

NORTH SHORE DINING:

A FOOD-LOVER'S PARADISE

By Matt Beardmore

Not far from Chicago where some of the best restaurants in the world make their home, the North Shore has made its own mark in the culinary world. The dining scene here is vibrant and diverse, so no matter if you are looking to grab-and-go, sit at a bar with a beer and a burger, enjoy a casual meal or experience dining at its absolute finest, the North Shore has a bistro, brasserie, coffee bar, café, tavern or restaurant for you.

Ready to tempt your tastebuds?

NORTHFIELD

If you're in the neighborhood, a visit to **Three Tarts Bakery and Café** is a must! Their shortbread cookies, like all of the cookies sold at the café, are made from scratch in their on-site bakery. Three Tarts makes three kinds of shortbreads: Best Ever, "a classic "plain" shortbread recipe," Lemon-Lavender and Maple Pecan, a lovely warm maple note and a little extra crunch from the pecans." "Three Tarts has been selling this shortbread since they opened over 25 years ago – they are buttery and crispy and have just the right amount of sweetness," said Christina Ito, one of the café's managers. You'll find breakfast and lunch menus too!

At **Stormy's Tavern and Grille**, this family-friendly bar is the spot to be on Game Day as



locals and visitors are glued to the flatscreens as the Chicago's college and pro sports teams play. Stormy's also has a nice selection of beer on tap as well as a wide variety of salads, sandwiches, pizza (served after 5 p.m. on Fridays and after noon on the weekends), and delicious home-made chili and soups. There is also has outdoor patio seating (weather permitting, of course) and curbside pickup available.

WINNETKA

At **501 Local**, "everyone will find something to love on our creative 'American with a Twist' menu," said Mark Salmon, the restaurant's general manager and co-owner. "We also offer a thoughtful selection of wine, craft beer and signature cocktails." Guests at this neighborhood bistro can dine and enjoy their drinks on 501 Local's beautiful patio or in its warm, inviting dining room.

"501 Local's signature dish is the Seared Salmon," Salmon said. "It stands out because of its high-quality Scottish salmon, a blend of sautéed fingerling potatoes, mustard greens, and zesty lemon aioli." The Angus Burger (gruyere, caramelized onion, arugula, Dijon aioli, on toasted brioche bun) is another menu standout. Gluten-free and dietary preferences are available.

Jimoto is the newest Winnetka restaurant from the "501 Local" team, offering "guests" a modern, innovative take on uber-fresh sushi and creative Asian-inspired cocktails."

One of the most popular rolls that was just added to Jimoto's menu in the past year is the Chicago Fire roll, said Jimoto general manager and owner Colleen Carroll. "The combination of spicy and savory flavors makes this a memorable dish that customers come back



for," she said. "It contains snow crab, avocado, jalapeno, and cilantro on the inside and is then topped with seared spicy tuna, spicy mayo, garlic crunch, and unagi sauce."

Sushi bites are another unique menu item. "We use a waffle iron to make the rice and form it into mini circles," she said. "It is then topped with your choice of tuna or salmon along with a mix of cucumber, mango, cilantro, jalapeno, spicy ponzu sauce, sriracha, avocado, and sesame seeds."

At **Guanajuato Mexican Restaurant & Tequila Bar**, everything is made from scratch, there is a wide variety of tequilas and mezcals, and it only carries 100% blue agave for the tequilas with no additives, said owner Margarita Challenger.

One of the signature dishes at Guanajuato – Challenger's home region in Mexico – is the molcajete "a delicious dish that makes you think of home," Challenger said. "It's served in a hot stone molcajete and you get a choice of chicken, steak, shrimp or a combination of the three." It is layered with beans, cheese, salsa, cactus, cilantro, onions and radishes. The carne asada, cut in house and cooked to specifications, comes from a local family-owned meat supplier.



Adjacent to La Taquiza is **Fred's Garage**, which – as the name suggests – is situated in a charming, renovated service station. Named Best Outdoor Dining by North Shore Choice Awards in 2020, Fred's Garage has an inviting patio with lounge seating and a game area for guests as well as two fully functional garage doors and two banquettes with car bench seating. Fred's Garage has a full-service bar and its food menu has reimagined and elevated classics, prepared with high quality, fresh ingredients.

Located in the Hubbard Woods Business District is **Towne & Oak**, "a café and private event space" owned by executive chef Elaina

Vazquez, who launched Boutique Bites, a catering and events company, in 2008. At Towne & Oak, "the menu consists of easy and delicious grab-and-go items as well as a made-to-order menu of casual favorites such as salads, tartines, cheese platters, and heartier daily specials." There is also a full coffee bar along with wine, beer, and specialty drinks.

If you have a taste for French cuisine, **Pomeroy** could be just the place for you. This popular bistro is inspired by the great cafes of France, and offers warm service and an approachable cuisine in a classic yet comfortable setting. Pomeroy has one of the most electric vibes on the North Shore, with guests attracted by the energy, ambiance and the large square bar that takes center stage.

At **Aboyer**, which means "to bark" in French, this contemporary American-French restaurant pushes the boundaries of classic cuisine yet is still firmly planted in classic method and technique."

For casual Greek dining and a wide selection of Greek wines, consider **Avil Estiatorio**, which serves brunch, lunch, and dinner daily in its year-round patio and relaxed dining room atmosphere. Avil Estiatorio offers classic, regional, and contemporary Greek dishes as well as over 130 top Greek wines.

At **Spirit Elephant**, the team "uses fresh, seasonal, and local (when possible) vegetables to develop dishes from familiar favorites to unique, plant-centric creations." This plant-based restaurant and bar, founded by Iowa native CD Young, also has a beautiful plant-filled patio that can be booked for events.

The warm, welcoming environment, the use of the finest ingredients and the authentic Italian dining experience, are drawing plenty of locals and those from the surrounding suburbs and Chicago to Tocco. Founder/president Bruno Abate, who was born in Naples, Italy, and raised in Milan, has delivered one of the finest Italian restaurants on the North Shore. There is an impressive selection of pizzas, insalate, antipasti, pasti di grano duro, pasta fresca, carne, pesce, and dolci. Chef Bruno is also available for at-home consultations to prepare food for your family.

At **Once Upon a Bagel**, family-owned since 1982, there is a lot more than just bagels on the menu. Select from a wide array of Leonard's Bakery goods, fresh salads, homemade soups, omelets, specialty sandwiches, the "North Shore's finest deli" and much more.

If you are looking for fresh-baked goods and a coffee, Winnetka has several options where you can't go wrong: **Momsy's Café**, "an upscale boutique cafe and coffee bar, offering light fare, fresh-made baked goods & pastries," **Lincoln Avenue Bakery**, which has made a comeback this year, and **Hometown Coffee & Juice**, where you can also try their juices, smoothies, bagels melts, and pockets. Hometown Coffee & Juice also has a Glencoe location at 700 Vernon Avenue.

GLENCOE

At **Guildhall**, you will find an American bistro with a sophisticated attitude. Guildhall serves thoughtful cuisine, creative craft cocktails, and premiere wine and beer from an eclectic list. The Guildhall team also prides itself on working with local and artisanal purveyors to source the highest quality ingredients available. Brunch is available on the weekends and the bar is open seven days a week.

Open since 2013 in Chicago's Avondale neighborhood, **Honey Butter Fried Chicken** owners Josh Kulp and Christine Cikowski opened a second location in Glencoe in 2024. The restaurant's fried chicken, sandwiches and sides are the stars, but the restaurant's business model deserves a light shined on it as well – Honey Butter Fried Chicken is a "hospitality included restaurant and adds no service charges," meaning everything from the cost of the food, the service, staff benefits and wages, to business operating costs, are included in the price of the menu items. The restaurant owners are also offer medical, dental and vision benefits for their employees, and for the last 10+ years, all employees have access to weekly profit and loss statements and are paid if they decide to attend a weekly financial huddle.

Founded in 1979, **Foodstuffs Gourmet Foods & Catering** has been committed to delivering the highest quality gourmet foods and services to discerning Chicagoland shoppers. It caters to more than 90,000 guests each year at weddings, corporate events, social gatherings, and family parties.

At **True Juice Glencoe**, there is more than just juice on the menu, as there is a variety of juices, smoothies, soups, salads and a variety of other healthy balanced food options to support your healthy lifestyle on the go. Owner Whitney Fitzgerald's first True Juice location opened in 2013 in Winnetka and is still open at 542 Chestnut Street.

See the **EATERIES** section on page 46 for more options!