

LIFESTYLE / RESTAURANTS

The 10 best Cheap Eats restaurants on Long Island: Eat here now

Peter M. Gianotti, Corin Hirsch, Erica Marcus and Pervaiz Shallwani

Note: Most dishes mentioned are samples of the restaurants' menus and may not be available at all times. Seasonal changes and dish substitutions are common.

Flour Shoppe Café & Bakery



Photo Credit: Yvonne Albinowski

Flour Shoppe Café & Bakery (486 Sunrise Hwy., Rockville Centre): Breakfast (as well as breakfast-for-dinner) is the draw here, courtesy of chef-owners Madison Kaer and John Maher. Tartines hit all the savory notes, like the scrambled Florentine, a generous heap of spinach and eggs laced with caramelized onions and a squiggle of Mornay sauce. Served with a side of fruit, it's an elevated version of diner food -- delivered on school lunch trays repurposed into plates. Don't overlook specials, from crab chowder and cauliflower-Parmesan soup with a grilled-cheese sandwich to a

chicken potpie that billows from the cast iron like a gossamer hat. More info: 516-536-2253, theflourshoppebakery.com



Photo Credit: Yvonne Albinowski

The scrambled Florentine tartine with spinach, Gruyere, caramelized onions, mornay sauce, fresh herbs and rustic toast is served at Flour Shoppe Café & Bakery in Rockville Centre.

Frankly Thai



Photo Credit: Jeremy Bales

Frankly Thai (959 Hempstead Tpke., Franklin Square): Chef Jintana Lauchalermasuk cooks the food of her homeland with respect, passion and lightness, and travels back to Thailand at least once a year to source new menu items. She offers five levels of spicing, and honors requests. Standouts include a

superb pad thai, as well as curry puffs, duck salad, drunken noodles and eggplant with basil. Don't miss the basil noodles with ground pork and shrimp, a Thai take on Italian pasta Bolognese made with fat Thai noodles similar to the Japanese udon. More info: 516-616-4393, franklythai.com



Photo Credit: Uli Seit

Mango curry with shrimp is served at Frankly Thai in Franklin Square.

JR El Rodeo



Photo Credit: Marisol Diaz

JR El Rodeo (130 Montauk Hwy., East Moriches): Tucked between a beauty parlor and a dancing school in a quiet strip mall, this bare-bones Mexican storefront with eight tables offers authentic, made-to-order classics like burritos and tacos. The meat dishes are stars, from caramelized

grilled skirt steak to meltingly tender carnitas. Also recommended: Sopa de pollo; pozole; tamales; sopas de pollo; chicken-and-cheese stuffed fried tacos dorados; alambre with chorizo and beef. More info: 631-909-2666, elrodeony.com

Photo Credit: Marisol Diaz

Alambre with chorizo and beef is served at JR El Rodeo in East Moriches.

Morning Rose Cafe

Photo Credit: Daniel Brennan

Morning Rose Cafe (317 Bedford Ave., Bellmore): Jump-start your morning with sofrito baked eggs with fried yucca, Oaxaca cheese and tostones. Those who prefer a sweet breakfast can go for brioche French toast or fried banana and Nutella crepes. Savory dishes dominate the afternoon, such as the MRC Reuben: house-cured corned beef, fresh sauerkraut and Dijon mustard on grilled marble rye. Or go All-American with the Southern-fried chicken breast with melted Cheddar, bacon, avocado, tomato, greens and honey mustard in a wrap. More info: 516-221-5010, morningrosecafe.com

Photo Credit: Daniel Brennan

The MRC Classic burger is served with thick cut tomato, red onion jam, sharp cheddar cheese, lettuce and MRC burger sauce at Morning Rose Cafe in Bellmore.

Nelly's Taqueria

Photo Credit: Yvonne Albinowski

Nelly's Taqueria (356 W. Old Country Rd., Hicksville): Owners Will Colon and Nelly Palacios have a deep passion for tacos and turn out some of the Island's best at this hidden strip-mall gem. The two recently paired down the menu to keep the focus on tacos and nachos. It's the excellent house-made tortillas and authentic al pastor that keeps them coming. Recommended: chuchos tacos al pastor, which are made the traditional way (from spit-grilled meat), and horchata, the classic rice and almond drink laced with cinnamon. More info: 516-261-9177, nellystaqueria.com

Photo Credit: Yvonne Albinowski

Horchata is served at Nelly's Taqueria in Hicksville.

The North Fork Shack

Photo Credit: Randee Daddona

The North Fork Shack (41150 County Rd. 48, Southold): Samy Sabil and Ryan Flatley, former staffers at North Fork Table & Inn, converted a tool shop for Cessna airplanes into North Fork Shack, a compelling little spot with a chalkboard menu of local ceviche, clam chowder, pulled lamb and fresh-catch sandwiches. Taco and tostadas please meat lovers and vegetarians alike, and gluten-free diners are not ignored. For dessert, chocolate-chip cookies and lemon cupcakes with pistachio buttercream taunt from the counter. More info: 631-876-5566, thenorthforkshack.com

Photo Credit: Randee Daddona

Grilled calamari with fingerling potatoes, scallions, olives and dill vinaigrette is served at The North Fork Shack in Southold.

Relish

Photo Credit: John Dunn

Relish (2 Pulaski Rd., Kings Park): The service here is unfailingly friendly, the surroundings casual-chic, and the location right in the heart of this cute town. For breakfast, choose among omelets, a "new school" egg sandwich (with house-made maple turkey sausage, tomato, Swiss and spinach), French toast and pancakes, while lunch offers a roast-pork sandwich with broccoli rabe and provolone on a semolina roll and a long list of burgers and shakes in flavors such as maple bacon. More info: 631-292-2740, relishkingspark.com

Photo Credit: Benjamin Petit

A pastreuben sandwich is served with coleslaw at Relish in Kings Park.

Slurp Ramen

Photo Credit: Daniel Brennan

Slurp Ramen (109 West Broadway, Port Jefferson): Chef Atsushi Nakagawa has brought the ramen rituals of his homeland into a bare-bones space with a killer water view. The noodles of the milky-white signature ramen are layered with thin-sliced pork belly, soft-boiled egg, fresh ginger and scallions, while the "Slurp Smooth" pairs shoyu and chicken-based broth with Japanese fried chicken. Nakagawa sources his noodles from New York City's Ipuddo, and of his four broths, there's a miso-based option for vegans. More info: 631- 509-1166, slurpusa.com

Photo Credit: Daniel Brennan

The slurp classic ramen (pork tonkotsu with slow cooked chashu pork, marinated soft boiled egg, scallions and red ginger) is served at Slurp Ramen in Port Jefferson.

SriPraPhai

Photo Credit: Marisol Diaz

SriPraPhai (280 Hillside Ave., Williston Park): This is the Long Island offshoot of the Woodside temple of authentic Thai cuisine, which is consistently feted as one of the New York area's best Thai restaurants. The Williston Park satellite offers a dizzying array of dishes in an elegant room of sleek banquettes and artful lighting. Dishes are spiced to spec, such as larb, a salad of pork with mint, chili and lime; barbecued pork tenders; kao-soy curry egg noodles; crisp Chinese watercress with chicken, shrimp and squid; or a papaya salad with dry shrimp and peanuts. More info: 516-280-3779, sripraphairestaurant.com

Photo Credit: Kirsten Luce

A crispy watercress salad is served at SriPraPhai in Williston Park.

Thomas's Ham & Eggery

Photo Credit: Jeremy Bales

Thomas's Ham & Eggery (325 Old Country Rd., Carle Place): There's often a line here for great

renditions of classic diner fare. Most egg dishes are served in a skillet, such as the fontina and pancetta frittata or homemade corned beef hash topped with a fried egg. Stuffed lemon ricotta French toast is delectable, and drizzled with blueberry syrup. For lunch and dinner, there are satisfying soups, piled-high salads, overstuffed sandwiches and platters of

meatloaf and liver and onions. More info: 516-333-3060

Photo Credit: Heather Phelps-Lipton

A Popeye scramble of eggs, cheese and spinach is served at Thomas's Ham & Eggery in Carle Place.

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