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PRÓXIMO A REGULAR FOR BUSINESS BREAKFASTS



Dulce De Leche French Toast is french toast finished with macerated berries and toasted pecans.

IF YOU GO

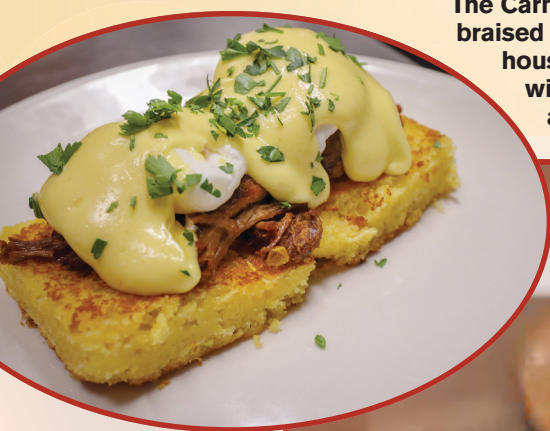
WHAT: Proximo, ObiCai Restaurant Management

WHERE: 203 E. Berry St., Suite 602

PHONE: 260-422-0080, Ext. 195
for the event coordinators

WEBSITE: www.obicai.com

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



The Carnita Benedict contains braised pork served over arugula and house-made cornbread, finished with poached eggs, hollandaise and cilantro.

The Garbage Skillet contains diced potatoes tossed with peppers, onions, tomatoes, bacon and white cheddar cheese. Finished with sausage gravy and sunny-side-up eggs.



BY MARY ANNE GATES

Próximo, 898 S. Harrison St., regularly hosts business breakfast meetings for various area firms.

"Absolutely, yes," Peter Shuey, director of operations, ObiCai Restaurant Management, said. "We handle quite a few business meetings both formal and informal. We do three to five breakfast events per week. Breakfast meetings usually start around 8 or 9 a.m. They usually last a couple of hours."

Three popular Próximo food choices include Dulce De Leche French Toast finished with macerated berries and toasted pecans. Another favorite is the ever-popular Garbage Skillet. The dish includes diced potatoes, tossed with peppers and green onions, tomatoes, bacon and white cheddar cheese. It is finished with sausage gravy and sunny side up eggs. Finally, for something a little different Próximo serves a Carnita Benedict. The dish features braised pork served over arugula and the house made cornbread. It is topped off with a poached egg, hollandaise and cilantro.

ObiCai Restaurant Management owns Próximo; The Hoppy Gnome, 203 E. Berry St.; and Baker Street Steakhouse, 4820 N. Clinton St.

Breakfast meetings can be held in the Club Room, a fully private, space that is rented and reserved prior to the breakfast event, Shuey said.

A private space to comfortably discuss confidential matters is often one of the reasons many corporate leaders choose to reserve space.

"The main thing most of our groups are looking for is a place that can be fully private. A lot of times they are discussing sensitive information," Shuey said.

Additionally, in a post-pandemic world, combining business and breakfast is frequently on the agenda.

"The business breakfast is very popular as people have come back to work over the last year.

There are a lot of groups that come in for their business meetings during breakfast," he said.

Scheduling a business breakfast meeting allows business leaders to tailor the menu or arrange tables and seating to suit a variety of needs.

"They can customize the menu or order off the menu. We can also have a breakfast buffet ready.

"It is full-service just like in the restaurant, but you have your own space," Shuey said. Adding, "We can arrange tables in any configuration ... whatever (arrangement) fits your meeting needs the best."

Another big draw for a business breakfast is an internet connection and audio-visual equipment.

"There are full audio and visual capabilities, which is pretty convenient for a lot of these businesses that hold breakfast meetings. We have quite a few people that need some sort of monitor display as they are going through their meeting," he said.

BY MARY ANNE GATES

Perhaps a surprising option for a business breakfast combo is Parkview Field, 1301 Ewing St.

It hits a home run for food, private meeting space and entertaining extras.

"Parkview Field is a unique and fun place to host a meeting," Holly Raney, special events manager, Parkview Field, said.

Favorite Parkview Field menu items feature its delicious cinnamon rolls. Other popular options are the Bases Loaded Omelets. These tasty dishes include sautéed sweet peppers, onions, ham and sausage.

"We do have some businesses that come in for a quick business breakfast meeting from 7:30–9:30 a.m. and then go on to work. We do our own catering and can accommodate many dietary requests. Or we can serve coffee and a light breakfast."

Parkview Field also offers business breakfast guests a variety of entertainment extras. These extras can include a behind-the-scenes guided tour conducted by friendly staff. Or an appearance by Johnny TinCap can be arranged. His appearance is likely to bring another dimension to any breakfast meeting.

Alternatively, Parkview Field has a rock wall. A brief climb on a rock wall is likely to energize any business breakfast meeting. Or, the rock wall will delight the ultimate multi-taskers who want to combine business and breakfast with a little sporting exercise.

However, skipping the entertaining extras and just having a business meeting with your breakfast is no problem.

Parkview field offers several private meeting room choices. Meeting rooms can accommodate small groups or up to several hundred people. Room layouts can be customized to fit the needs of each group.

Besides a customized room layout, free parking is available at Parkview Field.

PARKVIEW FIELD HITS A HOME RUN

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Parkview Field

WHERE: 1301 Ewing St.

MAIN OFFICE: 260-482-6400

CONTACT: Holly Raney
special events manager

DIRECT LINE: 260-407-2820

EMAIL: raney@tincaps.com

WEBSITE: www.parkviewfield.com

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



A large pan of cinnamon rolls can start off a breakfast meeting just right.

How about Johnny TinCap served with your egg bake?

WORTH THE WALK: FORT WAYNE FOOD TOURS

Good food, history and architecture on 3.5-hour excursion

PHOTOS BY MARY ANNE GATES

At left foreground: filet mignon, sauteed mushrooms and smashed potatoes. This mini masterpiece from The Gas House came complete with a taste of red wine. Background: Several Fort Wayne Food Tours guests taste the signature offering.



Amber Bouthot, left, talks to Food Tours guests about the Lion's Dance mural created by the artist Juuri. The mural is on a building at 128 W. Wayne St.



Fort Wayne Food Tours owner and guide Amber Bouthot serves up a little history about the Allen County Courthouse, seen in the background.



BY MARY ANNE GATES

Fort Wayne Food Tours sample delicious culinary offerings on a one-and-a-quarter-mile-long walking loop through downtown. Plus, attendees discover Fort Wayne's historic past and get a leisurely view of iconic architecture.

"We are overflowing with culinary opportunities. We have had a great focus on downtown redevelopment ... It is a very exciting time to be in Fort Wayne, Amber Bouthot, Fort Wayne Food Tours owner and guide, said.

The three-and-a-half-hour guided excursion, which usually runs May-October on Friday and Saturday afternoons, visits several locally owned eateries where signature dishes are offered. Between tastings, the city's story comes alive as Bouthot serves up snippets of local history along the way. Tickets this year were \$70.

"I am extremely passionate about everything that is happening in Fort Wayne, and I think our local culinary scene is top-notch," she said.

The tour begins at The Gas House, 305 Superior St., one of the most historic restaurants still in operation in Fort Wayne. According to Bouthot, at one time it was part of a larger power plant serving the city. It was decommissioned in the early 1900s. The building that now operates as a popular downtown restaurant once housed the offices for the long-ago power plant, she said.

Besides The Gas House, partners with Food Tours are The Hoppy Gnome, 203 E. Berry St.; Proximo, 898 S Harrison St.; and DeBrand Fine Chocolates in Skyline Plaza, 878 S. Harrison St.

The Hoppy Gnome just celebrated seven years being downtown. Food Tours guests this year were treated to an Applewood smoked brisket taco with cherry chipotle salsa and a topping of scallions.

"We have 15 taco options, and we can customize anything," Joe Sirk, general manager, said. "We are noted for our scratch kitchen. And, we can serve food to meet a variety of dietary needs."

These include vegetarian or vegan diets. Additionally, staff can work around diets with celiac

disease or allergies, he said.

Proximo serves up its own unique Latin-fusion fare. The Food Tours cuisine included chicken pesto and a guava salad. Wrapping up the food portion of the tour featured a variety of milk, dark and white chocolates served at DeBrand Fine Chocolates next door.

For at least one Food Tours participant it was more than just the food that made the tour enjoyable.

“Besides the food, just getting to know the other people at the table and having good conversation about a variety of topics (was enjoyable),” Carole Terkula, deaconess in the Lutheran Church serving the Lutheran Foundation, said.

Also, included on the tour were interesting facts about the Allen County Courthouse, 715 S. Calhoun St. Additionally, Bouthot shares her knowledge of several recently installed murals. Finally, as each food tour wraps up, she briefly highlights the history of The Canal House, 114 W. Superior St. The Canal House, also known as the John Brown Stone Warehouse, is an historical commercial building built in 1852. It is the oldest standing commercial building in Fort Wayne, Bouthot said.

Amber Bouthot bought Fort Wayne Food Tours in September 2019 from Randy Harter and Sarah Arnold. Harter is a historian and local author.

Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic shut Bouthot down in 2020. Afterward, her new business began taking off.

“Last year, we started back up and had great success. Now here we are in our second season under my ownership, and I am absolutely loving it,” she said.

Besides Fort Wayne Food Tours, Bouthot currently serves as the executive editor and publications manager for Glo Magazine. She also owns Red Bird Marketing, a freelance marketing and writing company. Bouthot has lived in Fort Wayne for 20 years.

For more information about Fort Wayne Food Tours or to book a tour go to fortwaynefoodtours.com.



DeBrand Fine Chocolates, displays a wide variety of chocolates for Food Tours guests at Skyline Plaza, 878 S. Harrison St.



Applewood Smoked Brisket Taco served with cherry chipotle salsa and topped with scallions served at Hoppy Gnome, 203 E. Berry St.

From left, Próximo serves up chicken pesto and a guava salad.



Amber Bouthot shares a little history of The Canal House, 114 E. Superior St.

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SPYRO'S WHERE FRIENDS GATHER FOR BREAKFAST

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Spyro's

WHERE: 6455 W. Jefferson Blvd.

HOURS: 7 a.m.–2 p.m. daily

PHONE: 260-436-7797

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



**Waffle with
strawberries.**



**Breakfast
sandwich
served with
fruit.**

BY MARY ANNE GATES

Spyro's, 6455 W. Jefferson Blvd., is a popular place for friends to meet and enjoy breakfast together. The restaurant opens daily at 7 a.m., but it might not be early enough for some.

"We have people waiting when we open the doors. Often about 15 people are standing outside, ready to walk in here," Danielle Brunson, manager, said. Adding, "Often in the first hour about 100 people come in and enjoy our weekday breakfasts. Many more than that come here on the weekends."

Spyro's enjoys a steady stream of regular customers.

"About 80% of our customers are regulars that come in weekly or even daily," she said.

The large and varied menu offering dozens of food choices is the main draw. The multiple, attractive, and spacious dining rooms just serve as the backdrop for the tasty food options.

"I think it's the great variety of food we serve. We use peanut oil, and we try to make good food while keeping it healthy. The Garden Wrap with scrambled eggs, peppers, onions, mushrooms, spinach, tomatoes, and cheddar cheese is a healthy choice," Brunson said.

Generously sized salads rank high as customer favorites. Spyro's Signature Salad includes grilled chicken breast, cranberries, and feta cheese over chilled greens. Meanwhile, the Employee Favorite Skillet ranks high with the staff. It is served with smoked sausage, jalapenos, and cheddar cheese.

Buying food locally is one key to the success Spyro's enjoys. It is also a way to help other local businesses. Besides locally sourced food, the polo shirts, T-shirts and aprons the Spyro's staff wears are sourced locally from DKM Embroidery, Inc.

"We buy local. Our meats come from Didier Meats. Our eggs come from a local, FDA-approved, family farm. We want to help small local shops. That is what we want people to do for us. Shop local," she said.

Excellent customer service is another key to customer satisfaction. Servers focusing on customer needs helps ensure that people will want to come back.

"We have great service. Our staff makes sure your coffee cup never goes empty," Brunson said.

Spyro's is owned by Nasser Anabtawi. He bought the restaurant about three months ago, according to Brunson. He also owns the Breakfast Clubb in the Market Place of Canterbury, which he bought several months ago.

Plans for Spyro's include adding outdoor seating on the patio next summer. A large patio area with six or seven tables and new landscaping is planned.



Meat and cheese omelet served with potatoes.

Employee Favorite Skillet contains hearty smoked sausage, jalapenos, and cheddar cheese.



Classic bacon, eggs and potatoes.

KLEMM'S ON WELLS ST. COZY

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Klemm's On Wells

WHERE: 1429 N. Wells St.

HOURS: 5:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
Monday–Saturday;
7 a.m.–1 p.m. Sunday

PHONE: 260-426-0928

PHOTOS BY MARY ANNE GATES



Dan Knepper, owner of Klemm's On Wells, feels humbled by the number of people who come to the restaurant.

Three varieties of the No. 1 on the menu at Klemm's On Wells. From left, the popular breakfast is served up with sausage, bacon or ham.



BY MARY ANNE GATES

Meeting friends for breakfast brings the anticipation of a delicious, satisfying, and unpretentious meal. The classic American meal of bacon, eggs, and toast is a comfort plate best served among pals. Besides good food, diners experience the camaraderie of good friends gathered around a table or sharing a cozy booth.

Many locally owned, family-run restaurants serve up a variety of breakfast menu options that set the tone for the day. Two local diners one east and one west of downtown — Klemm's On Wells and Willie's Diner — attract many diners who savor the unhurried pace of the first meal of the day.

Klemm's On Wells

Klemm's On Wells, 1429 N. Wells St., serves up a classic variety of breakfast menu items. The No. 1 option on the menu starts with "two eggs the way you like" — from over easy to scrambled. Klemm's even offers scrambled with cheese for a slight upcharge. The No. 1 also includes a choice of meat of ham, sausage or bacon. It is served with white, wheat or rye toast.

The popular country-fried steak and eggs, corned beef hash and eggs, and breakfast tacos are also available. Other offerings include french toast, pancakes, biscuits and gravy. Klemm's also features a "garbage plate" that includes egg, sausage, American fries, onions, peppers and tomatoes, all smothered with sausage gravy and served with toast.

A variety of omelets round out the menu. The classic Denver Omelet features ham, onion, pepper and cheese. A Philly Steak and Cheese Omelet comes with steak, cheese, peppers, and onions. Both are served with American fries and toast. Additionally, a Meat Lovers Omelet and a Veggie Omelet are available.

The popular restaurant was for sale at the right time. Dan Knepper 38, bought Klemm's On Wells in 2016.

"It was a great place, and the opportunity presented itself. I have always loved restaurants. It was a good opportunity," he said.

For Knepper the usual challenges in running a restaurant are preferable to not having the cozy restaurant at all. Knepper relishes the challenges.

"Like anything else in life, the ability to remain consistent is important. In the last few years, we have seen inconsistent price structures and supply chain issues.

"Those are problems I like to have. I'd rather figure myself out of that than not being able to be here and do this stuff," he said.

Besides making a living doing something he enjoys, Knepper's reward is serving up tasty food that many regular customers enjoy on a near-daily schedule. He is also proud of a great staff serving a never-ending stream of customers.

"We have a lot of people who are multi-week visitors. Plus, we get a lot of new people coming in. We have some people who come every day, which is super humbling because there are so many good restaurants with good operators to choose from," Knepper said. Adding, "We get to feed a bunch of people every day. We have a great staff. They always have a job to do because the people come ... The reward is being able to feed people and give them something they enjoy. We are blessed."



Diners fill up the counter at Klemm's On Wells.

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full house at
Klemm's On Wells,
1429 Wells St.**



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GREAT PLACES TO HOST YOUR NEXT BUSINESS BREAKFAST MEETING

The Grand Wayne Convention Center, 120 W. Jefferson Blvd., has catering services from the Hilton Hotel for a breakfast meeting with a full-service AV staff.



FILE PHOTO

BY MARY ANNE GATES

Fort Wayne offers a variety of custom-built venues for hosting business breakfast meetings. Throughout the city there are many ideal places that are perfect for hosting business meetings of any type. For example, one venue can offer both the smallest and the largest business meeting space on this brief list.

That flexibility gives corporate leadership a variety of options to consider. The following locations offer great spaces with amenities to host your next business breakfast meeting.

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave.

Event capacity: 15 rooms — Holds 80-1,000 people depending on the room

Caterer: Aramark in-house preferred caterer. Both buffet and plated meals offered

Technology: All in-house capabilities. Can use in-house AV services team or client can bring their own AV services team

Draw: Very easy, convenient parking, multiple meeting spaces

Phone 260-482-9502
Nathan Dennison, vice president of sales

Baker Street Station, 221 W. Baker St.

Event capacity: One large room — holds up to 200 people

Caterer: Goeglein's Catering

Technology: Wi-Fi, multiple screens

Draw: Downtown, free parking available, restored historic building

Phone: 260-749-1162
Amy, events

Bergstaff Place, 2020 E. Washington Blvd.

Event capacity: One large room — holds up to 300 people for a corporate event

Caterer: Ceruti's Catering, Inc.

Technology: Client can bring in own AV company

Draw: Downtown location near Indiana Tech

Phone: 260-207-2020, ask for an event specialist

Grand Wayne Convention Center, 120 W. Jefferson Blvd.

Event capacity: 18 rooms — Holds 16 up to 3,000 people depending on the room

Caterer: Hilton Hotel, exclusive on-site caterer. Both buffet and plated meals offered

Technology: Full-service AV team on staff. IMAG available, multiple-size screens available

Draw: Award winning facility. Central downtown location. Flexible space

Phone: 260-426-4100
Susie Bruick, sales manager handling events

The Charles, 3127 Carroll Road

Capacity: Two event rooms — holds 265 seated and 350 seated, depending on the room

Caterer: Choose your own caterer — no in-house caterer

Technology: Wi-Fi available, Bluetooth sound system

Draw: Events are customizable; venue offers complete setup and tear down

Phone: 260-637-3643
Tessa Egolf, client coordinator for details



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WILLIE'S HAS NEW LOCATION

BY MARY ANNE GATES

Willie's Café is celebrating its first anniversary in its new location at 3434 N. Anthony Blvd. It was formerly known as, Willie's Family Restaurant. The eatery was a longtime fixture at the corner of St. Joe Center and Maplecrest roads.

A new location meant a slightly new name to Willie's Café. Besides the name change, the move meant the menu could also change. Now there are more options to choose from.

"When we relocated, we had the opportunity to enlarge the menu. We could serve lunch and breakfast all day long. A new item is spinach benedict. It is served on an English muffin with fresh spinach and tomatoes, topped with a poached egg and hollandaise sauce," Kim Campbell, owner, said.

When the property came up for sale, Campbell didn't hesitate. She has owned the popular eatery since 2001.

Other menu additions are gluten-free items, seasonal waffles, and more meat items.

"We have avocado toast. We have gluten-free bread and buns. We have seasonal waffles now. We have been able to add country-fried steak to our menu. We can do more things like fried pork chops. We make our own homemade hash," Campbell said.

Popular items include a variety of breakfast bowls. The bowls are served with two eggs and potatoes. The bowls also come with a choice of toast or pancakes.

Seasonal fruit is an option. Coffee or tea is also served.

Customizing each bowl comes with additions of meat or vegetable. For example, the Hungry Willie comes with ham, bacon, sausage, fresh mushrooms, and onions with a cheese blend. The chicken fajita is served with chicken breast, onions, and green peppers with a cheese blend.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Willie's

WHERE: 3434 N. Anthony Blvd.

HOURS: 7 a.m.-2 p.m.
Monday-Saturday;
8 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday

PHONE: 260-485-3144

PHOTOS BY MARY ANNE GATES

Blueberry parfait.



Strawberry-topped waffles come with dollops of whipped cream and ribbons of chocolate.



The egg-topped chicken breast Chicken Fajita Bowl.



Another change Campbell made at the new location was putting in a large community table. It is in the center of the restaurant and seats 10 people.

"I have had a lot of single people come in. They are looking for companionship.

"One person used to sit at one table and another person sat at another table. Now they all sit together. They enjoy their conversation, coffee and breakfast," she said.

The draw for many diners is the community feel of the restaurant.

"We are locally owned and family-operated. We have a lot of regular customers," Campbell said.

Plans are in the works for a second Willie's Café. Campbell recently bought the former Bob's Restaurant in Woodburn. The new eatery is set to open Nov. 1 at 22031 Main St. Capacity is expected to be 85-90 people.

"We are really excited. We are remodeling right now," Campbell said.



Pancakes come with delicious syrup.



Saturday morning brings a full house at Willie's Café. Part of the community table is seen in the center.

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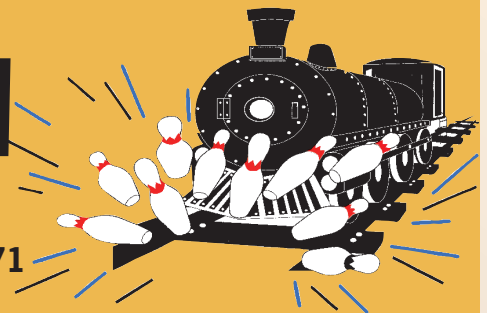


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WHERE: 204 W. Main St.

PHONE: 260-428-4018

WEBSITE: www.provenancehotels.com

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



The Mashed Avocado consists of ciabatta toast, mashed avocado, charred peppers and herbs.



The Simple Breakfast features scrambled eggs, sliced avocado with chives and ciabatta toast.

BY MARY ANNE GATES

One of the newest places to host a business breakfast meeting is The Bradley, 204 W. Main St. It is a downtown boutique hotel. The bright, well-lighted Allen meeting room, named after Allen County, features a modern and elegant, private space.

Additionally, the latest computer technology with high-tech audio and visual equipment is onsite.

It is set up to easily conduct business meetings more efficiently.

"We host meetings several times a week. We can host up to 100 people in our space," Andrea Wilmont, director of sales for The Bradley, said in an email. "We have many options for all types of events and meetings with our own onsite catering."

Focusing on food, the signature dishes at The Bradley include The Simple Breakfast. It features scrambled eggs, sliced avocado with chives and ciabatta toast. Another dish starring the avocado is The Mashed Avocado. This dish consists of ciabatta toast, mashed avocado, charred peppers and herbs.

"We are a scratch kitchen, and we can cater to many different budgets. I can provide our catering menu upon request, with inquiries," Wilmont said.

When choosing a place to host a business breakfast meeting there are several things to consider.

"I recommend considering what type of meeting (is being planned). Will attendees eat first and then work? Who will attend and the number of attendees expected. Further, consider any dietary restrictions and whether it will be a plated meal or a buffet. What type of beverages need to be offered," Wilmont said.

Other considerations when planning a business breakfast meeting include the budget, timeframe of the meeting, who is the decision-maker and who is responsible for payment, she said.



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