

Dining Guide

Mike Atkinson's Picks for the Best in London

Alright, I admit it...I eat out a lot. My wife and I live in Port Stanley, but we work at Western. The commute is about 50 minutes each way, and many times we don't leave UWO until late. So in order to free up more home time, we decided to eat out rather than cook. Consequently, I've managed to sample most of the restaurants in London (and the greater St. Thomas-Port Stanley area). Here are my picks (a subjective sample to be sure) for the best London has to offer. I've tried to limit the choices to places are fairly close by and yes, I have actually eaten at most of them.

Enjoy!

- Best Pizza** **Toscano's**. 1579 Oxford St. E. (519-452-3737), across from Fanshawe College. Rated consistently high on Tripadvisor. A close second is **Fromaggio's Pie Shack** 1600 Highbury Avenue North (519-457-2233) Excellent deep dish. I'm also a fan of the **Pallisad** (519-645-7164), corner of Oxford and Adelaide. Pallisad pizza is ultra thin crust with your choice of oil or sauce. I recommend the Athena or for the meat lover, the carnivore. .. and you can bowl or play pool while you are there.
- Best Diner** **Prince Albert's Diner** (565 Richmond Street; 432-2835). Lots of the usual diner food, plus Tex Mex and burgers...be sure to try the Theatre of Cruelty burger (tons of garlic).
- Best Steak** **The Keg** (664 Richmond Street; 438-0045). The Keg is always consistent—this one is in a renovated train station. Another good choice is **Abruzzi** (119 King street; 519-675-9995)—try the beef tenderloin.
- Best Asian** **Ben Thanh Viet Thai** (655 Fanshawe Park Rd.; 519-433-6346) . Relaxed atmosphere with standard Thai dishes. The **Thaifoon** (1290 Dundas St.; 519-850-1222) is a much higher-end place with great food. Try the plaintains with deep fried ice cream for dessert. For a great alternative try the **Viet Nam** Restaurant (1074 Dundas Street; 457-0762). The décor leaves a bit to be desired and it's not really close by, but the food is fabulous. If you're a bit unsure about what to order or if you want to try something different, ask the owner, Mr. Long, to put some dishes together for you. The crispy wafers of beef with lemon pepper and mint thing is fabulous.
- Best Chinese** My favourite is the **Hong Ping**, 339 Horton St. (519- 858-3074). The décor is simple, but the food is excellent. Try the scallops in black bean sauce. Just ask the owner if you like it extra spicy. The **Tak Sun**, 122 Wellington Road S. (519-438-2019) is also good. Great Dim Sum.
- Best Greek** **Mykonos** (572 Adelaide Street; 434-6736). The gyros dinner is good and for those who can't decide, the combo platter is filling. I find the

dolamdes quite good as well. Also try the **Mythic Grill**, 179 Albert Street (519-433-0230). Excellent appetizers. Note: not many tables, so definitely make a reservation.

Best Pub

The Waltzing Weasel (1324 Adelaide Street North; 663-9194). Good selection of beer on tap and single malt. Also has the advantage of being close to Western (but not really walking distance). Other good choices: **Henry's** (1737 Richmond Street; 226-663-8020), & **Beertown** (109 Fanshawe Park Rd.; 519-679-5424). Both have a huge selection of beers and scotch.

Best Student Bar

Joe Kool's (595 Richmond Street; 663-5665). Always busy on the weekend. Nachos are the best in town and if you're feeling adventurous, order the Swanson TV Dinner. For you late night folks, check out **Tobaggan Brewing Company** (585 Richmond Street; 663-5665). This is one of three most popular student hangouts. The other two are the **Ceepts/Barney's** (671 Richmond; 432-1425) and the **Barking Frog** (209 John at Richmond; 850-3764). Of the three, the Barking Frog is the most upscale, and the Ceepts is the most "regular". Jack Astor's (across from the Ceepts) has a fabulous patio as well.

Best Burger

The Bungalow (910 Waterloo; 519-434-8797) No question on this one. Featured on Where to Eat in Canada, the Bungalow has a custom burger menu giving you the choice of 5 types of meat, 3 different buns, 3 cheeses and over 30 toppings (most included in the price). My go to is a blackened turkey burger on a kaiser with swiss, topped with spinach, roasted garlic, smoked bacon, and cranberry salsa. I've heard that a few people have tried all 30 toppings! The Bungalow also has excellent flat bread and other choices, but make a reservation or go early...it fills fast.

Best Italian

La Casa (117 King Street; 434-2272). Fabulous décor, great food. There is both formal and informal seating, plus some comfy chairs in front of the fire. NOTE: Not strictly Italian, more like a trendy Californian version of Italian. Best traditional Italian is **Bertoldi's Trattoria** (650 Richmond; 438-4343). Note: Bertoldi's can get quite loud, so be careful if you're looking for a place to have a quiet conversation. **Blu Duby** (519-433-1414) in the Covent Market is highly ranked on Trip Advisor. Don't forget the three pizza places suggested above as well.

Best Mexican

Close by is **Under the Volcano** (30 Wharncliffe N.; 519-435-1179), but my favourite is **Mexicactus** (1392 Trafalgar, 519-963-0816). This will require a car, and also quite small. The deep fried tacos are great...I usually get the burrito.

Best Organic

The Root Cellar (623 Dundas; 519-719-7675). Great food. Everything is sourced locally (including the beverages). Wide range of vegetarian and vegan items.

Best Bistro

David's Bistro (432 Richmond Street; 519-667-0535). Rated #1 in London on tripadvisor. I also like **The Church Key** (476 Richmond Street; 519-936-0960) and **Waldo's on King** (130 King Street; 519-433-6161). Reservations are recommended since seating is limited. Waldo's has a very good pasta bar.

Best of the Best

The Black Trumpet (523 Richmond St.; 850-1500)

Absolutely the best ambiance in London serving up a mix of Thai/Asian/new World fusion. **Reservations are a must** and be sure to order an appetizer ... main courses would not be described as “generous.

Best place to eat when you're leaving London and hit the 401:

Pasto's (401 at Highway 4; 652-7659)

Surprisingly elegant for a restaurant tied to a highway hotel.

Best Overall Value: This is a tough one, so I'll give 3 choices that reflect good food, good prices, a nice décor, and places that I haven't mentioned already.

1. **The Tasting Room** (483 Richmond; 438-6262). Combo bar and bistro...great appetizers and taste-test flights of wine. Extensive wine list. Note: Next door to number 2 on this list.
2. **Garlic's** (481 Richmond Street; 432-4092). The place to go if you're going to The Grand Theatre — it's next door. Good selection of pasta and Mediterranean with a twist: everything on the menu has garlic in, around, or on it. Try the roasted garlic for a starter and for dessert, what else ... the garlic ice cream.
3. **The Springs** (310 Springbank Drive; 519-657-1100). Bistro style dining... good selection of wine, live music.

Honorable Mentions

There are actually a number of good restaurants in London. If none of the above work for you try the following:

Sweet Onion Grill (135 Wortley Road ; 519-204-5775). Funky little bistro in the heart of Wortley Village.

The Old South Village Pub (149 Wortley Rd; 645-1166). Restored century home in the heart of Wortley Village. Wide selection of food...nice veranda.

Marienbad (122 Carling; 679-9940). If you're looking for schnitzel, this is the place for you. Standard old-world style restaurant. Be sure to check out the more informal **Chaucer's Pub** next door.

The staff of the Teaching Support Centre also frequent:

Spaghetti Eddy's, Fellini Koolini's, Michael's on the Thames, and of course...The Wave (University Community Centre), The Spoke (University Community Centre), The Grad/Faculty Club (Middlesex College), and Windermere Manor (in the Research Park)

If all else fails, go to the corner of Oxford St. and Richmond St. and walk south on Richmond. There are numerous restaurants, bars and lounges within the next six blocks.