

Where to Eat

AMERICAN

1886 CAFE & BAKERY In the historic Driskill Hotel, 1886 was long known as “Austin’s socializing parlor.” Breakfast is a treat, with Texan twists on old standbys. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 604 Brazos St., 391-7066 **\$\$** † * ☺

24 DINER This upscale diner offers comfort food for foodies, mixing American basics turned up a few notches. The chicken and waffles and deviled eggs are just a few of the all-star lineup dishes at this spot, housed in the former Waterloo Ice House building. Open daily, 24 hours. 600 N. Lamar Blvd., 472-5400 **\$\$** ☺ ♻️

219 WEST With its “American tapas” and entrees such as chicken-fried ahi tuna and blackened rib eye Pontchartrain, this hip lounge puts a tipsy spin on American fusion cuisine. Dinner Mon-Sun; Sunday brunch. 612 W. Sixth St., 474-2194 **\$\$** † * ♪

ARKIE’S GRILL Early risers will love this vintage dining spot, which opens its doors only a few hours after the excitement on Sixth Street dies down. The menu is jam-packed with comfort food like grits,

biscuits and an assortment of fried offerings. Breakfast and lunch Mon-Fri. 4827 E. Cesar Chavez St., 385-2986 **\$\$** ☺

AUSTIN CAKE BALL KITCHEN & BAR After shopping until you drop at The Domain, stop by this modern, bistro-inspired restaurant for a good meal. The menu features creative cocktails and entrees like the Cake Ball cobb salad and gnocchi of the day, as well as those addictive signature cake balls. Lunch and dinner daily. 3401 Esperanza Crossing, Ste. 104, 215-3633 **\$\$** ☺ † * ☺

BARLEY SWINE This gastropub offers an eclectic, ever-changing selection of locally sourced dishes. Thanks to Chef Bryce Gilmore’s use of small plates, it’s easy and affordable to try a wide array of items, such as sweetbreads, fried Brussels sprouts or grilled pork belly. Dinner Mon-Sat. 2024 S. Lamar Blvd., 394-8150 **\$\$** ☺ ♻️

BC TAVERN Comfort food is taken to a whole new level at this gastropub on Bee Caves Road. Indulge with the black truffle mac ‘n’ cheese or brisket pot roast, and pair your meal with one of the tavern’s cocktails, such as The Blondie, a blend of vodka, cranberry juice and basil.

Dinner Mon-Sun; Sunday brunch. 11715 Bee Caves Road, 477-6535 **\$\$** ☺ † * ☺

BESS BISTRO ON PECAN This cozy space owned by Sandra Bullock features cuisine best described as classic European meets the Old South. Lunch Mon-Fri; dinner Mon-Sun; brunch Sun. 500 W. Sixth St., 477-BESS (2377) **\$\$** † † * ☺

BLUE STAR CAFETERIA This Rosedale eatery from Chef Eddie Bernal offers modern comfort food. Try the coconut and cornflake chicken tenderloins or smoked trout salad. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat; brunch Sat-Sun. 4800 Burnet Road, Ste. C-300, 454-STAR (7827) **\$\$** ☺ ♻️

BRAISE The owners of now-closed Bossa Nova and Jezebel are behind Braise, an upscale eatery with classics like French onion soup and osso buco. Try full- or half-plate entrees such as duck breast and jumbo shrimp surf and turf or spiced Jamaican jerk pork shoulder. Dinner Mon-Sat. 2121 E. Sixth St., 478-8700 **\$\$** ☺ ☺

THE CARILLON Chef Josh Watkins creates superb entrees like pan-seared Hawaiian snapper and olive

oil-poached prime beef tenderloin at this gem on UT’s campus. Breakfast daily; dinner Tue-Sat. AT&T Executive Education Conference Center, 1900 University Ave., 404-3655 **\$\$\$** † † ☺

CHEZ ZEE AMERICAN BISTRO Live piano music, local artwork, a lush courtyard and dishes like crème brûlée French toast make this the place for brunch (reservations suggested). Lunch Mon-Fri; dinner daily; brunch Sat-Sun. 5406 Balcones Drive, 454-2666 **\$\$** ☺ † † * ☺ ♪ ☺

KEY TO SYMBOLS	
★	new or updated entry
\$	most entrees under \$10
\$\$	most entrees \$10 to \$25
\$\$\$	most entrees over \$25
☺	free parking
♻️	valet
🍷	full bar
🍺	beer and/or wine only
☀️	outdoor dining
📞	reservations accepted
🎵	live music
🌃	late-night dining



Take Your Pick

No one could ever accuse **Blue Baker** of not giving people choices. The new cafe and bakery in the Arboretum has a Texas-sized menu that is chock-full of everything from breads, pastries, cookies and pizzas to sandwiches, soups and salads. Despite the huge menu, the bright and airy eatery, which is a branch of a popular College Station chain, doesn’t cut any corners with its food. “We make everything in-house and from scratch,” says Zach Langenkamp, director of product development. “Not many places do that anymore.” In fact, Blue Baker employs a three-day artisan baking process, which Langenkamp says increases “the complexity and flavor.” Baking starts at 2 a.m. every day, ensuring that everything is warm and fresh for customers when doors open at 7 a.m. The smoked salmon and cream cheese breakfast sandwich, Neapolitan pizza and Club Bleu sandwich are just a few of the most popular items on the menu. Though another draw is the rotating items, which include monthly and daily sweet treats and breads, such as one-of-a-kind items like peach cobbler bars and Shiner Bock beer bread. Speaking of sweets, the bakery makes about 300-400 cookies each day, including chocolate chip, peanut butter and oatmeal raisin, as well as monthly specials, such as chocolate peanut butter cup and double chocolate oatmeal. So even choosing a dozen could be tough. 10000 Research Blvd., 346-2583, bluebaker.com —ERIN QUINN

PHOTO BY JENN HAIR.