

## **Breakfast Of Course's bewitching dishes will have you floating**

By Laura Giovanelli | Journal Reporter

Published: July 9, 2010

There is food, and then there is food, the kind of substance that you wake up wanting. The kind of dish that you walk around dreaming about, hungry for nothing else. Maybe you think I'm exaggerating. Maybe you haven't had one of Mary Haglund's breakfast burritos.

She's Winston-Salem's good witch of comfort food, and she can put a spell on you.

Her breakfast burritos, embarrassingly large and spiked with garlicky salsa, are heaven. I could eat her cold, fruity soups in strawberry and peach for lunch, and have second helpings for dessert. One summer I was obsessed with her jalapeno limeade, a tongue-tingling elixir of spice and sweet. I tried to re-create it at home but never quite got it right.

Mary's Of Course was the first restaurant I went to Winston-Salem. I'm glad I had friends looking out for me.

After 10 years at her Brookstown Avenue address, Haglund moved to Trade Street in early June. Mary's Of Course became Breakfast Of Course (Mary's Too). The new place builds on her brunch and breakfast menu, with dinnertime hours that stretch into 3 a.m. on the weekend. Sunday brunch is history, but you can have eggs Benedict for lunch or dinner every other day of the week. Haglund waved her wand over her new restaurant, banishing many of the things that were problems at the old space. Gone are the small, stuffy dining room, and the cramped galley kitchen. Gone, too, is the wait. It was so expected on Sunday mornings on Brookstown that there was a serve-yourself coffee pot to make getting to your table more tolerable.

Haglund has pretty much turned the new kitchen over to Daniel Webster. She still makes the cold soups and the granola, the things, she says, that are fun for her, but Webster is in charge of the line. He co-owns Breakfast Of Course with Haglund and her daughter, Shama.

Breakfast Of Course has two long and large dining rooms in which to spread out. They're painted a serene, icy blue and flooded with daylight. Five local artists each took over a wall and the ceilings, decking the place with puffy clouds, a starry sky, and a massive wall-length mural of the Garden of Eden. Tattoos and pigtails are still favored among the wait staff. "Beware of Attack Waitress" warns a sign near the kitchen. Knitted bags, indy-rock wristbands and vegan-friendly baked goods crowd one corner. The hippy vibe is fierce, alive and well.

My favorite time to eat at Mary's Of Course was always lunch, when I could scratch an itch for one of her sausage Reubens, or dive into her Southern-slanted chef salad, a dish that laughed in the face of other salads with its mountain of pimento cheese. Spells, I tell you! These dishes are gone (Haglund told me that the kitchen will make it).

Still, there is witchcraft on the new menu: crackling hot polenta fries with a fiery smoked chile aioli, and maple bacon ice cream made locally by Blue Ridge Ice Creams. In case it's

not clear, that's a dessert, and it comes on a hot buckwheat waffle, the ice cream melting into the waffle's earthy crunch, salty bacon bits ringing off the alto note of maple. What else would you want to eat after a night pub-crawling on Trade Street?

There are sandwiches and salads, too, the rest of the day's meals re-imagined with a breakfast-time palette of eggs, bacon and maple syrup: chicken and waffles, an Asian-tinged salad with eggs and spicy peanut dressing, and a club with a fried egg nestled among the bacon and avocado.

There are build-your-own Benedicts, with a list of ingredients from artichoke hearts to zucchini. There are cornmeal cakes with maple syrup, and waffles, pancakes and French toast. Of course there are grits, even as a landing spot for poached eggs, steamed spinach and Hollandaise sauce.

A Monte Cristo, that duke of sandwiches, is here. It's lightened up. Well, an inch -- it's not deep-fried. Instead, the turkey, ham and the provolone ooze between slices of cinnamon French toast, all of it showered with powdered sugar.

To ensure your daily recommended allowance of cheese, order the Crispy Madame. It's a terrific take on the *croque-madame*, a French sandwich. Fistfuls of Black Forest ham and Swiss cheese are tightly wedged between buttery slabs of sourdough. The whole thing is finished off with a gently fried egg and a buttery *Cacio de roma* cheese sauce. You will try not to eat all of it, but you're likely to fail.

Does the breakfast-time is every-time theme always taste delicious? Not in the case of the Breakfast Caesar, which comes with slices of pesto omelet tucked among the tomatoes and black olives. The combination feels forced, but worse, the croutons tasted stale and mass-produced.

The sunny-side-up egg on the burger is a stroke of genius -- the yolk creates an unctuous sauce -- but the meat lacks punch. It may be hormone and antibiotic-free, but it's also under-seasoned.

It's always paid off to pay attention to Mary's chalkboard specials, but at Breakfast Of Course things have been more hit or miss -- the chilled peach soup is there this time of year, but one evening, a creamy salmon soup tasted as appealing as a batch of leftovers blended together. A cornmeal cake with red chile, pork and bean stew and lashings of salsa was better. And although bacon and Benedict rule the menu, there are more dinnerish specials, too, such as pork tenderloin with blue cheese.

That's all well and good, but, Mary, I'm looking for more things to crave. I need some more polenta fries.

## **Breakfast Of Course (Mary's Too)**



(out of five)

**Location:** 723 N. Trade St.

**Phone:** 723-7239.

**Website:** [www.breakfastofcourse.com](http://www.breakfastofcourse.com)

**Hours:** Monday through Thursday 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 7 a.m.-3 a.m.  
Closed on Sunday.

**Reservations:** No, but you can call ahead to get a table for a large group.

**Type of cuisine:** Breakfast, breakfast, breakfast.

**Alcohol:** No.

**Health-department rating:** 101.5 percent.

**Price range:** Appetizers: \$3.95-\$7.50; Entrees: \$5.95-\$13.25 (varies, depending on how you build-your-own eggs Benedict and other composed entrees); Desserts: \$2.50-\$9.95.

**Credit cards:** All major credit cards.

**Atmosphere:** Funky, tattooed Bohemian diner meets art gallery.

**The noise:** Minimal.

**The wait:** Little to none.

**Service:** Easy-going and attentive.

**Vegetarian-friendly?** Very.

**Be sure to try:** Polenta fries, Crispy Madame, maple-bacon ice cream, chilled strawberry soup, pimento-jalapeno cheese.

**Stay away from:** Hamburger with a fried egg, Breakfast Caesar, salmon soup.

**Will I go back?** Yes.