

CREATIVE COCKTAILS, CRAVE-WORTHY DISHES  
AND COMPELLING CONVERSATION MIX IN RELAXED  
ATMOSPHERES ALONG NEWPORT'S COASTLINE.

# Brunch Bliss

BY ASHLEY RYAN



Brunch items at A Crystal Cove

COURTESY OF A CRYSTAL COVE



From left: Bayside Restaurant's coursed brunch; overnight oats at A&O Restaurant & Bar

## Brunch exploded in popularity

several years ago and shows no signs of fading. But the idea of combining breakfast and lunch isn't a 21st-century construct—it dates back more than 100 years and gained popularity in the 1930s, thanks in part to Hollywood stars stopping for late morning meals on transcontinental train trips.

With a relaxed, indulgent vibe, the appeal of brunch lies in its leisurely pace of dining. Or maybe it's the creative blend of flavors, from avocado toast, fruit-topped waffles and a variety of eggs Benedicts to bottomless mimosas and savory bloody marys. Perhaps it's also the chance to gather with loved ones, for a festive occasion or simply a casual catch-up.

Whatever the reason, whether you're an early bird fueling up after a restful night or a late riser seeking a laid-back meal, visit these Newport Beach eateries to enjoy great food and welcoming spaces for meaningful connection.

## A Crystal Cove

The elegant atmosphere at this Pacific Coast Highway hideaway makes it perfect for week-end brunch on the coast. "The front wall of the restaurant opens up so our guests can enjoy a soft coastal breeze while they dine during the warmer months," says Kimberly Jepson, the restaurant's general manager. "Plus, our complimentary vintage photo booth is the perfect way to commemorate a beautiful day spent with loved ones." Before snapping pictures,

indulge in the smoked salmon Benedict with luxurious lemon cream cheese, the A Brunch Burger topped with a fried egg, brioche French toast with strawberry compote and fresh berries, lemon ricotta pancakes or breakfast pizza with crispy prosciutto, egg and a Parmesan cream sauce. Plus, enjoy half off bottles of sparkling wine during brunch as well.

## A&O Restaurant & Bar

Dine on the water seven days a week at Balboa Bay Resort, where the signature restaurant overlooks the marina. The Nashville-style chicken and waffles is a fan favorite, featuring a jalapeno, bacon and cheddar waffle, fried eggs and brown butter syrup. "It packs in the protein, but adds a sweet element with the waffle and syrup," says Executive Chef Prabeen Prathapan. For a healthier option, try the acai coconut smoothie, a medley of fresh fruit, yogurt and house-made granola, or the Wellness Omelet, which combines egg whites with grilled asparagus, artichokes, avocado, spinach and goat cheese. "The Newport Espresso Martini is the best in town as the ultimate wake-up beverage," Prathapan adds.

## Bayside Restaurant

Coursed brunch meals are offered on Sundays at this prominent Newport Beach eatery, where singer-songwriter Dylan Wagner performs acoustic tunes while diners eat. Choose between a starter and entree, entree and dessert, or all three, pairing soup or salad with dishes such as an Angus beef breakfast burger,



Corned beef hash and eggs at The Beachcomber at Crystal Cove

brioche bread pudding French toast or one of three Benedicts—traditional ham, spinach or braised short rib, all served with house-made citrus hollandaise sauce. "Our bloody mary options are a crowd favorite," says owner Marc Ghoukassian, "from the standard bloody to any of the specialty handcrafted ones, like the Seacoast, which comes with a jumbo prawn; the Maria, made with Tanteo chipotle tequila; or the Spicy Southern, which has a little spicy kick." Enjoy a covered outdoor patio and welcoming community of regulars.

## The Beachcomber at Crystal Cove

For a memorable experience right on the sand, visit this beloved local restaurant. "The attraction is getting lost in time with the historic cottages, tide pools and crashing waves almost literally at your footsteps," says Tad Belshe, vice president of operations for The Beachcomber





COURTESY OF THE CANNERY SEAFOOD OF THE PACIFIC

The Cannery Newport Beach's waterfront location

at Crystal Cove. “Grabbing a cocktail at the Bootlegger Bar while waiting for your table is a great start to any brunch day.” Sip oversize beverages like the gin-based Pimm’s Cup, the Big Bad Bloody Mary or the Front Porch Blackberry Tea with vodka, all served in glass jars. Enjoy with savory spinach and mushroom crepes, a turkey chorizo breakfast burrito, coconut-macadamia pancakes, corned beef hash with eggs and potatoes, and more.

### The Cannery Newport Beach

An iconic destination and ever-popular weekend brunch spot, The Cannery Newport Beach enjoys a waterfront location that offers an elevated yet relaxed ambiance. “The yachts and Duffy boats, the lightly lapping harbor, the sunshine and the crowd all mingle together in a way that is almost irreplicable anywhere else,” says Jason Noble, catering and events manager for the restaurant. “... We go out of our way to make even an ordinary day in Newport Beach feel special.” Sample sea-inspired starters like the crabcakes, ceviche and New England clam chowder or delve right into the heart of the menu with the lobster enchiladas, crab club sandwich or smoked salmon Benedict. Pair your meal with brunch beverages as well. “The best drinks at The Cannery are ... [the] bloody marys, with a thick piece of bacon in it,” says Trevor Jensen, the eatery’s bar manager. “You can relax and have bottomless mimosas, an Aperol spritz or any of our other craft cocktails.”

### Fable & Spirit

Start the morning right with Fable & Spirit’s modern takes on Irish fare and other global delights. With a brunch offered Saturdays and Sundays, diners can tuck into unique breakfast dishes like apple cinnamon beignets, shakshuka, crispy-edge sourdough pancakes, house corned beef hash, serrano ham toast and a Portuguese sausage scramble as well as hearty lunch items, including a pork belly BLT or crispy chicken sandwich, and seafood dishes. During your meal, sip expertly crafted beverages that range from Irish coffee made with whiskey and espresso to produce-filled concoctions like the Beets by Drew or Hustle & Motivate cocktails, reminiscent of pressed juice with a spirited twist.

### Farmhouse at Roger’s Gardens

Known for its array of fresh fare with produce straight from the farmers market, this alfresco eatery at the Roger’s Gardens plant nursery is the perfect spot for Sunday brunch. “Our open-air dining room surrounded by views of the garden creates a serene atmosphere that’s perfect for enjoying a leisurely brunch,” says owner and Executive Chef Rich Mead. Ingredients change with the season to provide the freshest meals possible, and the French toast continues to be a favorite, with a fruit compote highlighting what’s currently being harvested. Another favorite, the unique green chile, pork and eggs, is a “a wholesome, protein-packed



COURTESY OF FARMHOUSE AT ROGER'S GARDENS

Seasonal French toast, on the Sunday brunch menu at Farmhouse at Roger's Gardens



COURTESY OF LIGHTHOUSE CAFÉ

Chicken and waffles at Lighthouse Café

dish” served with seasonal vegetables and flour tortillas. Mimosas with fresh-squeezed juices, the Farmhouse Bloody Mary and delicious mocktails round out the experience.

### Lido Bottle Works

Located near the water at Lido Marina Village, this restaurant is another that takes pride in its farm-to-table ingredients and innovative menu. During weekend brunch, opt for unique dishes such as crab toast, monkey bread with dulce de leche or root vegetable

a lighthouse. “We are right on the water,” says Managing Partner Tad Belshe. “Guests can arrive via Duffy boat, stand-up paddle board or car—[and we have] lots of outside seating, including the rooftop deck.” Start with a drink: Lighthouse Café offers specialty mimosas by the glass, a mimosa pitcher, jumbo jars and frozen libations in addition to traditional cocktails, beer and wine. Then, delve into the rest of the menu, selecting from entrees like a seafood omelet, chicken and waffles with hot honey, lemon blueberry ricotta pancakes with a mascarpone cream sauce, a wagyu burger, mahi mahi tacos and steak chilaquiles with house-made chips. Finish the meal with dessert in the form of cinnamon sugar beignets served with cream cheese icing.

### Malibu Farm

Visit Malibu Farm for a healthy brunch that’s not to be overlooked. “Lido [Marina Village] is a hidden little gem in Newport Beach that everyone should take the time to explore,” says Paige Refino, general manager and beverage director at Malibu Farm. This waterfront locale offers something for everyone, with a variety of vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options. Boozy cocktails include premium margaritas, a mimosa flight and barrel-aged drinks, but the menu also features smoothies, loose-leaf teas, botanical sodas and wellness drinks such as the adaptogen latte or the immunity shot flight with energy, rejuvenation and detox blends. When it comes to food, options continue to impress. “At Malibu Farm Lido, our most popular breakfast items are hands-down the fried egg sandwich and breakfast burrito,” Refino says. “Both come with free-range organic eggs, our made-in-house herb roasted potatoes and, of course, arugula.” Diners can also enjoy Swedish mini pancakes with a seasonal

berry compote, green eggs and ham, Surfers Rancheros and acai or pitaya bowls.

### The Mayor’s Table Pacific Pub & Kitchen

Modern elegance and relaxed comfort merge at this signature restaurant at Lido House hotel, a property that wholeheartedly embraces the coastal vibe of Newport. “Our brunch menu offers playful, elevated riffs on familiar favorites,” says The Mayor’s Table chef-partner Riley Huddleston. “Eggs Benedict gets an upgrade with Rye Goods jalapeno sourdough, pork belly and corny hollandaise. Another favorite is the California Avocado Crost, where two organic poached eggs, pickled red onions and smashed avocado are served over a rolled croissant—an exciting twist on the traditional avocado toast.” Some other dishes include the vanilla souffle pancakes, the fish-shaped James’ Waffle, caviar fries and the Big Chicken, Little Sando, which delights with Korean chile-glazed crispy chicken and kimchi. Also not to be missed is the Champagne Cart, featuring the restaurant’s own blend.

### OEB Breakfast Co.

Open exclusively for brunch, this vibrant dining destination delivers memorable meals every day of the week. “Combining light-filled interiors, a cozy ambiance and heartfelt hospitality, OEB provides a setting as delightful as the dishes served,” says CEO Dave Orsten. Sip bottomless mimosas with a variety of juices or the refreshing Hugo First, with sparkling wine, elderflower, mint and lime. Dishes range from savory options like flavorful shakshuka and hearty gnocchi breakfast carbonara to sweet treats, including banana cream pie French toast and Do Not Even Go There, a crepe with vanilla custard, fruit and whipped cream.



LEFT: COURTESY OF MALIBU FARM; RIGHT: COURTESY OF OEB BREAKFAST CO.

From left: Immunity shot flight at Malibu Farm; an array of brunch dishes at OEB Breakfast Co.







Red O's brunch options including breakfast tacos with a side of bone marrow (bottom left)



Huevos rancheros at Sol Mexican Cocina

### Parakeet Café

From neon signs, pink accents and jungle-themed wallpaper to beautifully plated dishes, brunch at Parakeet Café is an experience in and of itself. Enjoy your meal in the whimsical dining room or on the patio just outside, with healthy options for all. Acai bowls, overnight oats, waffles, toasts, pastries and scrambled egg dishes abound while the Brekkie Croissant Sandwich and Best Burger Ever capture much attention. In addition, enjoy diverse drinks: smoothies, cold-pressed juices, coffee drinks, matcha, wellness lattes, mimosas and so much more.

### Red O

Glamour, charm and a laid-back atmosphere come together at Red O, a Fashion Island restaurant that features floor-to-ceiling tequila walls, hanging plants and vibrant lanterns. Start your meal off with mix-and-match bottomless brunch cocktails; you can choose from mimosas, bloody marys and sangria. Then, explore the flavors of Mexico with a brunch menu highlighting creative cultural cuisine such as eggs and rajas cheese tamales, chilaquiles verdes, sizzling fajitas or carne asada breakfast tacos with an optional side of bone marrow. “The short rib Benedict sopes are a crowd pleaser, featuring an artful stack of poached eggs, crispy sopes, refried beans, braised short rib and Tapatío hollandaise,” adds Ashleigh Wiehl, the brand’s director of marketing.

LEFT: COURTESY OF RED O, RIGHT: COURTESY OF SOL MEXICAN COCINA

### Set Steak & Sushi

Those looking to amp up the fun during weekend brunch need look no further than Pendry Newport Beach, where signature restaurant Set Steak & Sushi hosts a DJ spinning music on Sundays. “People want to come out and have fun during brunch—drink, eat and have a good time,” says Executive Chef JoJo Ruiz. Fun drinks like the espresso martini or the sharable, tequila-based Farrah Fawcett cocktail populate the menu while traditional dishes such as steak and eggs, mixed berry French toast and scrambles mingle amongst a tuna pizza, crabcake and caviar Benedict and specialty sushi rolls. “One of my personal favorites is the lobster frites, which is a whole lobster served with fries and bearnaise,” Ruiz adds.

### Sol Mexican Cocina

Find fare that differs from the typical brunch menu at this Mexican eatery, located on the water. “For someone who is craving a traditional and authentic Mexican brunch, we have those options, like the classic huevos rancheros and a jalapeno cornbread, all made from scratch using the freshest ingredients,” Joshua Becerra, Sol’s chief marketing officer. Some other bestsellers include Kobe steak and eggs, crab and shrimp cakes Benedicto and the Tropical Tableside Mimosa with various juices to choose from. For a sweet option, try the Souffle Carlotta. “It is a unique dish of bread pudding spiked with Patrón Citrónge and lemon zest, then we saute it in butter and drizzle agave syrup, and top it off with mango, berries and whipped cream,” Becerra notes.

### Tommy Bahama Restaurant & Bar

With one of the newest brunches in town, Hawaiian-inspired restaurant Tommy Bahama delights locals with live music, delicious fare and a breezy patio reminiscent of the islands. Try the signature bloody mary or the Build Your Own Mimosa flight, which comes with a whole bottle of sparkling wine as well as orange juice, pineapple agua fresca, and guava and passion fruit purees. Though the menu is limited, it packs a punch with dishes like a Korean-style crispy chicken Benedict, a crab-cakes Benedict, bananas Foster French toast, a huevos rancheros toastada and filet served with fried eggs and chimichurri. Favorites from the lunch menu are also available along with the beloved selection of desserts.

### View

Uncover delicious cuisine paired with equally appealing scenery during brunch at

ROBERT REYES



Steak and eggs at Set Steak & Sushi

Veja Newport Beach’s View restaurant. “It’s all in the name,” says Executive Chef Adam Haverland. “...With the Newport Beach Country Club directly below us, followed by the ocean and silhouette of Catalina beyond, View’s backdrop adds incredible value to our cuisine from dawn to dusk.” Diners can enjoy avocado toast elevated with lemon olive oil, a braised short rib Benedict, lemon ricotta pancakes and a croissant breakfast sandwich served on a pretzel croissant. A range of other unique options include a labneh parfait with passion fruit coulis and house-made almond granola, and Veja Omelet Lorraine with a hearty slab of bacon as well as the vodka-fueled Avocado Toast cocktail, garnished with a cherry tomato and toast point.

### Zov’s

Relax on the patio with a coastal breeze and lush greenery, sipping a cocktail while perusing the menu. “We recently revamped our cocktail program and are proud to offer several new ... brunch cocktails, including a vodka-based Cucumber Mint Cooler with elderflower, mint and citrus and a Santorini Spritz with Aperol, Pimm’s, and fresh apricot and citrus juices,” says Zov’s CEO Armen Karamardian. Unwind with a sweet dish like the bananas Foster French toast, topped with warm caramel and fresh whipped cream, or embrace savory alternatives, including the pork sausage breakfast burrito, avocado toast with Moroccan spices and variety of eggs Benedicts, from traditional to smoked salmon and slow-braised short rib. **NBM**