheese, and serve immediately.

For the salsa verde:

Combine tomatillos, onion, garlic, peppers and cilantro in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth, adding water as needed for desired thickness. Salt to taste. ♦



BEST ★ Of The BEST 2026

EAT LIKE A LOCAL



Eating well in the Brandywine Valley is easy. We're blessed with a bounty of choices for places to eat, drink and meet up. Last year for our Best of the Best review, we highlighted places that have stood the test of time — those with a history of hospitality that have drawn faithful diners for generations.

For 2026, we shift our focus to places that also have a loyal following but are where the local community gathers morning, noon, night and happy hour, plus some gems not to be missed. It's where you can eat like a local and learn what draws patrons back again and again. Places where you'll get a sense of place along with good food — from diners to steakhouses to vegan restaurants and from French bakeries to neighborhood Italians to Asian-fusion gems.

As always, we've also rounded up recent additions that contribute to our vibrant dining scene. Help support these new businesses and visit restaurants and casual spots, more options for wine, beer and spirits, plus speakeasies and sweet treats.

This year make plans to gather with family and friends, share the ambience with neighbors, and make new memories at these local favorites.

Check our website and social media for more on restaurants, food news, recipes, beer and wine columns, and more. CountyLinesMagazine.com



The Borough

NEW PLACES TO TRY

The Borough

149 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown
484-364-4525 / BoroughDowningtown.com

There's a new lively modern dining spot in Downingtown, with two bars (signature drinks, 20 beers on tap), an entertainment space (live music, open mic, karaoke, private parties) and patio. Sample elevated pub fare along with sushi (that's a surprise!), a raw bar and gastro-style plates — something for everyone. The 60 TVs make a perfect spot to catch the game — any game. Or stop in for trivia night, live comedy or a boozy brunch.

La Fête

2530 Concord Pk., Wilmington
302-374-0779 / LaFeteDelaware.com

Look for French dining in the Wilmington suburbs now that La Fête opened on Concord Pike (Route 202), next to the Charcoal Pit — an unusual but well-known neighbor. The upscale yet welcoming interior — with bar, patio and restaurant space — sets the stage for French classics including escargot, mussels, beef tartare, steak frites, roasted chicken and duck prepared by Executive Chef Max Kaklins (from Marc Vetri's Fiorella). A top-tier cocktail list featuring selections from pre-Civil War through modern no- and low-alcohol options, plus 500 bottles in the wine cellar curated by advanced sommelier Scott Zoccolillo make this destination drinking as well as dining.

Mistral French & Fast

130 W. Miner St., West Chester
610-816-1817 / MistralFrenchAndFast.com

Check out a new West Chester source for your favorite Julia Child classics for takeout, delivery and catering. Enjoy rustic French cooking — nothing fussy — blending classic bistro flavors with global specials. Menu offerings include bouillabaisse, tuna Niçoise, jambon-beurre sandwiches, coq au vin and beef bourguignon. Perfect for busy days, cozy nights and events that need something special. Note the limited hours.

Mother

202 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown
MotherTaco.com

It's called Mother — a new taco+ place (replacing Estrella Tacos) in Downingtown announced itself: Tacos. Margs. Beer. Mother is here. Sample elevated tacos (confit duck carnitas, beef cheek barbacoa), empanadas (smoked pumpkin), starters (paella bites), guacs (hot spiced maple bacon), mains (chorizo sloppy joe, quesabirria). Local beers, including from upstairs neighbor East Branch Brewing, and the margaritas are getting raves. And got to love the kids cheese quesadilla.

Station 142

142 E. Market St., West Chester
484-947-5416 / Station142.com

West Chester natives know 142 East Market Street has seen restaurants come and go — from The Note to Serum.



La Fête



Mistral French & Fast



Mother

Luckily Saloon 151 stepped up to create a new fun live music venue with plenty of bands, karaoke, a spirited Christmas-themed bar (sorry if you missed it) and more. Two bars serve up a long drinks list (yes, there's food too), plus Happy Hours and a rooftop bar for warm weather.

Taquero

111 Veterans Sq., Media
610-920-0115 / TaqueroMX.com

Media's newest Mexican restaurant, Taquero (taco maker), is helmed by Chef Antonio Garcia, formerly of Ariano. This BYOB (with mixers) on Veterans Square, 18 months in the making, serves a range of modern and traditional Mexican dishes — including some Garcia's grandmother made — plus five types of tacos, appetizers, soups, salads, entrees and desserts.

Triple Crown Restaurant, Events & Garden

593 E. Lancaster Ave., St. Davids
610-632-5000 / TripleCrownRadnor.com

The name Triple Crown previews its equestrian theme in its nod to the epitome of horse racing. Expect classic American fare, from hearty entrees (40-oz. Tomahawk ribeye) to small plates from the restaurant and wine, beer and perfect cocktails from the Blue Ribbon Bar (try the Main Line Julep with elderflower liqueur). The ever-expanding Fearless Restaurant group (White Dog, Rosalie, Autograph) has gone full-on equestrian everywhere for the ambiance — mahogany and brass, boots and polo mallets, framed horse paintings. Add a lovely garden and glass conservatory for event spaces at this spot at the Radnor Hotel.

ITALIAN / MEDITERRANEAN

Lasagnola

134 E. Gay St., West Chester
LasagnolaWC.com

An offshoot of dolce Zola, Lasagnola specializes in one thing — lasagna, and they make it chef-worthy. From the ghost kitchen filled with Nonna's secret recipes and techniques, choose pickup or delivery of their one-pound portions, ranging from classic to chicken alfredo to garden harvest. Add an app and tiramisu, too, for a soul-satisfying meal.

LaScala's Fire

44 W. Gay St., West Chester
610-773-2222 / LaScalasFire.com

At last LaScala's Fire opened in downtown West Chester, joining other locations includ-

ing Newtown Square and Villanova and offering "classic Italian American reimagined" at Jack Loew Plaza. The extensive menu includes almost 20 apps (Tuscan and Fire wings), plenty of salads, paninis, wood-fired pizzas (Tony from Gentili's is a partner), house-made pastas and favorites (parmigianos, picattas, marsalas) along with ... a sushi bar! Good drinks selections at a bar with a circle of TVs, plus Happy Hour, weekdays 3 to 6 p.m. Welcome to the Borough!

L'Olivo Trattoria

570 Wellington Sq., Exton
610-340-8115 / LOlivoTrattoria.com

Joining Eagleview's Restaurant Row (in the former Suburban spot), L'Olivo (olive tree) adds authentic northern Italian flavors from the folks at Birchrunville Store Cafe and ButterScotch Pastry Shop — Chef Francis and Nui. Enjoy rustic flavors and creative twists from Executive Chef Jon (of Amani) with signature dishes featuring fresh-made pasta and chef's specials including slow-cooked meats and grilled seafood. Now with a liquor license. Some say it could be the next Birchrunville-level star.

Maris

214 W. State St., Media
267-500-2979 / MarisSeafood.com

Seafood and Mediterranean flavors are what Maris (of the sea) delivers to Media's diverse restaurant selections in the former Two Fourteen space. Local restaurateur Loïc Barnieu (La Belle Epoque, Sterling Pig) put together a menu with plenty of Greek specialties (from Greek salad to spanakopita, saganaki and more), fish (whole branzino, grilled swordfish, tuna) and raw bar along with steaks and chops. A new lighter, brighter interior with white and Mediterranean blue accents seats 75 diners, more at the bar.

Settantatré Pasta & Provisions

802 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn
610-314-0876 / SettantatrePasta73.com

Moving from Delco to a larger space in Berwyn, Settantatré (meaning 73) delighted gluten-free pasta lovers who come for Matt Gentile's creations (tomato pie, topped focaccias get raves), made in a dedicated facility. Others come for regular pastas, sauces and extras at the store or farmers markets. Front of the house is a cafe and lunch spot — espresso and pastries, tomato pie and focaccia. A \$73 monthly membership gets access to dinners, special-release foods, cooking classes and more. *Inquirer's* Craig LaBan, whose daughter is allergic to gluten, named it one of his favorite gluten-free spots.



Triple Crown



LaScala's Fire



L'Olivo Trattoria

ASIAN OPTIONS

Bao Nine

10 Liberty Blvd., Ste. 120, Malvern
484-320-8481 / BaoNine.us

Malvern's restaurant scene welcomed the fluffy Taipei street-style bao buns at Bao Nine — the nine in the name refers to cloud nine, your postprandial experience. About a dozen options (order three, they're small), with the Sticky Chicky (teriyaki glazed chicken) getting raves. The "Gob-baoler" was a special for Thanksgiving. Mainly for delivery and pickup, given the few tables.

Maison Lotus

175 Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-527-5700 / Maison-Lotus.com

The latest venture of the Win Hospitality group (Azie, Blue Elephant, Teikoku), Maison Lotus offers up French-Vietnamese food in the sumptuous reno of the former Margaret Kuo's building. Over two stories "designed to capture a bygone era of romance and celebration" — plus the new lower-level Jade Rabbit speakeasy — enjoy brunch (including dim sum), lunch or dinner, with plenty of signature dishes, like the vermicelli noodle or rice bowl, lobster shumai, shaking beef, hot stone wagyu. Weekday Happy Hour, 4 to 6 p.m. The place to live out your "White Lotus" fantasies.

Mama-San

226 N. Radnor Chester Rd., Radnor
484-580-6942 / MamaSan-Restaurant.com

A fast-casual "elevated Asian Shake Shack," Mama-San is another new venture from the Win Hospitality group, this one in Radnor's former Buena Onda spot. Eat in or take out handmade sushi rolls, poke and noodle bowls, and plenty of Asian-fusion fare (umami fries and drunken noodles are faves). Everyday \$7 Happy Hour, 3 to 5 p.m., cocktails and sushi.

Mino Sushi & Ramen

2 W. Gay St., West Chester
610-301-8869 / MinoRamen.com

An offshoot of the longtime Malvern location, Mino Sushi & Ramen opened at the Gay and High Street intersection in West Chester (former Starbucks corner). Enjoy authentic ramen, bubble tea, poke bowls, sushi and traditional Japanese cuisine. Try their sushi tacos — crispy fried seaweed shells with sushi rice — or the many other apps, rolls (raw and cooked), bowls and balls (rice balls) from their extensive menu. Lunch, dinner and takeout.

CASUAL SPOTS

Bored Trading Cafe

139 W. Gay St., West Chester
484-947-0802 / BoredTradingCafe.com

Opened in West Chester in November and open most mornings at 7 a.m. for early birds, Bored Trading Cafe is a dynamic pop-up eatery with locations in Center City (planned for Ardmore). Expect casual dining with an elevated twist, including handhelds, smash burgers, inventive toasts and matcha lattes. Whether you're grabbing a bagel and latte to go or sitting down for a full meal, you'll find bold flavors and cozy vibes.

Jackson Street Steaks

110 S. Jackson St., Media
JacksonStreetSteaks.com

Looking for the Philly classic without the drive to the city? Then head to Media and Jackson Street Steaks (once it opens). Enjoy a European vibe along with city faves like cheesesteaks, hoagies and burgers, while the bar pours beers from Meyers Brewing Company. Media resident and co-owner Pete Kada looks forward to bringing great cheesesteaks to the 'burbs.

Nanu's Hot Chicken

314 S. High St., West Chester
610-840-6008 / NanusHotChicken.co

All natural, never frozen, Nashville hot chicken. Nanu's Hot Chicken kicked off their grand opening in West Chester as the fourth or sixth hot chicken spot (if you count national chains) with a free food giveaway, a great way to gather fans (44k Instagram followers over four states). The cheesy, spicy, over-the-top fries are another. You'll likely need a refreshing sweet smoothie to calm your palate. Watch for plans for a charity section to help others like the founders' little brother Nanu.

Oola Bowls

16 E. Gay St., West Chester
610-978-9380 / OoloBowls.com

Say ooh la la for this nutrition-focused brand started at Lancaster Central Market, now with locations from Maine to Florida. When the West Chester shop opened (more Chester County spots planned, including Malvern), it became the Borough's fourth açai spot. Oola also offers pitaya bowls, fruit smoothies, Oola bites (peanut butter, Nutella, PB chip), healthy snacks, plus an at-home açai bowl kit. Add fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants for the full effect.

Taqueria Los Poblanos

445 Hannum Ave., West Chester
484-908-8680 / @Tacos_WC

Starting as a food truck at a Shell Station, Taqueria Los Poblanos quickly became a West Chester fave, now with a red-and-yellow, brick-and-mortar location (Sam's Pizza Island). This family business is known for authentic flavors of street tacos, including lengua, tripa and chorizo tacos, birria burritos, quesadilla, tostadas and quesabirria. Open daily, with late-night weekend hours (10 p.m.) for takeout and delivery.

NEW WINE, SPIRITS, BEER

The Barrel by Brothers Kershner

112 Pennsylvania Ave., Avondale
BrothersKershner.com

The latest addition to the Brothers Kershner Brewing Company in Skippack plus seasonal Brothers on the Brandywine Beer Garden in Coatesville, The Barrel is a new gastropub in Avondale based in a historic two-story building (previously Be Here Brewing Co.). Look for craft beers, wine and cocktails along with live music and pub grub classics — including delicious smash burgers.

LoCali Wine Lounge

123 E. Market St., West Chester
484-459-7498 / EnjoyLoCali.com

Stay local, sip Cali, live fully. That's the idea behind LoCali Wine Lounge, a neighborhood lounge built for hanging out, slowing down and sipping California wine in West Chester. The vibe is relaxed, unpretentious and with the belief that wine should be enjoyed, not analyzed. Try small plates, charcuterie, snacks, seasonal bites locally sourced. Plus beer, cocktails, spritzes. It's a music-forward space with plenty of vinyl on the playlist, plus live music, open mic nights and events.

John Roberts Cellars

115-117 W. State St., Media
@JohnRobertsCellars

Delco's only "urban winery," John Robert Cellars brought bold wines and big flavor to their new Media tasting room (also in Essington). In a stylish space made for winding down, sip wines handcrafted by lifelong friends (50 years!) and founders John Irving and Robert Goodwin, enjoy local brews from Sterling Pig and sample tasty bites.

Sweet Treats

We are always happy to scope out the latest scoop on ice cream places, bakeries and other local sweet treats to sample.

• **Ice Cream West Chester** opened (at last!), making summers in the Borough even better. If you haven't visited this third leg of local foodie-preneur Speer Madanat's empire (pizza, cheesesteaks), check the website for shortened cold-weather hours. Soft-serve goodness, plus Dubai chocolate sundaes. 14 N. Church St., West Chester. @IceCreamWestChester

• **Urban Scoop** in Exton offers small-batch, handmade flavors, aka a hug in a cone. Fresh ingredients + decadent mix-ins give you flavors like ube cookie dough, Thai tea and Tuscan trifle. Egg- and gluten-free options as well as signature bubble cones with treats like Mamma Mia — birthday special ice cream, strawberry syrup and gummy bears. 309 Lincoln Hwy., Exton. Urban-Scoop.com

• **Malvern Buttery** keeps expanding and evolving, with three new locations (Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Malvern Station) and a reno of the King Street flagship. Celebrate the extra opportunities to enjoy their gourmet pastries, breads, soups, salads, sandwiches with your coffee, along with treats like eggplant focaccia, lemongrass rice bowl or seasonal panzanella. 233 E. King St., Malvern. MalvernButtery.com

• **PanDoughMonium Bakery** is creating weekend madness with long lines salivating for the small-batch bakery's goodies. Fourth-gen baker Robert Weinrich and his fiancée started the venture last summer, producing pies, pastries, pretzel pockets and more. Indulge in some Instagram scrolling (and drooling), then set your alarm clock to secure your spot in line before Friday's 6:30 a.m. opening. 10 Wallace Ave., Downingtown. PanDoughMoniumBakery.com

• **The Biscuit Lady** is set to deliver what the name promises — buttery, made-from-scratch biscuits in early 2026. Look for a rotating menu of 15+ biscuit varieties (savory and sweet), plus holy biscuits (think donuts), nine breakfast and lunch sammies, plus coffee. 39 W. Gay St., West Chester. VisitTheBiscuitLady.com



Nature's Vin

193-197 E. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
NaturesVin.com

A natural Cali-style wine bar owned by Ragini Parmar, Nature's Vin serves and sells natural, organic and biodynamic wines — low carb, sugar free, low sulfites, no toxic additives — made around the world by women. The aim is to create a relaxed environment for learning and enjoying wine through tastings, private events and a membership club.

The Ridge at Chesterbrook

1400 Liberty Ridge Dr., Chesterbrook
@TheRidgeAtChesterbrook

Yes, yet another seasonal beer garden opened this past spring, adding to the growing list of local options for enjoying a brew in an environment that adds to the pleasure. Head for The Ridge to enjoy selections for a lineup of rotating food trucks, live music and family-friendly vibes. Maybe wait until the weather warms (closed October 31).

Bao Nine



Maison Lotus



Taqueria Los Poblanos



The Barrel



LoCali Wine Lounge



The Ridge at Chesterbrook





Jade Rabbit



La Baguette Magique



Roots Cafe



Limoncello Ristorante



Bar Avalon



Slow Hand

Speakeasies

For a taste of 1920s glamor, head for a local trendy speakeasy and relive the thrill of the Prohibition era.

• **Johnny O's**, in the lower level of West Chester's steakhouse 9 Prime (in the 1864 First National Bank Building), was the first speakeasy on the scene. It's a membership-based club (entry fob required), emanating exclusivity and upscale vibes with its elevated fare, plus special member events. Dress to impress. Grab a drink inside the vault! *9 N. High St., West Chester. JohnnyOsWestChester.com*

• **Room 109**, in the lower level of Hotel Indigo in the heart of West Chester, is more accessible — no membership required. Just show up at this Prohibition-era hidden bar for special drinks and bites — better with a reservation if you're coming late. There's even Happy Hour, Monday–Thursday, 5 to 7 p.m. *39 E. Gay St., West Chester. WCSeafoodKitchen.com/Room-109*

• **Jade Rabbit** opened in October in the lower level (sensing a pattern?) of Wayne's Maison Lotus (former Margaret Kuo's). There's an Asian legend linked to the name (Google it) of this Main Line spot. Look for Asian-inspired crafted cocktails and small plates, including a five-course cocktail pairing option. Small space means reservations are a must. *175 Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Maison-Lotus.com/JadeRabbit*

• **Martinique Deux**, tucked beneath the Phoenix Building, is Delco's more casual contribution to the genre and is more speakeasy-adjacent, with a 2,400-square-foot entertainment venue + bar offering cocktails, live music, comedy, darts and Birds' games on big screens. Thursday–Sunday, 4 p.m. to midnight. *115 W. State St., Media. MartiniqueDeux.com*

BEST PLACES TO EAT LIKE A LOCAL — MORNING, NOON, NIGHT & MORE

WEST CHESTER

Morning: Market Street Grill

6 W. Market St.

610-429-5328 / TheMarketStreetGrill.com

If you want true insight into a town's must-hit morning spots, walk the streets on Sunday morning and look for the line. In West Chester, it will take you to the Market Street Grill with its red vinyl booths and walls peppered with pop art paintings. There's a breakfast bar to the right and one too many tables squeezed down the middle, but you don't mind because you came for a hot cup of coffee, a pancake as big as your plate and one of their outrageous breakfast specials. Bacon-honey-banana-peanut-butter French toast, anyone?

Morning: Two Birds Cafe

653 Downingtown Pk.

610-222-6200 / TwoBirdsCafeWC.com

Fans of Two Birds Cafe's velvety eggs Benedict, to-die-for cinnamon rolls and rotating seasonal menu are so devoted that the cafe recently had to leave tips for the best way to park in their always-crowded Downingtown Pike parking lot. So it's probably not surprising that not too long ago, this from-scratch kitchen was named one of Yelp's Top 100 Places to Eat in the country. A labor of love from husband-and-wife team Jess and Justin Minchak, Two Birds serves breakfast and lunch six days a week (closed Tuesday) against a modern country backdrop. Head over now. The coffee is waiting.

Morning: La Baguette Magique

202 W. Market St.

484-947-5024 / @LaBaguetteMagique

Not every meal requires pomp to be memorable. Sometimes, it's the simple things. Quality ingredients, proven techniques and a charming backdrop that ushers you to a world a thousand miles away. For a decade now, La Baguette Magique — affectionately known simply as the French Bakery — has been that place. Whether you choose to people-watch by the window with a cappuccino and a thick slice of vegetable quiche, or dash home with a white bag full of flaky croissants and whatever treasures you find that day, a stop into La Baguette will leave your day a little brighter. And sweeter.

Noon: Roots Cafe

133 E. Gay St.

610-455-0100 / RootsCafeWC.com

With only 11 tables until spring weather opens the patio, Roots Cafe may make you wait, even for a mid-week meal. But don't worry, it will be worth it. Located at the eastern end of Gay Street, Roots has been serving up farm-to-table classics like rainbow carrots in a delightfully tangy tzatziki sauce and light-and-airy mushroom omelets for more than a decade now. The lovingly created dishes, the friendly staff and the overwhelming floral prints can give the distinct impression that you're visiting grandma's house. That's assuming grandma makes a perfectly juicy breaded fried chicken sandwich and her own hot sauce.

Noon: Taco Mar

122 E. Gay St.

610-455-1400 / TacoMar.com

Some say you need to go to Kennett Square to find authentic Mexican food. Well, Taco Mar would beg to differ. The Gay Street taqueria has gained a reputation and solid 4.7 Google rating by consistently dishing up freshly made Mexican

classics like their savory red chili birria and crispy fish tacos served with cilantro, onions and salsa (or, for American-style, lettuce, tomato, cheese and salsa) in a vibrant, casual environment. Pair with homemade guacamole or a side of the rich, creamy queso, and finish with everyone's favorite cinnamon-and-sugar-coated churros.

Night: Opa Taverna

40 E. Gay St.

610-696-4100 / OpaTaverna.com

With many long, narrow spaces to work with, restaurants in West Chester definitely have a signature feel. They're often energetic and buzzy, flush with waitstaff dodging traffic and delivering patrons and platters in equal parts. That's the feel of Opa Taverna, West Chester's popular Greek restaurant, on a Friday night. Bring in a group and order for the table. Start with the freshly made hummus platter and indulgent moussaka. And don't forget the bar — the drinks all feature fresh-squeezed juices and housemade syrups. End the night with a slice of baklava. The flaky, sweet Greek classic is a perfect treat to share.

Night: Limoncello Ristorante

9 N. Walnut St.

610-436-6230 / LimoncelloRestaurant.com

Limoncello is a good meal any time of year, but there's something special when you tuck inside on a January evening, closing the cold behind you and giving into the warm embrace of the surely overstuffed restaurant. While you wait for the hostess to ready the table, pop to the bar and order up a glass of wine or, if you're feeling festive, a limoncello cocktail with prosecco and lime. Then peruse the menu with winter abandon, swaying between tender clams, home-made gnocchi in a San Marzano tomato sauce, or juicy, breaded chicken stuffed with mozzarella and asparagus.

Night: Bar Avalon

116 E. Gay St.

610-436-4100 / AvalonRestaurant.net

Started a quarter of a century ago as a BYOB eatery, Bar Avalon has gained quite a reputation for its popular cocktail list. Made with fresh ingredients by a knowledgeable staff, drinks here make it hard not to think back at a memorable Bar Avalon night that lasted for hours. Start the evening with a signature smoked Manhattan, or if you are abstaining, one of their equally well-thought-out mocktails, before moving on for an elegant meal served beneath the long arms of their trademark painted clock. The bacon-wrapped dates are a treat, the crispy calamari a favorite and any of the pasta dishes a worthy indulgence.

Happy Hour: Slow Hand

30 N. Church St.

484-999-8638 / SlowHand-WC.com

When you enter Slow Hand on Church Street, you're confronted almost immediately with throwback vibes. Perhaps it's the large picture of Conway Twitty that hangs over the main bar or the fact that there are no TVs in Slow Hand. That situation has a way of nudging you ever so subtly into a conversation with your bartender, who will explain, if you let him, the magic that goes into each expertly made drink. Ease into the post-work world with a paper plane and an order of the addictive pimento cheese dip, and relish the reminder of an era that did Happy Hour right.

Happy Hour: Sedona Taphouse

44 W. Gay St., Ste. 1

610-738-5104 / SedonaTaphouse.com

Sedona Taphouse's Happier Hours have become so popular, you might not be able to get in, but at least they'll be honest with you. Perhaps it's that attention to capacity that allows the servers

to keep serving, the vibe to stay hopping without turning claustrophobic, and those who make the cut to understand why the place is so popular. Pop in early — Happier Hour at 4 p.m. — to beat that rush, grab a seat at the contemporary stone-backed bar and lean into their signature Southwest style with a craft-made prickly pear margarita and a BBQ chicken flatbread to share.

Happy Hour: Good, Bad & Ugly

158 W. Gay St.

484-999-0922 / GoodBadUglyWC.com

As they like to say at West Chester's Good, Bad & Ugly, "There are three sides to every story, and we've told them all." Have one of those nights when you just want to let off some steam? Sneak downstairs to GBU. Located in the lower level under Stove & Tap, this lightly country, mostly modern bar offers games to play, music to dance to and a surprisingly good array of apps and cocktails to choose from. Try the sticky garlic chicken wings with a WC Ranch Water — Hornitos Plata, sparkling water and lime. Happy Hour runs late here, 8 to 10 p.m. So no need to rush. And no excuse not to stay.

Happy Hour: Barnaby's

Restaurant & Pub

15 S. High St.

610-696-1400 / BarnabysWC.com

Pick your poison — football, basketball, hockey, baseball, MLS, West Chester University games? It doesn't matter. If it's streaming somewhere, Barnaby's Restaurant & Pub, a multi-floor sports bar housed in a historic building once home to the Borough's municipal offices, can likely find it for you. The rich mahogany live-edge bar (one of seven) is already a welcoming beacon off the cold street. Add a \$4 draft of your favorite domestic and the lively commentary of like-minded fans, and really, it can't be beat. Not a sports fan? There are seven other rooms, each with a different vibe to choose from.



9 Prime

Gem: 9 Prime

9 N. High St.

610-365-3309 / 9PrimeWestChester.com

Some nights you just want to feel special. Those are the nights you break out the sparkles, the velvet, your Saturday night best, and saunter up to 9 Prime's grand bar and order a martini, extra dry, two olives and savor the crisp, cool liquid while embracing that Bond feeling. Once here, you must stay for a meal. The charred octopus salad, light and refreshing, is a perfect place to start. Add to it a selection from the in-house dry-aged beef program. Aged for up to 50 days, these cured cuts deliver a more tender, flavor-rich steak. Now that's sophistication.



Ground Provisions

Gem: Ground Provisions

1388 Old Wilmington Pk.

610-355-4411 / GroundProvisionsPA.com

For three years now, Philadelphia restaurateurs Rich Landau and Kate Jacoby (of Philly's James Beard-winning Vedge) have been defying suburban expectations by consistently delighting and surprising diners with what can be done with an all-vegan menu. Ground Provisions features a rotating seasonal tasting menu served in the best kind of rustic country setting. Think late afternoon light, copper pots on the wall, fresh flowers on the table, and a glass of all-natural Sicilian wine in hand. Reservations often need to be made weeks in advance, but the effort is a small price to pay to partake in this culinary adventure.



The Farmhouse

Gem: Bier and Loathing

113 W. Market St.

610-289-0079 / BierAndLoathing.com

Until Bier and Loathing opened in 2024, West Chester was seriously in need of some gaming action. Well, no more. Bier and Loathing on Market Street combines classic bar games — think multiple pool tables, shuffleboard and darts — with over 30 of your favorite arcade classics, all in the backdrop of a laidback bar. Come early with the kids and enjoy a pour from their rotating draft menu, while the little ones entertain themselves bopping between pinball, Pac-Man and the various racing games. Or come later (kids are out by 7 p.m.) for a surprisingly good cheesesteak, karaoke, tiki drinks and to relive your youth at this barcade.



Myrtos

DOWNINGTOWN

Morning: Green Street Grill

150 E. Pennsylvania Ave.

610-873-1700 / GreenStGrill.com

Green Street Grill is a bustling grill focusing on eggs, plate-size pancakes, cinnamon

swirl French toast, 10 kinds of gourmet omelets — you can also build your own — and eight kinds of Benedicts. Signature breakfasts include chicken and waffles, Camacho's nachos (tortillas with eggs, chicken, chorizo, cheese, black beans, sour cream, cilantro), the Telly (eggs, hash browns, green peppers, onions and cheese scrambled with spicy andouille sausage and choice of meat) and about eight other combinations. In a downtown shopping center, the restaurant is described by locals as quirky, bright, clean, unpretentious, casual and family-friendly, with fast, friendly service.

Morning: The Farmhouse

Coffee & Espresso Bar

115 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-269-1400 / FarmhouseCoffee.com

It's early. Very early. Need coffee? The Farmhouse Coffee & Espresso Bar, owned by Dana and Pete Petrizzio and open since 2017, is known for its specialty coffee, crafted beverages and espresso drinks, plus its highly praised, baked-daily dessert selection. Its fruit tart was described by a Yelp reviewer as "possibly one of the best baked goods" tasted in many years. Its scones also are regarded as excellent. No wonder that Downingtowners find it a popular spot for morning pick-me-ups and casual meetups.

Noon: Downingtown Diner

81 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-873-4545 / DTownDiner.com

At night, the giant "DINER" sign shines over the entrance and declares it "open 24 hours." It's where scenes from "The Blob" were filmed (though not the same diner). There are jukeboxes at the booths, and it's where to take a casual date. In short, the Downingtown Diner is "so retro." For lunch, the menu is more diverse than you'd expect, offering not only burgers, club sandwiches, French fries and wings — we love the onion rings — but also salads, steaks, seafood, pasta, sandwiches and wraps. And they serve a Blob Special — eggs, home fries, pancakes and choice of meat — all day.

Night: Myrtos

47 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-514-0000 / MyrtosRestaurant.com

Myrtos is a Greek and Mediterranean BYOB, inspired by the owners' family roots in Kefalonia, Greece. The vision is to bring authentic Greek cuisine to Downingtown. The menu includes dishes like moussaka, souvlaki, fresh grilled seafood, authentic gyro platters, falafel and Greek salads. Its Taste of Greece special features octopus, saganaki, lamb chops and more, while

desserts include baklava and other traditional Greek pastries and cakes. The atmosphere is casual and welcoming, and the community has embraced the restaurant since its opening. Hear the strumming of the bouzouki.

Happy Hour: Station Taproom

207 W. Lancaster Ave.

484-593-0560 / StationTaproom.com

Meeting friends after hours? Across the street from the Downingtown rail stop, Station Taproom is a popular gastropub, known for its rotating craft beer selection, comfort food and its casual atmosphere. It's a hip, cozy hangout with a trendy atmosphere, perfect for Happy Hour. Its beer list changes often, including American and hazy IPAs from various brewers. It also offers lagers and pilsners, stouts and sours, and some Belgian and European styles. As you quaff your brew, a pulled pork sandwich is an ideal accompaniment. Pork taquitos, chicken pretzel bites, chicken quesadillas or zucchini fritters are also available.

Happy Hour: Victory

Brewing Company

420 Acorn Ln.

610-873-0881 / Downingtown.VictoryBeer.com

At Happy Hour, Downingtowners visit the home of one of the best craft breweries in the country, Victory Brewing, and enjoy the discount. From 4 to 6 weekdays, they'll get \$2 off on drafts — there are over 30 — wine, spirits and shareables. Weekday deals on food include wings for \$1 off on Wednesday or \$8 for a burger on Thursday. On Fridays, it's 20% off of beer to take home. Kids also enjoy the menu and eat free on Sundays. Note: Victory's dining room is top-notch, serving a full menu of shareables, handhelds, salads and pizzas.

Gem: Dressler Estate Cidery & Bar

112 E. Lancaster Ave.

484-693-0918 / DresslerEstate.com

Owned by husband-and-wife team Brian and Olga Dressler, Dressler Cidery's unique "wine-like approach" and the dry, elegant finish of its ciders have been recommended by Craig LaBan of the *Inquirer*. Offerings include sparkling ciders and still, bone-dry varieties. In addition to cider, the bar offers select beers, wines and nonalcoholic drinks, as well as a small food menu. The tasting room is located in Downingtown's historic business district and is hailed for its fast service, snug atmosphere. Locals express immense pride at having Dressler as a choice local producer.

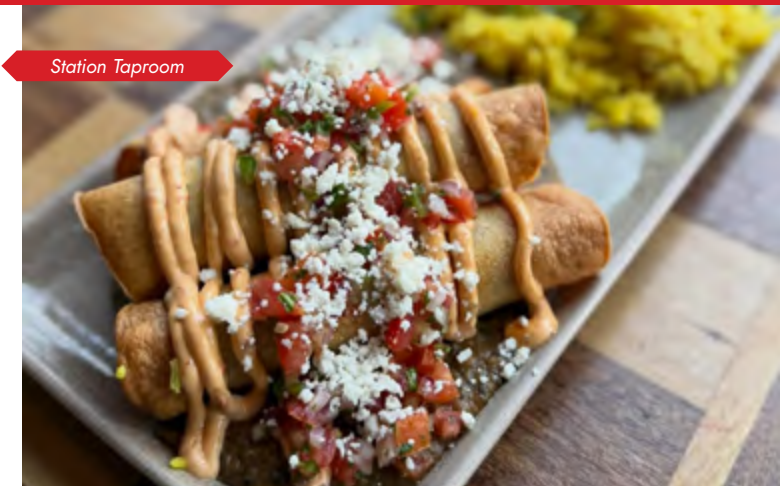
KENNETT SQUARE & CHADDS FORD

Morning: Talula's Table

102 W. State St., Kennett Square

610-444-8255 / TalulasTable.com

Breakfast and brunch are a foodie's fantasy at charming Talula's. Select decadent cinnamon buns or spinach and feta puff pastry that's as appetizing to see as it is to eat. Their frittatas are healthy, scrumptious starts to the day. Get creative with brunch with fig dip and crackers, artisanal cheeses or farm salad that includes egg and bacon along with other delectable morsels. Grab an outdoor table under the awning in warm months or seat at the cozy nook table inside anytime. Whatever you choose, with a steady stream of customers coming into the cheery market, people-watching is great over a rich cup of coffee.



Station Taproom



Victory Brewing Co.



Dressler Estate Cidery



Talula's Table

La Verona



Noon: Hank's Place

1625 Creek Rd., Chadds Ford
610-332-0400
HanksPlaceChaddsFord.com

When a line's at the door, there's something worth waiting for. That's Hank's Place, newly reopened on stilts in Chadds Ford after the 2021 flood. An icon since its hamburger stand and artists' gathering days, it's where locals take great guests for great cooking — scratch comfort food. The sunny space with a beamed vaulted ceiling and art is a fresh setting for four-cheese penne pasta, classic corned beef specials or anytime breakfasts of eggs Benedict with cream chipped beef on a biscuit. The wait on the ramp is just long enough to enjoy longtime friends or make new ones.

Night: La Verona

114 E. State St., Kennett Square
610-444-2244 / LaVeronaPA.com

When the whole family is in town, La Verona is the place for lovely ambiance, attentive service and plentiful options for wonderful Italian food. The inviting feeling begins the minute the doors with beveled glass windows open. Every cousin can order their favorite pasta — tricolor with seafood, the best gnocchi around or ravioli with lobster or spinach and mushrooms. There's also a gorgeous roasted half duck for Uncle George and gluten-free options for Grandma, including their special mushroom soup. Perfect for anniversary celebrations or cozy gatherings, fireplace light is reflected in your glasses, ready for a toast.

Night: Portabellos of Kennett Square

108 E. State St., Kennett Square
610-925-4984
PortabellosOfKennettSquare.com

Under starry skies, walk past the twinkling lights on State Street and enter Portabellos, where the cuisine, atmosphere and hospitality shine. Chef Hulbert's and Sandra Morris's changing menu is a tribute to local mushrooms plus other delicious offerings. Savor delectable dishes of starter mushroom en cocotte and entrees of portabella ravioli, egg noodles with white mushrooms and stroganoff with truffle sour cream. Options for cocktails, mocktails and premium wine are abundant. The experience completes any day, whether after work or adventures at Longwood Gardens or local horse country.

Happy Hour: The Creamery of Kennett Square

401 Birch St., Kennett Square
484-732-7040 / KennettCreamery.com

Looking for summertime hibiscus margaritas at picnic tables or wintertime craft beers under indoor sparkling lights? Stop for Happy Hours at the Creamery. The former milk plant includes a bar for cocktails, local wines, large selection of beers — some you may have never sampled — and loads of fun. Changing snacks and yummy food options to pair with drinks are as varied as the community: quesadillas, Bavarian pretzels and pasta, to name a few. Double-check the online calendar for days and times before friends — including your four-pawed bestie (Fido is welcome, too!) — pile into the car.

Gem: 1906 at Longwood Gardens

1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square
610-388-1000
LongwoodGardens.org/Dine/1906

Longwood's 1906 restaurant is its canvas for cuisine, bringing the same talent and artistry to the plate as it brings to its gardens. Unveiled in autumn 2024, the space and menu are creatively designed and beautifully articulated. The seasonally changing menu (with attention to sustainability) features local ingredients, including flowers and ornamental delights. Bundled for winter, enter after a stroll among the trees to warm up with hearty soup in a china bowl. Dress to the nines to celebrate with special cocktails, mocktails and dinner while watching fountain shows through the arched windows. Order dessert — a culinary tribute to horticulture.

MALVERN

Morning: The Buttery

233 E. King St.
610-296-2534 / MalvernButtery.com

If you're new to Malvern, discover where the local community gathers to begin the day. The Buttery is known for fresh ingredients, favorite cuppas and baked goods from the oven behind a giant sunny room where people are smiling. Stroll past a long glass case to choose pastries. At the register order beverages, extraordinary Turkish eggs, fruit bowls and yogurt with bee pollen and honeycomb. Go ahead. Dip into the big cookie jar or order sourdough bread for a mid-morning coffee break or elevenses. The Buttery is so popular, it recently expanded its Malvern seating space and to more locations.

Noon: Fork & Bottle at The Desmond

1 Liberty Blvd.
610-296-9800
ForkAndBottleMalvern.com

The Desmond's Fork & Bottle restaurant is just the place for an upscale lunch. Patrons popping in from nearby and hotel guests give kudos for service — excellent for large groups, as well as couples — and plating that's worth an Instagram post. In a classy, upbeat atmosphere, yet not too loud for good conversation, you'll benefit from the chef's relationships with quality fisheries and farms. Pair Maryland crab bisque with a signature cocktail, innovative flatbreads and remarkable hand-cut fries with local draft beer, or the chicken, portobello and goat cheese sandwich with a glass of wine.

Noon: Fattoush Med. Cuisine

182 Lancaster Ave.
484-568-4465 / FattoushHealthyDining.com

Come in from the cold to family-run and family-friendly Fattoush, where dazzling aromas of flavorful spices greet you. The lunchtime crowd relishes Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food in a casual setting where staff and surroundings are genuinely warm and helpful. Faves are delicious shawarma — seasoned, marinated beef or chicken with lettuce, tomatoes and more — on Lebanese bread, a superb, mouthwatering thin pita. Mjadra with lentils and rice is a delight for vegetarians or omnivores. Portions are generous — ask for a box so there's room for dessert. Or get it to go because the baklava isn't to be missed. Go once and you'll be back soon.

Night: The General Warren

9 Old Lancaster Rd.
610-296-3637 / GeneralWarren.com

Named for Dr. Joseph Warren, a physician and American Revolutionary figure killed at Bunker Hill in 1775, The General Warren (formerly an inne) is a cherished local landmark. Known for its historic ambiance and dishes like beef Wellington and snapper soup, the restaurant offers traditional American cuisine with a contemporary flair. Executive Chef Joshua Smith leads the culinary team, using local sourced foods and classic techniques to create an extraordinary dining experience. History, he believes, “sets the pace for the future of food, much the same way General Warren has set the pace for local hospitality in the Great Valley for centuries.”

Night: Joey Chops

245 Lancaster Ave.
484-450-8890 / JoeyChops.com

A classic steakhouse, Joey Chops is focused on serving superior, prime-grade, hand-cut steaks, praised as tender, flavorful and perfectly cooked. Its premium seafood is “fresh off the boat.” For starters, try the green garlic escargot, oysters Rockefeller or she-crab soup. For mains, locals declare the dry-aged ribeye exceptional, and the filet mignon, New York strip, Delmonico and wagyu beef are all top-notch, as is the seared tuna steak. The interior of the restaurant is modern, cozy, intimate and quiet, considered an excellent spot for date nights, special occasions and relaxing, intimate dinners. Be sure to sample a classic cocktail from the bar.

Happy Hour: The Jockey Tavern

240 Lancaster Ave.
610-296-2222 / JockeyTavern.com

Calling all horse lovers! Saddle up! When business is over, they call it “Jockey Hour.” Enjoy half-price pints of beer, house wines, mint juleps, martinis, old fashioned, highballs and buck-a-shuck oysters. Plus a long list of “bits & bites” — smoked brisket nachos, crispy calamari, hot cheese fondue and more. The Jockey Tavern's décor sports equestrian artifacts and photos, with brick, oak floors and wood tones throughout, and is inspired by Chester County's horse country heritage. Live piano music is featured on Friday and Saturday nights, contributing to the lively atmosphere. Outside find seating for your hounds.

Gem: Restaurant Alba

7 W. King St.
610-644-4009 / RestaurantAlba.com

Chef Sean and Kelly Weinberg created Restaurant Alba as a restaurant that not only uses locally produced foods, but also offers contemporary wholesome cuisine. Dishes, changing seasonally, are simply prepared over a wood-burning grill allowing for flavors to stand out while being enhanced by hickory and mesquite, a concept found throughout the countryside of Europe. Favorite appetizers have included grilled octopus, burrata and whipped ricotta bruschetta with honey and sea salt. Entrees have included wild boar ragu or guinea hen agnolotti. Diners praise their desserts too, such as bread pudding and budino, and are grateful for the culinary artistry.

Fattoush



Joey Chops



Jockey Tavern



The Creamery



1906 at Longwood Gardens



MEDIA

Morning: Bittersweet Kitchen

18 S. Orange St.
610-566-1660 / EatAtBittersweet.com

For over a decade, Delco locals have gathered for breakfast at this cozy spot on Orange Street. Expect a bit of a wait, especially on weekends, so order a coffee or cold brew to go and take a stroll down State Street in the meantime. Decadent crème brûlée pancakes with a burnt sugar top and challah French toast stuffed with cream cheese and topped with bourbon-caramel sauce and bananas are to die for. More of a savory person? Opt for the Bittersweet breakfast (eggs, buttermilk biscuit, potatoes), huevos rancheros, avocado toast or their rotating omelet selection. Be sure to take home a fresh-baked pastry for later!

Noon: Fellini Cafe

106 W. State St.
610-892-7616 / FellinisCafe.com

Though this beloved family trattoria is best known for family dinners, date nights and celebrations, its lunch selections deserve just as much attention. Fellini's offers one of Media's best midday deals: a \$15 combo with soup or salad plus your choice of more than two dozen pasta dishes — penne Bolognese, fettucine alfredo, rigatoni alla vodka and much, much more. You'll also find lunch-sized portions of classic Italian entrees, wood-fired paninis, sandwiches and all the traditional antipasti. Portions are generous, flavors are spot-on, and whatever you do, don't skip the housemade bruschetta.

Brick & Brew

Noon: Brick & Brew

226 W. State St.
484-443-8441 / BrickNBrewPub.com

For a lively noontime meetup with friends, you can't beat this vibrant gastropub in the heart of State Street. Warm woods, industrial touches and a friendly, bustling vibe make it an easy place to linger over lunch. Start with a few crowd-pleasing apps — Bavarian pretzel sticks, confit wings, birria eggrolls — before exploring a menu that's both comforting and creative. Take your pick of flavorful handhelds like the buttermilk fried chicken sandwich or French onion grilled cheese, hand-tossed pizzas, tacos and hearty salads, or build your own half-pound burger. Pair it all with a local craft beer or a signature house cocktail.

Night: Ariano

114 S. Olive St.
610-892-6944 / ArianoMedia.com

Tucked down a quiet side street, Ariano's terracotta, stucco-clad façade feels more Mediterranean than downtown Media. Inside, hand-hammered copper tables, a dramatic curved bar and striking second-floor ceiling mural set the scene for rustic Italian cooking. Known for its wood-fired pizzas, Ariano also serves Old World-inspired entrees — chicken parmigiana, bruschetta-topped salmon, short rib Bolognese over risotto — and housemade pastas, including brown butter ricotta gnocchi and spicy crab vodka. Don't miss stand-out apps like crab-stuffed arancini or littleneck clams served in a bread bowl. Pair your meal with a handcrafted cocktail and finish with gelato made onsite — even better as an affogato.

Ariano

Happy Hour: Azie

217 W. State St.
610-566-4750 / Azie-Restaurant.com

For a Happy Hour with serious flair — and a setting to match — Azie is your spot. Every day from 4 to 6 at the sleek front lounge and bar, sip \$7 specials like the Azie Blue (blueberry vodka, mint, lemonade), saketinis, margaritas, mixed drinks or select wines, along with \$5 drafts and bottles. Pair your drink with discounted bites: umami fries with seaweed aioli, pork or veggie dumplings, classic fried rice, sushi rolls or the \$14 temaki trio — three signature sushi hand rolls, spicy tuna crunch, salmon avocado and shrimp tempura. And dream of warmer evenings on the rooftop deck ...

Happy Hour: Departure

2 S. Orange St.
610-502-3833 / DepartureDelco.com

A newcomer to Media's Happy Hour circuit, Departure opened in fall 2024 and instantly stood out. Housed in a former bank across from the Delaware County Courthouse, it's been reimagined as a chic global dining spot with airport lounge vibes — right down to the vintage-style arrival/departure board. Weekdays from 4 to 6, enjoy drink specials and cleverly named signature cocktails (The Takeoff, The Contrail, The Northern Lights) alongside jet-setting small plates like hummus, tabbouleh, tandoori chicken dumplings, carne asada and jerk shrimp. Come warmer months, head to The Runway, the outdoor bar buzzing with live music and Philly sports on flatscreens.

Departure



The Boardroom Restaurant



Avlós



Bistro on Bridge

Gem: Desert Rose

305 W. State St.
484-442-8012 / DesertRoseMediaPA.com

Locals know that the unassuming storefront beneath a blue awning hides one of State Street's true gems. This husband-and-wife-owned BYOB has built a loyal following for its authentic Mediterranean and Middle Eastern street food — and for the warm hospitality that keeps regulars coming back. Choose from towering chicken shawarma, overstuffed falafel sandwiches, melt-in-your-mouth brisket, comforting shakshuka and rotating specials — with a side of fresh-baked pita and silky housemade hummus, of course. Online reviewers even insist Desert Rose serves the best cheesesteaks in Delco. With plenty of vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, it's a great choice for diners with dietary restrictions, too.

Gem: The Towne House

117 Veterans Sq.
484-445-2041 / TowneHousePA.com

A true Delco mainstay, the Towne House has welcomed generations of diners since 1951 — and its recent revival has brought new life to this beloved landmark. The sprawling, multi-concept space includes a main dining room, tavern, cocktail lounge, event space and seasonal patio, each with its own vibe. Dinner favorites range from overnight Guinness short ribs and classic shepherd's pie to signature burgers — from all-American to seasonal game and bone marrow wagyu. Shareables like grilled lollipop lamb chops and the local charcuterie board round out the menu. Whether it's brunch, a special gathering or an evening of live music, the Towne House proves why it's a Delco classic.

PHOENIXVILLE

Morning: Nook & Kranny Kafe

847 Valley Forge Rd.
610-933-5393 / NookAndKrannyKafe.com

The Nook & Kranny Kafe was founded, with her father's gentle push, by then-19-year-old Christina Rubeo (now Swartzentruber). Ultimately, the Kafe became a family business. A small and congenial spot, known for its fresh, homemade breakfasts and friendly atmosphere, serves up such dishes as omelets, eggs Benedict, French toast muffins and Monte Cristo sandwiches all day. Patrons describe the Kafe as a "hidden gem" with a "homey" ambiance in overwhelmingly positive reviews, with customers consistently praising the delicious homemade-style food and generous portions.

Noon: The Boardroom Restaurant

101 Bridge St.
610-235-0620 / TheBoardroomPXV.com

The building was once the superintendent's office for the Phoenix Iron Company, but it now houses The Boardroom Restaurant & Bottle Shop, an upscale casual restaurant, focused on from-scratch cooking, with New American cuisine. For starters, it offers a selection of cheese and charcuterie along with other apps. For main dishes, try filet mignon, heritage pork or Chilean sea bass. Relatively new to Phoenixville, the eatery's founders Pat and Kate Merriman sought to provide a fresh and exciting dining experience. They created The Boardroom as a tribute to their beloved town, where they were inspired by the local community.

Night: Black Lab Bistro

248 Bridge St.
610-935-5988 / BlackLabBistro.net

An intimate dining room, featuring classic woodwork, the Black Lab is snug, restful and romantic (although it can be lively on busy weekend nights). The menu is tempting, with popular choices being crispy calamari, spicy tuna tartare and lobster bisque. Mains include pan-roasted duck breast with scallops, jumbo lump crab cakes and sesame seared salmon. For dessert, try tiramisu, pumpkin cheesecake or cinnamon bun ice cream sandwiches. There's outdoor seating in good weather for people watching, and it's a perfect place to bring a date.

Night: Avlós Greek Cuisine

258 Bridge St.
610-455-4110 / AvlosGr.com

Held by two Skartistila sisters, Executive Chef Nikoleta and sister Katerina, who grew up near Mount Vesuvius, Avlós Greek Cuisine has an outstanding reputation for authenticity. Serving spanakopita, tzatziki, moussaka, souvlaki, grilled octopus and other Greek specialties, Nikoleta and her staff are committed to superior ingredients and generous portions. The atmosphere is informal and warm, lauded for its hospitality and friendly service. Avlós, known for its ambiance and occasional live Greek music nights, is a superb addition to Phoenixville's dining scene.

Happy Hour: Bistro on Bridge

212 Bridge St.
610-935-7141 / BistroOnBridge.com

Looking for a good place for Happy Hour? Try Bistro on Bridge. With \$5 craft beers, \$9





Soko Bag



The Goat's Beard



At The Table

cocktails, \$9 appetizers plus oysters for a “buck a shuck,” you can’t go wrong. The craft beer list is long, including Allagash Brewing, Sly Fox and others. Appetizers include wings, risotto balls, Buffalo chicken dip and more. The vibe is relaxed and lively, with seating both indoors and out, a second floor with retro arcade games and fireplace flaming, as well as a rooftop beer garden — featuring a VW bus bar — for spring and summer views. There’s no reason at all to head home early!

Gem: Soko Bag

95 Nutt Rd.
855-765-6224 / SokoBag.com

A must visit in Phoenixville! Soko Bag is Korean inspired, specializing in fried chicken. But Colonel Sanders didn’t just buy a ticket to Seoul. Three varieties of fried chicken — bamboo salt, ghost cheddar BBQ and white cheddar snow — are offered, all very crispy. Plus a variety of dipping sauces. And don’t forget the yummy menu or the beer list, offering about nine beers, including blonde, hazy and West Coast IPAs, American and Korean lager, chocolate, vanilla or sour jaw. Enjoy them all while watching Philly sports on high def TVs. Cheers and cheers!

WAYNE

Morning: Matines Café

757 Lancaster Ave.
484-580-2982 / MatinesCafe.com

Transplanted Parisians, Matines’ owners Amanda and Arthur de Bruc ask you to savor the rich aroma of its coffees, lattes, espressos and tea. Take in the luscious, sweet smell of their pastries and breads. Taste their delicious quiches and breakfast sandwiches. You’ll be taken back to a glorious morning by the Seine. The sounds of conversation, the bistro chairs, the small, round tables, the uncomplicated framed watercolors, the shelves of mustards, jams, chocolates, books and Eiffel Tower souvenirs, all enhance the Gay Paree vibe. *Tres bien!* The folks in Wayne find it an excellent place to hang out with friends.

Morning: Minella’s Diner

320 Lancaster Ave.
610-687-1575 / MinellasDiner.com

For a different vibe, there’s reliable and beloved Minella’s Diner, with fast, friendly service, a family-run feel, serving generous portions. It’s a local staple for its classic diner setting and comfort food. Breakfast is served all day, with French toast, omelets and eggs Benedict most often recommended. But for the true experience, order the Wayne Special, which typically includes scrambled

eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, home fries and toast. The dish often arrives, because of its size, on two plates. Minella’s is also known for its baked goods, entirely homemade, especially its blueberry and apple muffins.

Noon: The Goat’s Beard

103 N. Wayne Ave.
484-584-4979 / TheGoatsBeardPhilly.com

Co-owners Sean Coyle and Mike MacCrory named the Goat’s Beard after a native Pennsylvania plant — a tall, bushy perennial that produces cream-colored flower plumes (resembling a goat’s beard) and attracts a wide array of pollinators, including bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. The name intends to emphasize the restaurant’s culinary focus on regional, seasonal sourcing of its food. Serving locally sourced fare, such as sweet potato cornbread, shrimp paella, cheesesteak egg rolls, maple carrots, pastrami roasted turkey club and smash burgers, the menu is also widely praised for its inventiveness.

Night: Rosalie

139 E. Lancaster Ave.
610-977-0600 / RosalieWayne.com

The Wayne Hotel’s front porch is a perfectly mellow place to watch the sun set. Inside Rosalie, you’ll find a lively bar, the sophisticated main dining room, an airy space with vaulted ceilings, as well as several smaller spaces for private parties. The restaurant, owned by Marty Grims and daughter Sydney (of the Fearless Restaurant group), boasts Italian “soul food” — wood-fired pizzas, homemade pastas, main courses like branzino and beef osso buco, and desserts like olive cake, cannoli and gelato. A pleasant and comfortable spot for satisfying Italian fare, plus a see-and-be-seen bar scene.

Night: At The Table

118 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-964-9700 / AtTheTableWayne.com

Order the Royal Seafood Tower, consisting of a dozen oysters, shrimp cocktails, salmon crudo, scallop ceviche, mussels and crab Louis & claws. You’ll need to share, but wow! You can order a six-course tasting menu, which changes seasonally, or off an a la carte menu as well. Alex and Tara Hardy, owners and Executive Chefs, declare At The Table’s mission is to evoke “oceanic vibes” and offer a high level of service and thoughtful cuisine. The small restaurant’s modern, beautifully decorated interior gives it an intimate, upscale feel. It’s lively when full, with positive energy. Wayne diners appreciate the friendly and attentive staff.

Happy Hour: The Great

American Pub

4 West Ave.
610-964-9535 / TheGreatAmericanPub.com

On weekdays, come quitting time, the Great American Pub becomes a popular, high-spirited place, drawing in customers from Wayne and beyond, with discounts on beer, cocktails and snacks. Happy Hour offers \$3 for Miller Lite drafts, \$5 for Levante, Allagash or Sly Fox beers, White Claws for \$5, and \$8 for an orange crush or Moscow mule. You’ll easily forget your workplace blues. They also serve an assortment of bites, wings, pretzels and fries for \$6 to \$10 in a space with plenty of TVs and, when the weathers allows, lots of seats on the inviting rooftop.

Gem: Autograph Brasserie

503 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-964-2588 / AutographBrasserie.com

The walls are covered with vintage vinyl, framed celebrity photos and other pop culture memorabilia — over 1,000 pieces! At Autograph Brasserie, the mood is romantic and nostalgic, just right for date night. The cuisine is upscale, featuring premium steaks — the dry-aged Angus ribeye is especially good — seafood, homemade pasta and an expansive wine list. Lobster bisque, lobster mac & cheese, and the Autograph burger are very popular. Go to enjoy weekly half-price wine specials and live music on Tuesdays and Fridays. And the staff is praised for being attentive, friendly and knowledgeable.

WESTERN MAIN LINE

Morning: Black Cat Cafe

42 Berkley Rd., Devon
610-688-1930 / TheBlackCatCafeDevon.org

Owned and operated by PALS (Pet Adoption and Lifecare Society), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit,

Black Cat Cafe’s proceeds go directly to the needs of homeless, abandoned, injured and sick cats and kittens. Executive Chef Judy Link oversees the hearty and wholesome menu. Patrons coming in for breakfast love the food choices — eggs, pancakes, French toast — with vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options a plus. The cafe is a charming and homey space, and the cats and kittens, always adorable, are available for viewing and adoption in a separate gift shop area.

Brunch: Terrain Cafe

138 Lancaster Ave., Devon. 610-590-4675
ShopTerrain.com/Devon-Restaurant

Next door to the Devon Horse Show Grounds, Terrain Cafe inhabits a spacious, plant-filled greenhouse, a space often mentioned for its unique, natural ambiance, designed to pay homage to the area’s pastoral history (in the former Waterloo Gardens spot), featuring local materials like Pennsylvania fieldstone and reclaimed barn wood. The brunch menu is seasonally inspired, featuring choices like wild mushroom frittata, chicory and citrus salad, shakshuka, cauliflower sandwich and more. The culinary team works closely with its purveyors to ethically source its fresh ingredients (listed on the menu), laying the foundation for its nourishing dishes. Plus seasonally inspired cocktails and enticing mocktails — orange turmeric sunrise, anyone?

Noon: Dixie Picnic

215 Lancaster Ave., Malvern
484-320-8024 / DixiePicnic.com

They make everything — well, almost everything — from scratch. Mustard is purchased and potato chips are also bought. But Dixie Picnic is dedicated to homemade, from-scratch cooking. A woman-owned business founded by Tracey Deschaine, who was brought up in a Southern

kitchen, it bakes its bread and cakes preservative-free, on site. Chicken, turkey, pork, beef are all home roasted or smoked. All its sauces are made using simple, natural and often locally grown ingredients. Dixie Picnic is widely known and highly regarded for its upcakes — cupcakes turned over for more icing surfaces — and its loyal following.

Night: Nectar

1091 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn
610-725-9000 / TasteNectar.com

With a goal of artistry and urban beauty, Nectar’s towering silkscreen Buddha, dramatic high ceilings, stunning dining room, elegant bar and attentive service welcome Main Liners to a garden of culinary delight. The menu combines classic French cooking with Asian nuance and offers a broad, delicious selection of appetizers, sushi and sashimi. Wok-seared beef, grilled tea-smoked venison, edamame dumplings, tempura wok lobster and other dishes demand second and third visits. Chef Kenny Huang leads the kitchen with a commitment to using local, seasonal and sustainable ingredients. For date night or for any other romantic occasion, Nectar is a cosmopolitan fusion restaurant that’s unsurpassed.

Happy Hour: The Pullman

Restaurant & Bar

39 Morris Ave., Bryn Mawr
610-727-0777 / ThePullmanRestaurant.com

Main Liners looking for fun after work are drawn to The Pullman’s “Social Hour,” offering martinis, old fashioned, negronis and margaritas for \$12, glasses of Guinness for \$4, other beers, wines, Stateside cans and small plates. They’re all discounted. There’s live music after 6 on Fridays. And, as if weekdays were not enough, The Pullman does Late Night Happy Hour after 9 p.m.

Autograph Brasserie



Terrain Cafe



Nectar



on Fridays and Saturdays. Cocktails, beer, wine, cans, munchies ... discounts again! Owned by Roni and Jennifer Hammer, The Pullman's goal is to recreate an era of luxury and sophistication in rail travel, with a nod to the iconic Pullman dining cars of the 1940s.

**MORE IN
CHESTER COUNTY**

Morning: Farmer & Co.

5 Cemetery Ln., Unionville
610-347-0209 / [FarmerAndCo](#)

Head to the heart of Unionville for a great reason to get out of bed: Farmer & Co. Walk past the back garden growing flowers and vegetables to reach the cafe and market in a quaint old home. It has lots of cozy crannies to enjoy the yummiest mocha around or a special tea blend. Take your artisan striped cup and fresh egg sandwich up to the library room that overlooks a beautiful sprawling tree. Or for your morning coffee break, indulge in a big, premise-made cookie on the Victorian front porch. Fresh, locally sourced ingredients are just plain good.

Morning: ButterScotch Pastry Shop

1406 Hollow Rd., Birchrunville
610-827-0900 / [ButterScotchPastry.com](#)

Stop in after early-morning hiking on nearby trails or tumbling out of bed at 10 — still in your fuzzy jammies. Cross the footbridge and enter at the red door for a glorious breakfast or brunch. The artisan food, from quiche to salmon croissants with steaming matcha or espresso, made by two fabulous pastry chefs, is always a treat. It's never too early for superlative desserts — signature butterscotch cake, mouth-watering cannoli with chocolate edges and more. The interior stone wall, fireplace and collection of antique kitchen tools make it cozy as home. An absolute favorite!

Noon: Hood's BBQ

1664 W. Doe Run Rd., Kennett Square
610-347-1670 / [HoodsBBQ.com](#)

Leave your tie at work, 'cuz the BBQ sauce is so good you'll have it on everything. Hood's has a whopping-size parking lot and many tables — it's a lunchtime crowd pleaser. Chow down a burger, brisket, a side saddle of fries or baked beans. A quick drive from downtown Kennett, and worth a longer drive from farther reaches to backroads near Unionville, find Hood's star — the "Hoodie." The lip-smackin' sandwich has loads of pulled pork with sauce, provolone and coleslaw. Take home a bottle of sauce and a hooded sweatshirt with their logo. After all, it's "Home of the Hoodie."

Noon: Sovana Bistro

696 Unionville Rd., Kennett Square
610-444-5600 / [SovanaBistro.com](#)

Gracious, spacious Sovana Bistro is perfect for business or friendly lunches with any size group. Whether you're a first timer from elsewhere or a local who became a regular, its cheery, accommodating staff greets you with a smile while opening the door for you. Chic décor with high ceilings and wooden tables holding modern white dishes create an ambiance that impresses, while spotlighting the great food. Order the ever-changing express lunch — soup from scratch, sandwich and salad with innovative taste combinations and scrumptious dessert for a superb meal that gets you back to your office or next activity on time from this idyllic spot near the Willowdale races.

Night: Bloom Southern Kitchen

123 Pottstown Pk., Chester Springs
484-359-4144 / [BloomSouthernKitchen.com](#)

If there's a dish you love from south of the Mason-Dixon line, you'll likely find it at Bloom: hush puppies and deviled eggs for starters, seafood

jambalaya, and fried chicken and waffles for dinner entrees, plus Arnold Palmers and juleps. Whether you grew up with Granny's hand-ground pimento cheese, or you didn't, you'll approve of the pimento smash burger. It's big — big bacon slices, big roll and burger, big flavor. Dining rooms are a warm combination of chic, comfortable and charming. All with an eye-catching mural of poppies growing up the outside of the old inn.

Night: The Whip Tavern

1383 N. Chatham Rd., Coatesville
610-383-0600 / [TheWhipTavern.com](#)

The Whip Tavern celebrates 20 years of consistently great food and the bustling atmosphere of a popular English pub. Its hearth beckons guests from fields and hills of local horse country and the county's towns. Tables indoors and on the patio by the stream are laden with traditional dishes of beef Wellington, Yorkshire pudding, fish and chips with malt vinegar for the asking and sticky toffee pudding. The bar is rich with character, friendly servers and glasses of For Fox Sake cider, Everything Naughty stout and Belhaven nutty Scottish ale. Reserve a table — you'll want to linger until the moon is high in the sky.

**Happy Hour: The Stables Kitchen
& Beer Garden**

160 Park Rd., Chester Springs
484-696-7889 / [TheStablesBeerGarden.com](#)

Take your own party or join the one that's already at The Stables. Gather with 449 friends or friends-to-be for bites and sips. From the kitchen, try nachos and pizza, including a street corn pizza option. From the bar and beer garden, choose from taps of craft beers and ales, plus cocktails — mojitos, mules, margaritas and more, a different one featured each Happy Hour. In summer, grab patio umbrella tables or picnic tables near cornhole

games. In winter, ice skate outdoors or play beer pong in the former dairy barn. Friendly servers, casual atmosphere, lively fun.

**Gem: Life's Patina Co.
Mercantile & Cafe**

1657 Art School Rd., Chester Springs
[LifesPatina.com/Historic-Yellow-Springs](#)

In the charming village of Chester Springs, a historic home holds a gem of a cafe — Life's Patina — for first timers or those who discovered it earlier and return repeatedly. Locals know: come early! Every table fills quickly — in the dining room with crystal chandelier and wood floors, in a smaller area with sunny windows and wide windowsills, and on the delightful front porch. Enter the back room with a beautiful wood counter that holds glass cases of masterpiece pastries (both savory and sweet), irresistible cake slices and more. When the line is long, shop for gifts and home goods in the front room while you wait.

**WILMINGTON &
NORTHERN DELAWARE**

Morning: Kozy Korner

906 N. Union St., Wilmington
302-658-0812 / [KozyKorner-Restaurant.com](#)

A local hot spot, dating back over a century, Kozy Korner was founded by John Vouras and continued as a breakfast destination through Wilmington's golden years. Torn down in 1984 to make room for a high rise hotel, Kozy Korner was resurrected in 2002 by the original owner's grandson John, who helmed the eatery when it won the "Best Breakfast in Delaware" award, which it won six times! The menu is straightforward: eggs, pancakes, omelets, breakfast sandwiches. Known for hearty portions, the place can attract a crowd, but it continues as a local favorite,

proudly offering the restaurant's original quality, value and friendly service.

**Noon: Big Fish Grill
on the Riverfront**

720 Justison St., Wilmington
302-652-3474 / [BigFishRiverfront.com](#)

No need to drive to Rehoboth for great seafood. Big Fish Grill at Wilmington's riverfront features fresh seafood, steak dishes and a large covered patio with views of the Christina River. For a small lunch, try the sandwiches: crab cake or fried catfish, shrimp or fish tacos. For larger appetites, order fish and chips, seafood gumbo, Chesapeake crab cakes or fresh Scottish salmon, caramelized with shaved Parmesan or grilled with Dijon cream. The casual, contemporary and nautical-themed interior is spacious, with fiberglass and carved wooden fish models suspended from the high ceilings throughout the restaurant to complete the vibe.

Night: La Fia

421 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-543-5574 / [LaFiaWilmington.com](#)

Owned by James Beard semifinalist Chef Bryan Sikora, La Fia is an intimate bistro and bakery. Executive Chef Dwain Kalup readies inventive, seasonal meals with a focus on local and sustainable ingredients. The menu features French and American influences with globally inspired small plates, house-made pastas and rustic entrees. Popular dishes include Moroccan spiced short rib, crispy duck leg confit and an artisanal cheese plate. The restaurant has over 20 wines by the glass, craft beer and seasonally inspired craft cocktails. Everything is made in house at La Fia from the breads in the bread basket to the desserts. More reasons to visit.

Night: Bardea Food & Drink

620 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-426-2069 / [BardeaFoodAndDrink.com](#)

To bring the community together, Bardea co-founders Scott Stein and Chef Antimo DiMeo, imagined a restaurant that would capture the energy of downtown and offer modern interpretations of traditional Mediterranean cuisine. Pastas include ravioli with duck, foie gras and sweet onions. Other mains include a picanha steak with maitake mushrooms, beef cheek and a sunchoke citrus soy sauce. The restaurant's interior features rustic touches that allude to its Italian heritage. Its chic yet lively atmosphere and open kitchen showcasing the busy chefs add to the vibrant energy. Great patio space adjoining Bardea Steaks, another part of this growing restaurant group.

Bardea Food & Drink



ButterScotch Pastry Shop



Sovana Bistro



The Whip Tavern



The Stables



Life's Patina



La Fia





Merchant Bar

Happy Hour: Merchant Bar

1426 N. Market St., Wilmington
MerchantBarWilmington.com

Wilmington after work? An elevated gastropub, the Merchant Bar is what you want. Sip \$10 cocktails, \$10 wines and \$5 Mexican beers in cans. For food, order a taco for \$3, guacamole and salsa for \$5, and various plates for \$10. Sit at the marble-topped bar, individual tables, communal high tops or counter seating along its large storefront windows for people-watching. High ceilings and exposed ductwork, honey-blond hardwood floors and brass pendant light fixtures contribute to its trendy ambience. Nautical imagery — framed prints of lighthouses, paintings of old sailors — adds a “slightly salty” touch.

Happy Hour: Chelsea Tavern

821 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-482-3333 / ChelseaTavern.com

Directly across from the Grand Opera House, Chelsea Tavern, the popular local gastropub, has an early Happy Hour, from 3 to 6, and a late Happy Hour, from 11 to 1, all weeknights, attracting locals, tourists, the post-work and the pre-show crowds. At both Happy Hours, the menu features a large selection of mixed drinks, craft drafts, wines and canned cocktails. For apps, how about fried pickles, loaded potato bombs and pizzas? The energetic bar scene is a gathering place playing the game of the week on its large TVs.

Gem: Le Cavalier

42 W. 11th St., Wilmington
302-594-3154 / LeCavalierDE.com

A French neo-brasserie, Le Cavalier — meaning “the horseman” and evoking the equestrian tradition of the Brandywine Valley — is in the historic Hotel du Pont. The elegant space features original oak paneling, an ornate ceiling and gilded chandeliers, marble and terrazzo floors, new banquettes, oak-framed stained-glass windows and a marble bar. The careful preservation of its architecture earned the location in The Green Room a Best Historic Restaurant Award from Historic Hotels of America. In it, enjoy thoughtful French classics, such as short rib Bourguignon or trout amandine. From the bar, order at least one of its inventive cocktails or a glass of French wine and take it all in.

Gem: Buckley's Tavern

5812 Kennett Pk., Centreville
302-656-9776 / Buckley'sTavern.com

Once a blacksmith shop, then an ice cream store, Buckley's Tavern was taken over in 1951 by Dennis Buckley. Popular with stars, athletes and other glitterati, Buckley's dining rooms (as well as its parking lot) were full of glamour. Today, Chef Tom Hannum, former Executive Chef at the Hotel du Pont and guest chef at the James Beard House, offers his “secretly preferred comfort food.” Cream of mushroom soup, New England clam chowder, tobacco onions, crab Cobb salad, macaroni & cheese, baby back ribs — they're all delicious, prepared to perfection. It's where the locals want to go again and again. ♦



Le Cavalier



Buckley's Tavern

Food News + Coming Soon

- **Cutter & Cannon Spirits**, with a curated selection of rum, whiskey and brandy distilled in a 200-gallon pot still, plans to open behind Levante Brewing in West Chester. Look for Old Glory with 13 stars painted on ceiling of the tasting room, plus more themed décor and spirits (Red, White and Blue Bourbon) just in time for the America 250 celebrations. 210 Carter Dr., Ste. 5B, West Chester. CutterAndCannon.com
- **Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant** chain sent shockwaves around the area with their surprise bankruptcy announcement in late October and closure of all locations. November's surprise was the purchase of 10 locations (including West Chester) by Jeff Crivello, former CEO of Famous Dave's. Plans are to reopen some locations as Three Notch'd Brewing Co. Stay tuned. ThreeNotchdBrewing.com
- **New Roots by Ramsey's Farm** made hearts warm when they took over the beloved SIW farmstand last year. They closed for the season early November, but look for another bountiful year of fresh produce, including Dr. Martin lima beans, products and plants. The legacy continues. 4336 S. Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. NewRootsByRamseys.com
- **Salt II**, the planned high-end Korean dining complex (Korean omakase, tabletop cooking, lower price-point option, too) from the Salt Korean BBQ folks in North Wales, is expected to open in Devon this spring. The property, formerly the home of two high-end restaurants — La Jonquille and Shiraz, which closed several years ago — required extensive renovations. Should be amazing! 840 Lancaster Ave., Devon. SaltKoreanBBQ.com
- **Tired Hands Brewing Company**, the award-winning brewery with multiple locations and James Beard nods, made a mysterious announcement last summer about a future West Chester location. Said owner Jean Broillet IV, “It's the most unlikely spot you could ever imagine for a craft brewery.” Since then, crickets ... Location TBD. TiredHands.com
- **Wonder**, the national chain of food halls working with celebrity chefs (Bobby Flay), opened in West Chester, Newtown Square and King of Prussia for dine-in, takeout and delivery. Given all the wonderful local restaurants, we wonder why. Wonder.com

Cutter & Cannon Spirits



Chester County
FoodBank

We mobilize and educate the community to ensure access to nutritious and familiar food.

610-873-6000 • ChesterCountyFoodBank.org
650 Pennsylvania Drive, Exton, PA 19341

Give Me the Simple Life

Liz Tarditi

*"Some find it pleasant dining on pheasant
Those things roll off my knife
Just serve me tomatoes and mashed potatoes
Give me the simple life."
Harry Ruby*

HARRY RUBY, THE SONG-writer behind the lyrics to "Give Me the Simple Life," was a Bronx-born, working-class Jewish kid who worked his way into a long, prolific career in entertainment. By 1945, he was successful enough to be personally familiar with pheasant on the winter menu at the Stork Club and the 21 Club — the kind of glamorous places that shimmered with post-Depression optimism. Not exactly the setting for the "uh oh, the menfolk actually hit something" dinner of my family.

The grand occasion of my first taste of pheasant wasn't the stuff of tuxedoed waiters

lifting silver domes. I was 6, having dinner at my aunt's house during hunting season. All us kids were warned to chew carefully so we didn't chip a tooth on the hard, black pellets of shot still lodged in the meat.

This meal was also my first taste of polenta, which remains one of my favorite foods. And back in the 1970s, polenta was an inspired accompaniment to game, since the birds had been feeding in a family member's horse-corn field. I can still remember how my aunt flipped the bowl of polenta onto the serving platter, then cut the dome into cake-like wedges with the same spool of black thread she used to close the stuffing in the birds. My aunt was a marvelous cook.

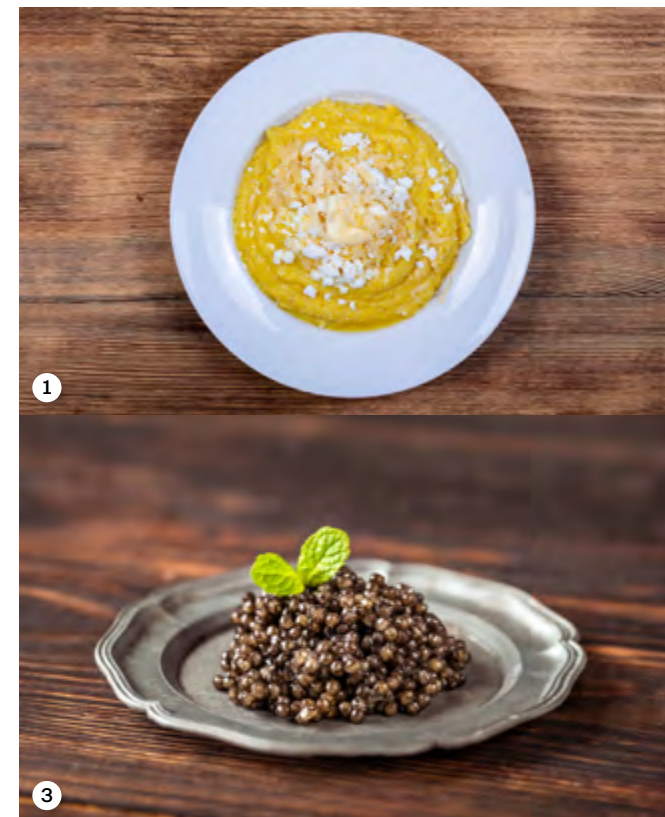
This story is to say that many of today's modern luxury dishes began as peasant food, built on thrift, necessity and whatever the environment offered that could keep

people from going hungry. As Jonathan Swift famously put it, "He was a bold man who first ate an oyster."

Let's take a closer look at three so-called luxury foods — polenta, pâté and caviar — and see if your perception of them changes.

POLENTA

Let's start with my beloved polenta. The root of its name dates back to grain porridge from ancient Roman times. The introduction of corn (maize) from the Americas happened in the 16th century, when it became a staple crop in parts of Italy for its high yield and nutritional value. Polenta was referred to as "the bread of the poor." This marked a significant shift in the culinary landscape of northern Italy, because polenta was affordable and could feed large families.



1. The name "polenta" dates back to the grain porridge of ancient Rome
2. Though often found in gourmet shops, pâté is surprisingly affordable to make yourself
3. Now the ultimate delicacy, caviar was once a simple breakfast for Russian fisherman and a freebie in American saloons

In Russia, sturgeon roe wasn't a delicacy at all — it was breakfast for fishermen along the Volga River and the Caspian Sea, spread on buttered bread because it was abundant, salty and kept you going through hard labor. In 19th-century America, saloons put out bowls of it for free, the way pretzels fill bowls now. The saltiness kept customers drinking and the saloonkeepers happy. Somewhere along the line, the humble became the highbrow, and the world politely forgot where it all started.

The preparation became a communal activity symbolizing family and community bonding. Anyone who's ever done all that stirring over a steaming pot is nodding in agreement. Over time, it evolved from a simple dish to a gourmet delicacy, gracing the tables of fine dining establishments.

PÂTÉ

Back in my own "salad days," I discovered the magic of truffled duck liver pâté from a little gourmet cheese shop a few blocks from my first condo. My single-girl treat dinner was cheese, crackers, pâté and wine with a side of apple and grapes.

A few years later, hearing my chef-professor describe what I'd regarded as the ultimate gourmet indulgence as "glorified finely ground meatloaf" was a true eureka moment. It freed me from all the intimidation I'd built up in my own head around high-end foods I loved. And better yet, once we started producing our own recipes and costing out the ingredients and prep time, I realized just how much money I'd save by not relying on little gourmet shops for my pâté fix ever again.

Knowing how pâté is made also made me quite smug about my love of our local, historical delicacy: scrapple. I can argue with full authority that it is, in fact, pâté — made from the same scraps and offal, simply seasoned and mixed with cornmeal and buckwheat flour.

CAVIAR

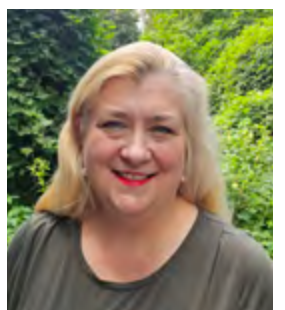
Finally, there's caviar — the poster child of modern luxury. Today it arrives on mother-of-pearl spoons in ice-chilled tins that cost more than a week's groceries. But its origins are anything but precious.

The foods I love most aren't defined by their price tags or reputations. It's January, and I'm already hungry for the Jersey tomatoes that aren't even seedlings yet, while consoling myself with the ratatouille and sauce I banked in my deep freezer last summer.

When I visit my daughter in Seattle, my checked bag is a cooler packed with frozen pork roll, our favorite neighborhood pizza, shaved beef and Amoroso's rolls. That's because I remember what it was like to go without the foods from home when I lived far away.

Peasant dish or luxury item, farmhouse bowl or fine-dining course — the line between them is thinner than the world pretends. As Dorothy Parker once quipped, "My tastes are simple: I am always satisfied with the best." And the older I get, the more I recognize that "the best" usually begins with something deliciously ordinary. ♦

Liz Tarditi is a chef and wine specialist with more than 30 years of experience in food, wine and event planning. She holds degrees from Villanova University and from a Seattle culinary arts program founded by a Certified French Master Chef, where she trained in a classic brigade-style kitchen. Liz later ran her own catering company and has worked as a wine specialist in Pennsylvania. She brings her training and lifelong passion for seasonal, approachable cooking to Brandywine Table.



Dining Guide 2026

Our guide to great local dining. Be sure to check websites before venturing out to check hours and other information.

SOME OF OUR FAVORITES

..... PENNSYLVANIA

Berwyn

The Berwyn Tavern
625 Lancaster Ave.
610- 889-9352; BerwynTavern.net

★ **Nectar**
1091 Lancaster Ave.
610-725-9000; TasteNectar.com

★ **Settantatré Pasta & Provisions**
802 Lancaster Ave.
610-314-0876; SettantatrePasta73.com

Birchrunville

✱ **Birchrunville Cafe**
1403 Hollow Rd.
610-827-9002; BirchrunvilleStoreCafe.com

★ **ButterScotch Pastry Shop**
1406 Hollow Rd.
610-827-0900; ButterScotchPastry.com

Bryn Mawr

Carina Sorella
866 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-596-9166; CarinaSorella.com

Il Fiore
915 Lancaster Ave. 484-380-2059; IlFiorePHL.com

★ **The Pullman Restaurant & Bar**
39 Morris Ave.
610-727-0777; ThePullmanRestaurant.com

Chadds Ford

✱ **Brandywine Prime**
1617 Baltimore Pk. (Rts. 1 & 100)
610-388-8088; BrandywinePrime.com

Chadds Ford Tavern
1400 Baltimore Pk.
484-800-4084; TheCFTavern.com

★ **Hank's Place**
1625 Creek Rd.
610-332-0400; HanksPlaceChaddsFord.com

✱ **The Gables at Chadds Ford**
423 Baltimore Pk.
610-388-7700; TheGablesAtChaddsFord.com

Chester Springs

★ ✱ **Bloom Southern Kitchen**
123 Pottstown Pk.
484-359-4144; BloomSouthernKitchen.com

Liberty Union Bar and Grill
325 Simpson Dr. *Also in Kimberton.*
484-359-4061; LibertyUnionBar.com

★ ✱ **Life's Patina Co. Mercantile & Café**
1657 Art School Rd.
LifesPatina.com/Historic-Yellow-Springs

Limoncello Ristorante
499 W. Uwchlan Ave. *Also in West Chester.*
610-524-3112; LimoncelloRestaurant.com

Revival Pizza Pub
240 Windgate Dr., Ste. A7
610-947-0999; RevivalPizzaPub.com

White Dog Cafe
181 Gordon Dr. *Plus other locations.*
610-827-9000; WhiteDog.com/ChesterSprings

Coatesville

✱ **Stottsville Inn Restaurant, Hotel & Bar**
3512 Strasburg Rd. 484-718-5121; StottvilleInn.com

The Iron Eagle on Lincoln Bar & Grille
143 Lincoln Hwy. E.
610-400-4407; IronEagleOnLincoln.com

Devon

★ **Black Cat Café**
42 Berkley Rd., Devon
610-688-1930; TheBlackCatCafeDevon.org

Pizzeria Vetri
138 W. Lancaster Rd.
484-207-6663; PizzeriaVetri.com

★ **Terrain Café**
138 W. Lancaster Ave. *Also in Glen Mills.*
610-590-4675; ShopTerrain.com/Devon-Restaurant

Downingtown

★ **The Borough**
149 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-364-4525; BoroughDowningtown.com

★ **Downingtown Diner**
81 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-873-4545; DTownDiner.com

★ **Dressler Estate Cidery & Bar**
112 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-693-0918; DresslerEstate.com

★ **The Farmhouse Coffee & Espresso Bar**
115 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-269-1400; FarmhouseCoffee.com

★ **Green Street Grill**
150 E. Pennsylvania Ave.
610-873-1700; GreenStGrill.com
See Market Street Grill in West Chester
A neighborhood favorite in Downingtown and West Chester, Green Street Grill serves breakfast and lunch with heart, craft and unmistakable flavor. The menu ranges from classics done exceptionally well to signature dishes you won't find anywhere else—including their famous andouille sausage gravy, hearty breakfast burritos, award-winning eggs Benedicts and an eclectic lunch menu.

★ **La Sponda**
20 E. Lancaster Ave. 484-593-4488; LaSponda.com

★ **Myrtos**
47 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-514-0000; MyrtosRestaurant.com



Appetites on Main



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The Noble Goat
200 River Station Blvd.
484-364-4369; NobleGoatDowningtown.com

Pomod’oro Pizza & Italian Restaurant
200 Chestnut St.
610-873-0405; PomodoroDowningtown.com

★ **Station Taproom**
207 W. Lancaster Ave.
484-593-0560; StationTaproom.com

Thorndale Inn
430 Bondsville Rd.
610-269-5455; ThorndaleInn.com

★ **Victory Brewing Company**
420 Acorn Ln.
610-873-0881; VictoryBeer.com

Exton

Appetites on Main
Main Street at Exton, 286 Main St.
610-594-2030; AppetitesOnMain.com
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ChopHouse Grille
301 N. Pottstown Pk.
484-875-6700; ChopHouseGrille.com

✱ **Duling-Kurtz House & Country Inn**
146 S. Whitford Rd.
610-524-1830; DulingKurtz.com

Gentili’s Pizza & Steaks
318 Lincoln Hwy. E.
610-477-7747; GentilisPizza.com

Nudy’s Café
420 W. Lincoln Hwy. *Plus other locations.*
610-524-1508; NudysCafes.com

Ron’s Original Bar & Grille
74 E. Uwchlan Ave. (Rt. 113)
610-594-9900; RonsOriginal.com
Serving real food, for the health of it. Delicious meals prepared from scratch, on site daily, with all natural ingredients and now seed oil free. American/Italian cuisine with something for everyone. Open daily at 11 am. Dine-in, takeout, delivery and catering. Order online or call.

✱ **VK Brewing Co. & Eatery**
693 Lincoln Hwy. E.
484-873-3199; VKBrewing.com

Eagleview Town Center Restaurant Row

Bluefin Eagleview
555 Wellington Sq.
610-458-3234; BluefinEagleview.com

Brickside Grille
540 Wellington Sq.
610-321-1600; BricksideGrille.com

Persis Indian Grill
541 Wellington Sq. 484-341-8445; PersisExton.com

Mama Wong
268 Eagleview Blvd.
484-713-8888; BestMamaWong.com

★ **L’Olivo Trattoria**
570 Wellington Sq.
610-340-8115; LOlivoTrattoria.com

Glen Mills

Harvest Seasonal Grill & Wine Bar
549 Wilmington-West Chester Pk.
610-358-1005; HarvestSeasonalGrill.com

Taste & Sea
1810 Wilmington Pk., Ste. 1
484-800-8331; TasteSea.com

Terrain Café
914 Baltimore Pk. *Also in Devon.*
610-459-6030
ShopTerrain.com/Glen-Mills-Restaurant

White Dog Café
981 Baltimore Pk. *Plus other locations.*
610-822-2100; WhiteDog.com/GlenMills

Kennett Square

★ **1906 & The Fountain Room at Longwood Gardens**
1001 Longwood Rd.
610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org/Dine

★ **The Creamery**
401 Birch St.
484-732-7040; KennettCreamery.com

Giordano’s
633 E. Cypress St.
610-444-5733; GiordanosKSQ.com

✱ **Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen**
108 W. State St.
610-444-7232; MeetAtGrain.com

Hearth Kitchen
Shoppes at Longwood Village, 847 E. Baltimore Pk.
484-732-8320; HearthKennettSquare.com

★ **Hood’s BBQ**
1664 W. Doe Run Rd.
610-347-1670; HoodsBBQ.com

★ **La Verona**
114 E. State St.
610-444-2244; LaVeronaPA.com

The perfect spot for an authentic and delightful fine dining experience, where they are committed to making your meal a memorable one with professional service in an inviting atmosphere. The menu highlights the northern region of Italy with seasonal variations for which Italian cuisine is celebrated. Their chefs and wait staff look forward to giving you an exceptional dining experience, and their private room makes your party special.

✱ **Letty’s Tavern**
201 E. State St. 610-444-5688; LettysTavern.com

Lily Asian Cuisine Sushi and Grill
104 W. State St.
610-925-3700; LilySushiAndGrill.com

The Naked Olive
759 W. Cypress St.
610-444-2424; TheNakedOlivePA.com

★ **Portabello’s**
108 E. State St. 610-925-4984
PortabellosOfKennettSquare.com

★ **Sovana Bistro**
696 Unionville Rd.
610-444-5600; SovanaBistro.com



Fattoush



Ron's Original Bar & Grille

★ **Talula’s Table**
102 W. State St.
610-444-8255; TalulasTable.com

Kimberton

The Kimberton Inn
2105 Kimberton Rd.
610-933-8148; KimbertonInn.com

Stone House Grille
1300 Hares Hill Rd.
610-933-1147; StoneHouseGrillePA.com

Lancaster County

Gibraltar Restaurant
488 Royer Dr., Lancaster
717-397-2790; GibraltarGrille.com

The Greenfield Restaurant & Bar
595 Greenfield Rd., Lancaster
717-915-2391; TheGreenfieldRestaurant.com

The Log Cabin Restaurant
11 Lehigh Forest Dr., Leola
717-626-9999; LogCabin1933.com

Shady Maple Smorgasbord
1324 Main St., East Earl
800-238-7363; Shady-Maple.com

Malvern

Anthony’s Pizza & Italian Restaurant
127 W. King St.
610-647-7400; AnthonysMalvern.com

★ **Bao Nine**
10 Liberty Blvd., Ste. 120
484-320-8481; BaoNine.us

BOMBAS ¡Tacos + Tequila!
10 Liberty Blvd. 610-727-5253; BombaTacos.com

Brick & Brew
400 E. King St. *Plus other locations.*
484-320-8688; BrickNBrewPub.com

Cedar Hollow Inn
2455 Yellow Springs Rd.
610-296-9006; CedarHollowInn.com

The Classic Diner
352 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-725-0515; TheClassicDinerPA.com

★ **Dixie Picnic**
215 Lancaster Ave.
484-320-8024; DixiePicnic.com

★ **Fattoush Healthy Dining**
182 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-568-4465; FattoushHealthyDining.com
The culinary passion at Fattoush brings a commitment to crafting memorable dining experiences for their guests. Serving humus, falafel, stuffed grape leaves, baba ghanouj, shawarma wraps, gyro and more. Bring your bottle, they’ll set the table.

✱ **The Fern & Fable**
39 Conestoga Rd.
610-647-8060; TheFernAndFable.com

The Flying Pig
121 E. King St.
610-578-9208; @TheFlyingPigSaloon

★ **Fork & Bottle at The Desmond**
1 Liberty Blvd.
610-296-9800; ForkAndBottleMalvern.com

★ ✱ **General Warren**
9 Old Lancaster Rd.
610-296-3637; GeneralWarren.com

★ **Joey Chops**
245 Lancaster Ave.
484-450-8890; JoeyChops.com

Rakkii Sushi & Ramen
235 Lancaster Ave.
610-889-3888; RakkiiUSA.com

★ **Restaurant Alba**
7 W. King St. 610-644-4009; RestaurantAlba.com

★ **The Buttery**
233 E. King St.
610-296-2534; MalvernButtery.com

Tonino’s Pizza & Pasta Co.
235 Lancaster Ave.
610-240-9566; ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com

A family-run business that prides itself on using the freshest ingredients to make authentic home-made Neapolitan pizza, pasta and signature Italian dishes. Come in and dine, BYOB, Tues–Fri, 10 to 9; Sat, 11 to 9; Sun, noon to 9 pm. Takeout, delivery and curbside pickup available.

Media

★ **Ariano Restaurant & Bar**
114 S. Olive St.
610-892-6944; ArianoMedia.com

★ ✱ **Azie**
217 W. State St.
610-566-4750; Azie-Restaurant.com

★ **Bittersweet Kitchen**
18 S. Orange St.
610-566-1660; EatAtBittersweet.com

★ **Brick & Brew**
26 W. State St. *Plus other locations.*
484-443-8441; BrickNBrewPub.com

Court Diner & Restaurant
140 E. Baltimore Ave.
610-566-4403; @MediaCourtDiner

★ **Departure**
2 Orange St.
610-502-3833; DepartureDelco.com

★ **Desert Rose**
305 W. State St.
484-442-8012; DesertRoseMediaPA.com

Dim Sum Mania
17–19 E. State St.
610-557-8757; DimSumMania.com

★ **Fellini Cafe**
106 W. State St.
610-892-7616; FellinisCafe.com

La Belle Epoque
38 W. State St.
610-566-6808; LaBelleBistro.com

La Porta
1192 N. Middletown Rd.
610-358-5104; LaPortaRestaurant.com



Casey Jones' Restaurant at Paradise Station

- ★ **Maris**
214 W. State St.
267-500-2979; MarisSeafood.com
- Pinocchio's Restaurant**
131 E. Baltimore Ave.
610-566-7767; PinPizza.com
- Sligo Irish Pub**
113 W. State St. 610-566-5707; SligoMedia.com
- Stephen's on State**
105 W. State St.
610-891-8900; StephensOnState.com
- Tom's Dim Sum**
13 E. State St. 610-566-6688; TomsDimSum.com
- ★ **The Towne House**
117 Veterans Sq.
484-445-2041; TowneHousePA.com

Mendenhall

- Mendenhall Inn**
323 Kennett Pk.
610-388-1181; MendenhallInn.com

Newtown Square

- Hiramasa**
2554 West Chester Pk.
484-420-4023; HiramasaPA.com
- LaScala's Fire**
3739 West Chester Pk.
484-900-2828; LaScalasFire.com
- ✱ **La Locanda Ristorante Italiano**
4989 West Chester Pk.
610-353-7033; LaLocandaPA.com
- Teca**
191 Newtown Street Rd. *Also in West Chester.*
484-420-4010; TecaNewtownSquare.com

- Teikoku**
5492 West Chester Pk.
610-644-8270; TeikokuRestaurant.com

Paoli

- Main Line Tavern**
516 E. King Rd.
484-320-8198; MainLineTavern.com
- Trattoria San Nicola**
4 Manor Rd.
610-695-8990; SanNicola.net

Phoenixville

- 260 Bridge Cafe**
260 Bridge St. 610-600-6570; @260BridgeCafe
- ★ **Avlós Greek Cuisine**
258 Bridge St. 610-455-4110; AvlosGr.com
- ★ **Bistro on Bridge**
210 Bridge St.
610-935-7141; BistroOnBridge.com
- ★ **Black Lab Bistro**
248 Bridge St.
610-935-5988; BlackLabBistro.net

- ★ **The Boardroom Restaurant & Bottle Shop**
101 Bridge St.
610-235-0620; TheBoardroomPXV.com
- Fitzwater Station**
264 Canal St.
610-933-1420; FitzwaterStation.com

- G-Lodge Cafe**
1371 Valley Forge Rd.
610-933-1646; GLodgeCafe.com
- ✱ **Great American Pub Bar & Grill**
148 Bridge St. *Plus other locations.*
610-917-3333; GreatAmericanPub.com
- Molly Maguire's Irish Restaurant & Pub**
197 Bridge St.
610-933-9550; MollyMaguiresPhoenixville.com

- ★ **Nook & Kranny Kafe**
847 Valley Forge Rd.
610-933-5393; NookAndKrannyKafe.com

- Root Down Brewing**
1 N. Main St.
484-302-5407; RootDownBrewing.com

- Sedona Taphouse**
131 Bridge St. *Also in West Chester.*
484-302-5714; SedonaTaphouse.com

- ✱ **Seven Stars Inn**
263 Hoffecker Rd.
610-495-5205; SevenStarsInn.com

- ★ **Soko Bag**
95 Nutt Rd. 855-765-6224; SokoBag.com

Pottstown

- The Blue Elephant**
152 E. High St. *Also in Wayne.*
484-949-9084; BlueElephantBar.com

- La Maison**
1470 Old Ridge Rd.
484-680-2631; MartinsKitchen.com

Radnor

- ★ **Mama-San**
226 N. Radnor Chester Rd.
484-580-6942; MamaSan-Restaurant.com

Ronks

- Casey Jones' Restaurant at Paradise Station**
312 Paradise Ln., Ronks
717-687-5000; EatAtCaseys.com
- Join them aboard their two original P70 (80-foot car), 80-ton dining cars that once rode the rails. Featuring scratch-made fare for breakfast, lunch and dinner, including all-inclusive options for groups. Enjoy onsite attractions like original shows at The Barn at Paradise Station, lodging at The Red Caboose Motel, petting zoo, gift shop and more. Just minutes from Sight & Sound Theatres!

St. Davids

- ★ **Triple Crown Restaurant, Events & Garden**
Radnor Hotel, 593 E. Lancaster Ave.
610-632-5000; TripleCrownRadnor.com

Wayne

- A Taste of Britain**
Eagle Village Shops, 503 Lancaster Ave.
610-971-0390; ATOBritain.com
- A Taste of Britain offers a charming British tea-room experience in Wayne's Eagle Village Shops, featuring over 50 loose-leaf teas, scratch-made soups, salads, sandwiches and freshly baked scones. Enjoy indulgent afternoon tea, explore the impressive British grocery market and gift shop, or let them cater your next gathering. Warm, welcoming and delightfully British for 34 years. Open 7 days, 10 am to 5 pm.
- ★ **At The Table**
118 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-964-9700; AtTheTableWayne.com
- ★ **Autograph Brasserie**
503 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-964-2588; AutographBrasserie.com
- ✱ **Black Powder Tavern**
1164 Valley Forge Rd.
610-293-9333; BlackPowderTavern.com
- The Blue Elephant**
110 N. Wayne Ave. *Also in Pottstown.*
484-580-6142; BlueElephantWayne.com
- Christopher's: A Neighborhood Place**
108 N. Wayne Ave. 610-687-6558
ChristophersANeighborhoodPlace.com

- ★ **Maison Lotus**
175 Lancaster Ave.
610-527-5700; Maison-Lotus.com

- ★ **Matines Café**
757 Lancaster Ave.
484-580-2982; MatinesCafe.com

- ★ **Minella's Diner**
320 Lancaster Ave.
610-687-1575; MinellasDiner.com

- ★ ✱ **Rosalie**
Wayne Hotel, 139 E. Lancaster Ave.
610-687-5000; RosalieWayne.com

- Teresa's Café and Next Door Bar**
120–126 N. Wayne Ave.
610-293-9909; Teresas-Cafe.com

- ★ **The Goat's Beard**
103 N. Wayne Ave.
484-584-4979; TheGoatsBeardPhilly.com

- White Dog Café**
200 W. Lancaster Ave. *Plus other locations.*
610-225-3700; WhiteDog.com/Wayne

West Chester

- ★ **9 Prime**
9 N. High St.
610-365-3309; 9PrimeWestChester.com

- Andiario**
106 W. Gay St.
484-887-0919; Andiario.com

- ★ **Bar Avalon**
116 E. Gay St.
610-436-4100; AvalonRestaurant.net

- ★ **Bier and Loathing**
113 W. Market St.
610-289-0079; BierAndLoathing.com

- DK Diner**
609 E. Gay St. 610-692-2946; DKDiner.com



Cecil Couty, MD

- ★ **Ground Provisions**
1388 Old Wilmington Pk.
610-355-4411; GroundProvisionsPA.com

- Kildare's Irish Pub**
18 W. Gay St. 610-431-0770; KildaresPubWC.com

- Kooma Asian Fusion & Sushi Bar**
123 N. Church St.
610-430-8980; KoomaFusion.com

- ★ **La Baguette Magique**
202 W. Market St.
484-947-5024; @LaBaguetteMagique

- ★ **Lasagnola**
134 E. Gay St. LasagnolaVC.com

- ★ **LaScala's Fire**
44 W. Gay St. *Also in Newtown Square.*
610-773-2222; LaScalasFire.com

- ★ **Limoncello Ristorante**
9 N. Walnut St. *Also in Chester Springs.*
610-436-6230; LimoncelloRestaurant.com

- ★ **Market Street Grill**
6 W. Market St.
610-429-5328; MarketStreetGrill.com
- See Green Street Grill in Downingtown*

- Más Mexicali Cantina**
102 E. Market St. 610-918-6280; MasMexicali.com

- The Mediterranean Restaurant & Bakery**
150 W. Gay St.
610-431-7074; TheMedWCPA.com

- ★ **Mino Sushi & Ramen**
2 W. Gay St.
610-301-8869; MinoRamen.com

- ★ **Mistral French & Fast**
130 W. Miner St.
610-816-1817; MistralFrenchAndFast.com

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After Dry JANUARY

2026 IS TIME FOR LOW-CAF AND NO-CAF TEAS



Laurel Anderson

SENTIMENTS SIMILAR TO those behind the sober-curious movement have been heading in a new direction. After all, there are only so many times you can mention your “Dry-uary” and Sober October journeys. With an increased interest in healthy eating and drinking, more consumers are exploring options for their daily beverages beyond their typical turbo-caffeinated Starbucks orders. They’re swapping a java jolt for the cozy vibe of a tea pot.

In short: tea is having a moment. That’s tea, broadly defined, beyond classic Lipton, black, green and white teas (among the “true teas” from the *Camellia sinensis* plant) to include herbal infusions (think chamomile, hibiscus, ginger) and trendy options like rooibos, matcha and mate (see the sidebar).

HEALTHY CHOICE

There are many different origin stories for tea drinkers. Here’s one. Coming from

a German, coffee-drinking family, Marlene Robinson reached the point when she needed a pot of coffee to jump start her morning. “I was addicted to caffeine,” she said. In her 40s, she became ill and had to give up her caffeine hit. “But I missed that familiar feeling of holding a warm cup in my hands. Then I discovered tea.” That journey led her to healthier habits and ultimately opening a retail outlet in Kennett Square, Mrs. Robinson’s Tea Shop, with over 200 varieties of tea.

Many others are also finding that tea is a satisfying warm drink, and one that offers additional benefits of immune support, gut health and stress relief. Tea drinking is part of the expanding “functional beverage” market — the health and wellness sector reaching beyond mere hydration and especially popular with Gen Z and the caffeine-cautious crowd.

Whether you prefer black, green, white or herbal varieties, tea is packed with nat-

urally occurring compounds that offer gentle, everyday health benefits. For example, many true teas are rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, believed to help combat stress and support heart health.

Plus tea sipped straight or with just a dollop of honey is a healthy alternative to coffee drinks with double pumps of caramel and whipped cream on top. Tea gives you flavor without the sugar or caffeine crash.

For the low-caf choice, black and green teas provide a balance of calm with a sustained lift from L-theanine, an amino acid that promotes focus without the jitters associated with coffee. Or for the no-caf options of herbal teas, enjoy chamomile’s and lavender’s calming properties, peppermint’s digestive support and ginger’s anti-inflammatory effects.

Even when you’re drinking tea socially at a tea room, like A Taste of Britain in Wayne, there are plenty of alt-caf options, said owner Debbie Pierce. “If you want to stay

away from caffeine, choose a black tea. We have a decaf Earl Grey, decaf French vanilla, or classic decaf English breakfast. For low-cafeine options, green, white and oolong teas are fabulous. White teas are the least processed and have the lowest natural caffeine levels of any true tea and the highest level of natural antioxidants. But even a regular black tea like English breakfast or Earl Grey typically has about half the caffeine of a regular cup of coffee.”

For less buzz and more balance, also think tea for mindfulness. The simple act of brewing — or the tactile experience of whisking up some matcha — then sipping tea creates a pause in a busy day. Tea can become not just a healthy choice, but a nourishment for mind and body to help you slow down and savor as you sip.

And tea is not limited to breakfast or (coffee) breaks. It’s for moments throughout your day: morning calm, afternoon reset, socializing, evening unwind and self-care anytime.

“Herbal tea at bedtime is just magical,” said Pierce. “There’s nothing like a cup of lavender and chamomile to put the day behind you and signal to your brain that it’s time to rest.”

BETTER FLAVOR

There’s a tea flavor for every palate — it just may take some exploration and experimentation to find it. For example, some associate an off-putting bitter taste with black tea, even as they strive to drink more tea. “Black tea has lots of tannins, which many people dislike. It’s meant to be drunk with milk and sugar,” advised Robinson. That’s an easy experiment.

Brewing your tea wrong can also create a bitter taste that can deter the switch to tea (see sidebar for brewing tips). Or using low-quality tea can affect the taste. Perhaps it’s time to replace that old box of Celestial Seasonings from pre-pandemic times with some quality loose tea.

With the wide range of options, it’s worth finding the right tea profile for your taste. “Do you like fruity tastes or vanilla? For vanilla lovers, try chai,” said Robinson. “Some prefer green tea to black tea,

1. Chamomile and other herbal teas are calming, caffeine-free drink choices
2. Make moments for tea throughout your day: morning calm, afternoon reset, socializing, evening unwind and self-care anytime

Know Your Tea Order

Much like learning the difference between a flat white and a macchiato, you may need a crib sheet to decipher today’s tea menus.

Chai: A spiced Indian tea made with black tea, milk and a blend of aromatic spices like cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and black peppercorns, often sweetened with sugar or honey. Other common additions include star anise, nutmeg, fennel and coriander, with recipes varying by region.

Matcha: The core ingredient is finely ground green tea leaves from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, specifically tencha leaves that are shade-grown, steamed, dried, deveined, destemmed and stone-ground into a vibrant powder, packed with chlorophyll, antioxidants, amino acids and minerals.

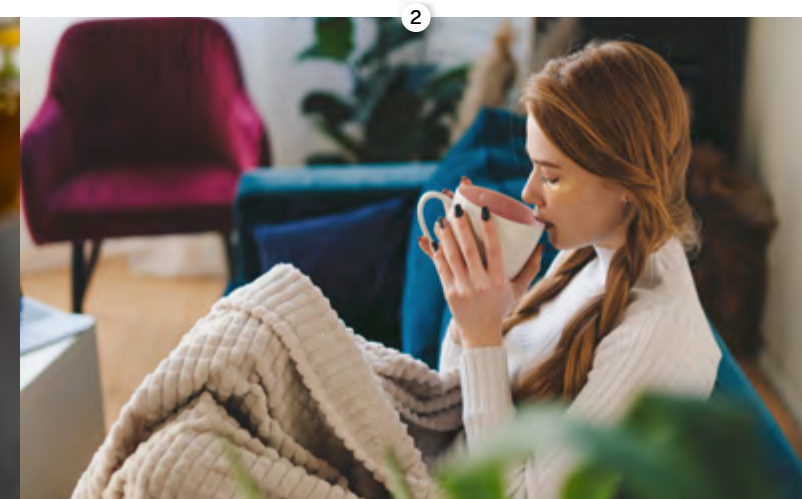
Mate: A caffeinated herbal infusion from South America (a favorite of the former pope from Argentina), made from the dried leaves of the *Ilex paraguariensis* plant, packed with antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Stimulating, coffee-like energy boost without the jitters, known for its bitter, earthy flavor and traditionally shared socially from a gourd with a metal straw.

Rooibos (roy-bus): An herbal infusion made from the needle-like leaves of the *Aspalathus linearis* shrub, native to South Africa, processed by bruising and sun-drying to develop its red color and sweet, nutty flavor. Common additions include vanilla or orange peel in blends, but pure rooibos is just the fermented plant. Naturally caffeine-free and rich in antioxidants.

Tisane (tee-zahn): A flavorful infusion made by steeping or simmering plants like herbs, fruits, flowers, roots or spices in hot water.



Matcha has around 1,384 units of antioxidants per gram — compared to 15 units in broccoli, 96 in blueberries and 204 in dark chocolate



How to Brew Better Tea at Home

Courtesy of Mrs. Robinson's Tea Shop

Water is the mother of tea, so take care with the water:

- Spring water is best. Next choice, filtered water.
- Oxygen in water is important, so overboiling and reheating will impact the flavor.

The three key variables for making tea: water temp, steep time, tea-leaves-to-water ratio

For water temperature (212° is boiling):

- Black teas are best a tad cooler, at 205°.
- White and green teas are best at 160-190°.
- Hotter water causes faster steeping and makes more aromatic tea.

Western-style brewing uses more water, less leaf:

- Leaf-to-water ratio of 5 grams to 12-16 oz. mug or teapot
- 2-4 minutes steep time
- One infusion
- Consistent flavor, best for simpler teas and daily drinking

Tea troubleshooting:

- Too bitter: use cooler water, shorter brew time or less leaf-to-cup ratio.
- Too weak: use hotter water, longer brew time or more leaf-to-cup ratio.
- Oily residue or "tea scum": the water is too hard — use filtered.



while others prefer herbal beverages or specialty teas." There are even flower teas such as rose, blue lotus and chrysanthemum flavors for those dreaming of summer.

The choices are many and surprising. Carrot cake and lemon soufflé are just two of the current popular flavors at Mrs. Robinson's Tea Shop. Want more options? There's a tea bag bar selling individual bags, where the tea-curious can sample widely. Or grab the prepackaged 10-bag medley, which includes rooibos and herbal selections along with some black and green teas to try. With tea shops, tea rooms and more teas on the menus at your local cafes, the search can be fun, too.

For 2026, consider a tea reset — no pricy machines or barista skills required. Explore some wellness blends for more balance and self-care this New Year. ♦



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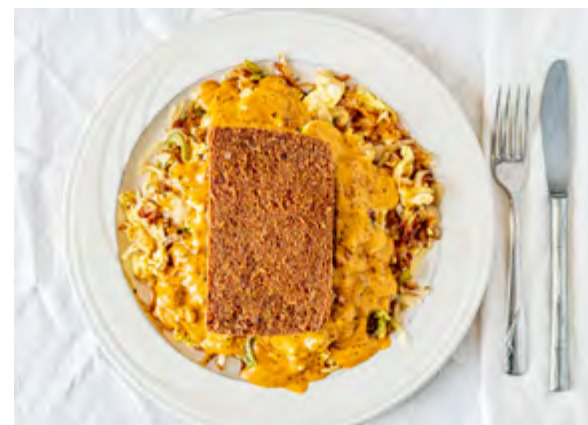
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Acts Retirement- Life Community 7	E. C. Trethewey Building Contractors64	Paradise Station54
America 250 Friends.....17	Farmer & Co..... 3	Pietro's Prime Steakhouse & Martini Bar61
Appetites on Main60	Fattoush Healthy Dining61	Riddle Village.....23
Ball & Ball66	Green Street Grill67	Ron's Original Bar & Grille.....60
Barclay Friends.....21	Harrison Hill 55+ Community22	Square Roots Collective61
Berkshire Hathaway Fox Roach / Country Properties 5	Homestead Structures..... 4	Toninos Pizza & Pasta Co.61
Cecil County, MD Tourism 8	Kendal-Crosslands Communities18	The Walden School.....21
Chester County Food Bank.....51	King Construction12	White Horse Village.....22
Chester County Library System15	La Verona Authentic Italian Dining54	
Closet Factoryback cover	Main Street Cabinet.....10	
Cornwall Manor.....10	Market Street Grill67	
The Creamery61		

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