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# If you can only eat three meals in Chapel Hill, make sure they're here

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By Debra Bruno, January 25, 2018

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The University of North Carolina's gorgeous flagship campus in Chapel Hill, with its towering trees and stately brick buildings, may be the center of life in the classic Southern college town, but it also hosts an impressive art museum, a planetarium and a botanical garden. The home of the Tar Heels is also basketball central, of course. Keep in mind that this is a partisan town: Wear the right color, pale Carolina blue, but never confuse your colors with the darker hue of nearby archrival Duke. Music is also big here. A popular spot, Local 506, operates as a private club under state law; for \$2, visitors can buy a lifetime membership and hear local and national rock bands. On the horizon: Chapel Hill is getting ready to open the Blue Dogwood Public Market (306 West Franklin St.), a new food hall on bustling Franklin Street that will include both permanent and pop-up food stalls.



(Sylwia Stevens/Weaver Street Market)

## BREAKFAST

Carrboro is just to the west of Chapel Hill, but it's so close you can stroll from one to the other in about a half-hour. And it's important to begin the day at a chill place such as the Weaver Street Market ([weaverstreetmarket.coop](http://weaverstreetmarket.coop), 101 E. Weaver St., 919-929-0010) with its hippie atmosphere and live music on Sunday mornings. Weaver Street uses organic flour and makes rolls, bagels and bread daily. Challah is available after 5 p.m. on Thursdays, too. In keeping with the welcoming vibe, you don't need to belong to the co-op to shop the market. Carrboro once was Chapel Hill's mill town and train depot, and the old buildings near the market have been renovated into restaurants and shops. In the market, the hot breakfast bar offers items such as a tofu scramble, French toast and breakfast burritos for \$7.99 a pound. Add some coffee (\$2 for a small cup) and an almond apricot scone (\$1.69), or a blueberry Danish (\$2.49), and either eat inside the building or on the picnic tables outside and take in the scene. The Carrboro store is the flagship market, but newer branches have recently opened in the southern end of Chapel Hill and in nearby Hillsborough, with a branch set for Raleigh this summer.



(Sutton's Drug Store)

## LUNCH

Sutton's Drug Store ([suttonsdrugstore.com](http://suttonsdrugstore.com), 159 E. Franklin St., 919-942-5161) — and yes, it is a drugstore — is a Tar Heel tradition. Basketball jerseys hang on the walls and in the front window (including, of course, Michael Jordan's No. 23), alongside hundreds of photos of Suttons diners — a tradition that started in 1983, although Suttons itself opened in 1923. On game days, expect to wait in line for the store's burgers (\$6.09 for a single burger with potato chips), egg salad sandwiches (\$4.99) or chocolate milkshakes (\$3.99). Fans of vintage sodas can indulge in hard-to-find varieties such as buckleberry or sarsaparilla (\$1.89). Stay alert for days with hot-dog specials, when two franks and fries cost only \$3.89. Yes, the burgers are simple and the soup all comes straight from Campbells, but you certainly know what you're getting here: Southern hospitality and a reliable lunch counter. On your way out, pick up a box of Chapel Hill Toffee (\$6.95 for a five-ounce package).



(Lissa Gotwals)

#### DINNER

Even though Lantern Restaurant ([lanternrestaurant.com](http://lanternrestaurant.com), 423 W. Franklin St., 919-969-8846) has an Asian fusion menu, it's one with a North Carolina pedigree, because chef-owner Andrea Reusing emphasizes its farm-to-table, locally sourced and seasonal menu, which might include pork or vegetable dumpling appetizers (appetizers from \$7 to \$14) or chaat, an Indian savory snack with roasted carrots, lentils and cauliflower, served with mint chutney (\$12). For entrees (ranging from \$25 to \$32), try the Vietnamese-style whole fish or the pork chops with papaya sauce. Don't be put off by the building's squat brick exterior. This small space has a cozy bar in the back serving wine and cocktails such as the Dark and Stormy (ginger ale and rum) and the Fin in Vierno, a version of a hot toddy, both for \$10. The hot chocolate cake (\$10) is always on the menu, but a newer popular dessert is a pistachio panna cotta with blood-orange caramel and pistachio brittle for \$10. All menu items are subject to availability and the season, but you can leaf through Reusing's cookbook, "Cooking in the Moment: A Year of Seasonal Recipes," for an expanded sense of the restaurant's possibilities.

*Bruno is a writer based in the District. Find her on Twitter: @brunodebbie.*