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Definitive Delicious List: The Irish Times's top 16 Cafes Around Ireland 2019

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Definitive delicious list: The Irish Times's top 16 cafes around Ireland 2019

The neighbourhood coffee spots, lunchtime stars and tea-and-cake hangouts we love

about an hour ago

Catherine Cleary, Aoife McElwain, Lisa Cope



We've marked this year's newcomers and used a € to flag everywhere that serves a main course for less than €15



Tiller + Grain € NEW

23 South Frederick Street, Dublin 2



Clair Dowling was still testing her menu on customers when I took one of the small seats in the back of her lovely cafe and



loved every mouthful. Another Ottolenghi graduate, she has brought the lunch offering in Dublin's city centre up several notches. When **Niall Davidson's** new place opens just up the road, later in the summer, this looks set to become quite a



food quarter. **Catherine Cleary**

The Pepper Pot €

Powerscourt Centre, 59 William Street South, Dublin 2; 01-7071610

I blame the food-service industry for dragging down the quality of cake at many of Ireland's cafes and coffee shops. Too many short cuts and prepped sauces, bases and mixes go into cakes these days. Not here, though. Everything, including the springily delicious bagels, is made from scratch. The Pepper Pot Victoria sponge should be eaten regularly as a reset button for how cake should taste. **CC**

Strandfield Cafe

Ballymascannon, Dundalk, Co Louth; 042-9371856

There's an Avoca-style oasis of plant and food shop and cafe and pizzeria in this lovely farmyard operation to tempt you of the motorway for a gentle pitstop. The people behind this cafe take their baking very seriously. Everything from scratch and no short cuts. You can taste the difference. **CC**

Pudding Row

Main Street, Easkey, Co Sligo; 096-49794

The buzz of conversation as you walk up the stairs into this first-floor cafe is the sound of summer. A trip (or several) to Pudding Row has become an unmissable part of family stays in Sligo. A perfect day involves wrestling a surfboard in Inniscrone for a couple of hours and then heading over to Easkey rubbery-kneed with the hunger, to tuck into Dervla James's cooking. I'm already planning this year's visit. **CC**

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Eoin

Cluskey of
Bread
Nation,
Pearse
Street,
Dublin.
Photograph:
Nick
Bradshaw

4 Vicars

4 Vicars Hill, Armagh; 048-37527772

There's a long tradition of restaurants in the South not looking to fish and seafood from the North, preferring to source from west Co Cork when a port like Kilkeel, in Co Down, is far closer. All the fish and seafood served in this lovely hilltop restaurant is landed at Kilkeel. The husband-and-wife team of Gareth and Kasia Reid are on a personal mission to show diners there's more to Armagh than apples. **CC**

Meet Me in the Morning

50 Pleasants Street, Portobello, Dublin 8

Or the afternoon. It's not time-dependent. What is certain is that you will get delicious food here in this bespoke place where they pack more flavour into one bowl than some restaurants get into whole tasting menus. The sourcing is impeccable, and the opening of their second operation, **Loose Canon**, has not dimmed the focus that this professional operation brings to things. **CC**

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Ubh Cafe € NEW

George's Street, Newbridge, Co Kildare; 085-7667911

Having paid her dues working in fine dining, the pastry chef Emma Spain decided to rediscover her passion for a simpler approach to cooking by opening Ubh, in early 2017. Her partner, Shane Byrne, roasts the coffee while their team of cooks, baristas and floor staff work with Spain to design a menu that changes every other week. On the roster are Dunlavin Dairy milk, Gubbeen cheese and chorizo, Toons Bridge ricotta, Garryhinch Wood mushrooms, local egg supplier Chick O'Loughlin (best name ever for an egg supplier?) and local Polish bread baker Richard Kamola. Regulars are obsessed with their mushrooms on toast with Parmesan cream, poached egg and wild garlic pesto foraged by Spain. The couple have just opened their second cafe and microastery, Bad Habits, in Naas. **Aoife McElwain**

Two Pups
Coffee,
Francis
Street,
Dublin 8.
Photograph:
Cyril
Byrne/The

This Must Be the Place € NEW*High Street, Cahernamart, Westport, Co Mayo; 087-7074500*

Susan Timothy and Andrew McGinley opened their cafe in Westport last summer, serving simple fare elevated by quality ingredients and solid cooking by their head chef, Eoghan Kelly. The menu changes often and according to the seasons, and they love using the local grower Joe Kelly's organic leaves and O'Reilly Bakery sourdough. One of their most popular dishes is a bacon croquette served with cabbage, poached eggs and hollandaise. Coffee is exceptionally good – it's made with Anam Coffee beans, which are roasted in the Burren – and the brownie made for the cafe by a local baker, Anne O'Malley, really convinces us that this is the place. **AMcE**

Five Points €*288a Harold's Cross Road, Dublin 6*

This neighbourhood cafe near Dublin 6's five-pointed crossroads is a partnership project between 3fe and the barista Adam Sheridan. At Five Points, coffee is king, the rarebit with wild garlic and smoked-bacon bechamel sauce served by Katie McCann, the head chef, is to die for, and the tunes on the sound system are always on point. **AMcE**

Storyboard €*Camden Block, Clancy Quay, Islandbridge, Dublin 8*

The Cork man and 3fe alumni Jamie Griffin is the bard of Storyboard, and his genre of tales is food and drink. Mark Butle continues Laura Caulwell's legacy as head chef through dedication to a pared-back menu, where McNally Family Farm produce, Le Levain Bakery bread and Wicklow eggs are the superstars of this story. Griffin is in the process of obtaining a wine licence, so watch this space for a new evening offering to come. **AMcE**

My Boy Blue €*Holyground, Dingle, Co Kerry*

Stephen Brennan, a Dubliner, and Amy O'Sullivan, who is local, are playing a blinder at My Boy Blue. Expect dishes like avocado toast with fried eggs and White Mausu chilli peanut rayu for brunch, and Thai green chicken curry with lemon grass and ginger served with sweet-potato poppadoms for lunch. The coffee – which is always excellent – is from 3fe, and BÁCÚS Bakery treats are delivered daily from right around the corner. **AMcE**

**Established Coffee €***54 Hill Street, Belfast; 048-90319416*

Bridgeen Barbour and Mark Ashbridge continue to win people over with the outstanding coffee and food at their central-Belfast cafe. They're spreading the love by hosting brewing classes at their Established Academy if you're interested in learning how to make better coffee at home. **AMcE**

Storyboard
café on Clancy
Quay, Dublin.

Bang Bang €

59a North Leinster Street, Phibsborough, Dublin 7; 01-8689244

Named after the Dublin street character, Bang Bang is a beautiful mix of community cafe, deli, vintage shop and art space, run by the brother-and-sister team of Grace and Daniel Lambert. Their Brunch Burger perseveres as their most popular dish. **AMcE**

Bread 41 € NEW

41 Pearse Street, Dublin 2; 087-2977284

Eoin Cluskey's dedication to "real bread" led him to open this bakery and cafe last year based on the belief that bread should have four ingredients: flour, salt, water and time. The cafe is the ideal showcase for the talented bakers in the kitchen, with unmissable pastries and a menu mainly based around their sourdough and batch breads, which are all available to take home. **Lisa Cope**

Two Pups Coffee €

74 Francis Street, Dublin 8

Two Pups is the cafe everyone wishes they had within walking distance of their house. With ample seating (including outside tables for sunny days), speciality coffee, and a menu focused on seasonal, Irish produce, it's what cafe dreams are made of. They effortlessly turn out show-stopping dishes daily. The peanut butter and avocado toast with eggs and pickled onions, and the French toast with plum compote and white-chocolate mousse, have been particular favourites over the past year. **LC**

Alma € NEW

12 South Circular Road, Portobello, Dublin 8; 086-8158324

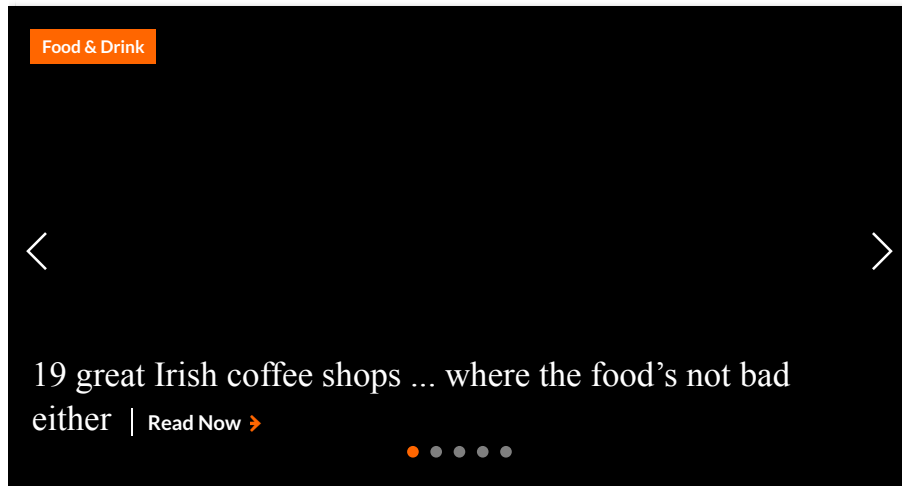
There are family operations, and then there's Alma. Six members of the Parisi family opened this Argentinean cafe earlier this year, with Alejandro and Lucrecia, the parents, in charge, and their four daughters doing everything from front of house to social media. Alma's brunch menu, with dulce de leche pancakes, and steak, eggs and chimichurri, has added something different to an eggs-Benedict-saturated scene, and customers show their appreciation by queuing down South Circular Road at weekends. **LC**

Our top 16 cafes feature in our list of 100 of the best places to eat

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