

The Happiest of Hours

Written by Geoffrey Anderson Jr. and Dianne Rubin, BT Contributors
May 2017

Food news we know you can use



In Miami, dining out is a double-edged sword. On one hand, you can find just about any type of cuisine in the city; whether you want Italian, Indian, Peruvian, or (insert your favorite food here), you're never too far from a restaurant. That's the beauty of living in a melting pot.

On the other hand, having so many restaurants to choose from can quickly do a number on your bank account. Going out even a couple of nights a week adds up fast. Thankfully, some restaurants are offering a happy middle ground: happy hour food specials. While most places just offer discounted drinks, some spots provide discounted bites as well -- and great ones at that.

One example is **Pinch Kitchen** (8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-631-2018), where happy hour starts early, at 4:00 p.m., and runs till 6:00 p.m., Tuesday to Friday. Saddle up to the bar, and enjoy small bites like fish and chips, brisket sliders, and ceviche for \$8 or less.

A little farther north, **Mignonette Uptown** (13951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-705-2159) is treating diners to a twice-daily happy hour at the bar: 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. to close. If you snag one of the 23 bar seats, you can order items like buffalo scallops, oysters, BBQ octopus, and gem lettuce salad for under \$10. There are even happy hour desserts like chocolate chunk cookies with peanuts and Nutella milkshakes for \$5.

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At **Beaker & Gray** in Wynwood (2637 N. Miami Ave., 305-699-2637), happy hour is also offered twice a day: Monday to Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Monday to Thursday from 11:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. If you happen to visit during the first, you can also indulge in a small-bites menu that includes kettle corn, grilled cheese, and mochi; the latter happy hour has its own late-night menu with chicken wings, ricotta, and cheesy fries.

Because of restaurants like these going above and beyond for happy hour, it's easier than ever to eat good food without breaking the bank. You're going to need that money, too, since the growth of South Florida's restaurant scene doesn't seem to be slowing.

Work continues on **Aventura ParkSquare** (2950 NE 207th St., 305-330-4003), the massive, mixed-use, luxury project in the heart of Aventura. Residents and visitors alike can expect a wealth of restaurants, including **Angelo Elia Pizza,**

Bar & Tapas

(Italian);

Icebox Cafe

(Mediterranean); and

Graziano's

(Argentinean) to open as part of the project, which is scheduled for completion later this year.

La Centrale (701 S. Miami Ave.) is also well under way at Brickell City Centre. The food hall is set to debut this fall, with three stories and 38,000 square feet of Italian delicacies and eateries, as well as space for cooking classes and demos. In Little River, there's another food hall and market coming along: **The Citadel** (8300 NE 2nd Ave., 786-218-2757). Brickell pizzeria **Stanzione 87** will open a second location in the space, while the team behind Threefold Café in Coral Gables and South Miami will debut a new Australian concept focusing on avocado toasts.

OPENINGS

Diners had many reasons to smile last month, as April brought some notable openings. The long-awaited **Kiki on the River** (450 NW N. River Dr., 786-502-3243) finally welcomed guests

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to enjoy delectable Greek cuisine with a view. The riverside eatery is helmed by Steve Rhee, who worked at Miami Beach's acclaimed **Estiatorio Milos**. Expect an extensive selection of seafood and shared plates; the restaurant is already a lunch hotspot with a \$25 three-course affair.

At Aventura Mall, the **Pubbelly** empire continues its expansion with a new iteration of **Pubbelly Sush** **Pubbelly Sushi Market** i: **P**

(19501 Biscayne Blvd., 786-522-7889). Unlike its Brickell and Miami Beach brethren, this version of the popular sushi concept is more grab and go. Fans of the full-service restaurants need not fret: Staples like the butter crab roll and tuna pizza are still on the menu, and there is seating available if you do decide to dine in.

CLOSINGS

Fortunately, April closings were few and far between. The biggest loss was Michael Schwartz's **Cypress Tavern** in the Design District, which shuttered on April 30. After rebranding itself from **Cypress Room** (a more upscale concept) in 2015, the American grill and cocktail bar didn't seem to find its footing.

Geoffrey Anderson Jr. and Dianne Rubin are co-founders of Miami Food Pug, an award-winning South Florida food blog that fuses the couple's love of dogs and food.

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