



## London eateries that merit a podium place



### Michelle Tchea

Michelle Tchea is a culinary professional and food expert in Asia Pacific. Graduating with a Bachelor of Biomedical Science with First Class Honors in Physical Chemistry (Summa cum Laude) from The University of Melbourne, she began her career in research and development. Tchea is an established writer on luxury travel, gourmet food and health. She has written two books — “Building a Perfect Meal” and “Signature Dishes” and is currently working on her next book in Europe.

1	2	4
	3	

1. Pork rillettes and terrines at Brawn Restaurant

2&3. The Counter Cafe

4. Terrace of Formans' Restaurant and Bar

### Michelle Tchea

The London food scene is constantly under scrutiny from self-professed food critics. However, with everything from top-end establishments and pop-up restaurants to chains and old fashioned pubs seemingly lining every main street of the British capital, tourists at high-profile events such as the London Olympics can feel baffled by the choice and concerned they make the wrong one.

Finding a decent eatery around tourist attractions may not be easy, but when it comes to enjoying the Games, feeding a growling stomach will be a hurdle many tourists must overcome. In the heart of east London, the Olympic Stadium straddles four boroughs, however, none that are considered a “foodie’s paradise.”

So where do you go for a decent meal in between events? Sure, you can head into the newly established Westfield Stratford City and dive head first into a food court chain. But for those looking to fuel up on something a bit special, pay attention now.

### The Counter Cafe

Apparently London’s best kept secret, The Counter Cafe is a perfect place for those who don’t have a ticket to the Olympic Stadium. Sitting in the shadow of the stadium and in the very creative Hackney Wick area, this cozy little cafe combines the hipster London vibe with blue retro flip-up theater seats, plus a roaring good cup of coffee. Friendly staff serve up delicious brunch options, with the Mumbai scramble a crowd favorite. Homemade pies are a cheap and delicious option for lunch. Address: 7 Roach Road, Hackney Wick

### Formans' Restaurant and Bar

If you decide not to brave the crowds to catch a glimpse of Tower Bridge, a visit to another iconic London establishment, Formans', should be organized. While it's easy to bypass the restaurant, which incorporates East London's oldest smokery, and head straight for the concessions stands in the

stadium, do yourself a favor and pop in for some of the city’s freshest seafood — done well. It serves up classic British staples, the cured smoked salmon and eel fillets are favorites for those who choose surf over turf. Oh, and don’t forget to bring your camera — there are stunning views of the stadium from this slightly upmarket environment. Address: Stour Road, Fish Island, Hackney Wick Tel: (020) 8525-2390

### King Edward VII

A visit to London must definitely include a visit to one (or two) local pubs. Luckily for visitors to the Olympic Stadium, a traditional pub dating back to its 19th century is only a short walk from the main action. The surroundings are Victorian London while the food is a mix of modern gastro pub meets shared tapas. Prices are affordable, ranging from 9 to 18 pounds (US\$14-18) for a decent plate of food, like a veggie burger to mixed grill plate. Address: 47 Broadway, Stratford Tel: (020) 8534-2313

### Lucky Chip at The Selbright Arms

If just watching the marathon gives you hunger pangs, head to Lucky Chip for a burger fix. Previously in Netil Market, Lucky Chip has its loyal burger fans lining up for some of the city’s “dirtiest” burgers. You can choose your meal based on your love-hate relationship with Hollywood actors such as the Kevin Bacon — porked up with a lot of porky goodness. However, true grease heads are suggested to go for the John Belushi — a heart attack burger loaded with foie gras, bone marrow and truffle oil. Address: 31-35 Coate Street Tel: (020) 7729-0937

### FARM

The countryside comes to the city of London, well this part of Hackney with FARM: shop. A short train ride from the Olympic Stadium is an urban food “hub” featuring an arts venue, fish pond, rooftop chicken coop, indoor allotment and, of course, a

cafe serving produce fresh from the farm. Address: 20 Dalston Lane, Dalston Tel: (020) 3490-5124

### The Hackney Pearl

The Hackney Pearl may have won a host of awards since opening in 2009, but it’s not resting on its laurels, the menu remains diverse and just as creative as when it first hit the food scene. A seasonal menu and a very affordable pre-fixe menu are on offer for a growing lunch crowd. Produce is local, right through to the drinks menu, which includes beer and cider from Meantime Brewery in Greenwich. Address: 11 Prince Edward Rd, Hackney Wick Tel: (020) 8510-3605

### The Corner Room

The Corner Room is not an easy place to find. There is no phone, no website and no way to make a booking. But owner Nuno’s ambition of creating a neighborhood restaurant that combines informality and affordability makes the search well worth the effort. Although the philosophy is to create an informal dining experience, the menu is, thankfully, the opposite. Go for lunch to really reap the benefits of a bargain — three courses for 21 pounds — and enjoy delicate creations such as sea bass ceviche and rump of lamb. Address: Patriot Square, Bethnal Green

### Brawn Restaurant

A piece of France comes to London with Brawn. The owners of the famed Terroirs have moved on and created a more affordable food destination that has some of the best steak tartar outside of France. A trendy atmosphere and unique concept encourages eaters to “graze” the menu and share plates. With pork rillettes, terrines as well as a list of affordable (8 to 14 pounds) mains, Brawn is a great introduction to those looking to taste a little bit of France. Address: 49 Columbia Road, City of London Tel: (020) 7729-5692



# Breakfast fit for champions

## Michelle Tchea

Cheering on your favorite athletes at the London Olympics can be a tiring business. For those lucky enough to be in Britain's capital for the event, whether at the stadium or catching the action in a London pub, it's vital to keep your stamina up to Olympian levels. And that means no scrimping on breakfast.

Whether nursing a hangover of Olympic proportions or simply analyzing the previous day's events, this is best done while plowing through a good old British fry-up in a London's cafe or restaurant. And if all that grease is just too much, how about a large cup of home-roasted coffee, buttery eggs and artisan sourdough? Here are some suggestions for joining the London breakfast club.

## Lantana Cafe

The owner of Lantana Cafe brings sunshine from Australia with breakfast and weekend brunch. Diners can enjoy Aussie grub while perched outside on a wooden stool in the Fitzrovia neighbourhood. Forget greasy British eggs with dry toast and look forward to Boston baked beans, poached eggs and good Aussie lattes.

Address: 13 Charlotte Place, Fitzrovia  
Tel: (020) 7637-3347

## The Regency Cafe

If you are looking for a typical British fry-up, head over to Pimlico and snag a table at The Regency Cafe. The cafe is reminiscent of an US diner and has been serving locals their bacon and eggs for 55 years. Not just another greasy food joint, but a destination that serves up a good breakfast for those looking to refuel on a budget. The bubble and squeak is sinfully good.

Address: 100 Queen's Gate, Pimlico  
Tel: (020) 7373-7878

## The Wolseley

The Wolseley is claimed by many to be the best place to have breakfast in London. The menu is a little complicated or exciting — depending on what catches your fancy from the extensive list of gourmet food. It includes everything from healthy choices like muesli and freshly poached fruit and yogurts to the hearty English breakfast and Scottish "tattie scones." For those looking to splurge, order the caviar omelette.

Address: 160 Piccadilly  
Tel: (020) 7499-6996

## Kopapa Café and Restaurant

Located in the heart of Covent Garden, Kopapa offers inventive and delicious breakfast options, such as the ricotta pancakes with roasted grapes and the spicy Turkish eggs — a mouthful of which will almost transport you to Istanbul. Those looking for a true brunch experience should try the French toast, topped with spiced bananas, sides and — of course — crispy bacon. The coffee is just as a good.

Address: 32-34 Monmouth Street, Seven Dials, Covent Garden  
Tel: (020) 7240-6076

## Ottolenghi Islington

Bring a good book or your favorite trashy magazine and park yourself at

Ottolenghi Islington. Simple breakfast items are available for those on the go, but enjoy the communal white tables and try not to burn yourself with the dangling "toast-your-own" toasters. Recommendations include cinnamon French toast, buttery brioche and fruity compote.

Address: 287 Upper Street, Islington  
Tel: (020) 7288-1454

## What the Dickens?

A fresh new breakfast place for those who like their food served by three well-dressed gentlemen. The vintage trio's philosophy is simple, making their breakfast "sing" by resurrecting old British classics, such as devilled eggs and lambs kidneys. For the less adventurous, stick to the eggs and house-cured meats for a great culinary experience.

Address: Chatsworth Road Market, Hackney

## The Bull and Last Pub

It is known as a great place to enjoy a pint and good food while mulling over sports. With a young, creative team in the kitchen, it's a great find for visitors. The menu includes a fish board — great for sharing — and other highlights include crispy pig cheek and home-made charcuterie.

Address: 168 Highgate Road, Highgate  
Tel: (020) 7267-3641

## Ginger and White

A cute little neighbourhood cafe with delicious seasonal food — what more could you ask for to cure a hangover? Ginger and White focuses on British cuisine, from produce to platter. Artisan bread by The Flour Station is delivered daily, creamy butter is provided by local Coombe farm and other delicious produce comes from

farmers around the region. Breakfast is served all day, with every item on the menu home-made. Cupcakes and sweets cater to those with allergies but if you don't suffer from nut allergies, try the home-made peanut butter. And remember to take a photograph of the latte art on display, before slurping some seriously good coffee.

Address: 4a-5a Perrins Court, Hampstead  
Tel: (020) 7431-9098

## Caravan Restaurant, Bar & Roastery

Another foodie destination in a market, Caravan is a great place to watch Londoners go about their daily business. The cafe in Exmouth Market is a restaurant, coffee hub and bar. Get up early or be prepared to rub shoulders with fellow eaters. The food is well-traveled, yet the produce local. The cornbread is a nice change to the regular sourdough served in neighboring cafes.

Address: 11-13 Exmouth Market  
Tel: (020) 7833-8115

## Dishoom

Indian-inspired dishes stream out on weekends to a hungry crowd. This breakfast eatery mixes up the Mumbai curry scene for breakfast — the naan bread is something that should be tried.

Address: 12 Upper St Martin's Lane  
Tel: (020) 7420-9320

## The Modern Pantry

Looking for that WOW factor for breakfast? Head to The Modern Pantry and expect the unexpected. Typical British classics are served with unusual ingredients, making it a great place to bring friends. Signature dishes include British fry-ups with plantain and French toast with an Asian twist.

Address: 48 St John's Square, Clerkenwell  
Tel: (020) 7553-9210



Sugar cured prawn omelette at The Modern Pantry



Bacon naan roll at Dishoom

Goat's Curd Pancake  
at The Modern Pantry  
— Photos provide by  
Michelle Tchea

