

## Our Grad Student Restaurant Guide

### KEY

**\$: Dirt cheap (under \$10-ish for two)**

**\$\$: Affordable (under \$30 for two)**

**\$\$\$: Plan ahead, this one's gonna cost you  
(by grad student standards at least)**

### **Bagel Rising \$**

1243 Comm Ave  
Allston, MA 02134  
(617) 789-4000

They said:

Bagel Rising, a cozy café in Allston, opened last summer in a high-traffic location (at Harvard and Commonwealth Aves). Now it's a popular spot for a variety of crispy, freshly baked bagels with different flavors of rich cream cheese (\$1.25 to \$2.25). The bagels are baked with extras like wild berries, garlic, and veggies. Cream cheese choices include scallion, sun-dried tomato, and honey raisin. Wake-up beverages (99 cents to \$1.99) are plentiful, and here you get more coffee for your buck than at Starbucks. For lunch, the Sahara (\$3.95) is a good choice; the hummus, roasted red peppers, cucumbers, and tangy havarti make for an excellent ensemble of piquant flavors. The most adventurous concoction is Goldy's Delicious Smoked Fish Combo (\$5.25): any kind of bagel piled high with whitefish salad, nova lox, tomato, onion, and cream cheese. Very tasty - but don't forget your breath mints.

We said:

Best bagels near campus (perhaps even in Boston!) We've had friends drive from Cambridge to get their fix. The coffee is also good and the staff is entertaining - mostly members of a fledgling rock band.

### **Bamboo \$**

1616 Commonwealth Ave.  
Allston, MA 02134

We said:

Dependable (but not incredible) Thai food. Clean, quiet ambience with fresh floral arrangements and funky straw wrappers. A good takeout destination.

### **The Big Easy \$\$**

1 Boylston Place  
Boston, MA 02116  
(617) 351-7000

We said:

A just-21 and over meat-market! However, with that expectation in mind, they have an awesome selection of live bands and a great people watching dance floor. Friends have nicknamed it the "Big Sleazy", so be forewarned - if *bumpin' and grindin'* is not your scene, skip it! If you like to dance - it's a must!!

### **Bluestone Bistro \$**

1799 Commonwealth Ave.  
(Right near the Chestnut Hill T stop)

(617) 254-8309

We said:

Boston is in a sad state when it comes to pizza - we are still looking for the best (although the North end is promising). This place offers cheap and interesting pizzas, but if you are looking for a NY, thin-crust mouthwatering jewel, it's not going to be here.

**Casa Romero \$\$\$**

30 Gloucester St.  
Boston, MA  
(617) 536-4341

They said:

This restaurant has been popular with native Bostonians for over 30 years, and has been voted the best Mexican restaurant by the Boston Magazine Readers Poll and Tab Magazine Reader's Poll. As memorable for its comfortable atmosphere as its delicious Mexican cuisine, this spot is perfect for a special evening out.

We said:

When you stumble upon it - in an alley off Gloucester - you'll know you uncovered a great find! A huge wooden door seals off the outside world and inside there is a beautiful entry way of cobalt tiles and friendly greeters (with accents!) This place has ambience to spare. Even its tightly knit dining area adds to a cozy (not claustrophobic) feel. You feel like a guest in a Mexican villa - not just a diner. And the food is FANTASTIC to boot!  
Impress your parents (or girlfriend/ boyfriend) when they come to visit!

**Charley's Eating & Drinking Saloon \$\$**

284 Newbury St  
Boston, MA 02115-2801  
Phone: (617) 266-3000  
Fax: (617) 425-0261

We said: A solid brunch location on trendy Newbury St., especially in early fall when you can still eat outside and people watch!

**Cheers \$\$**

Various Locations  
617-227-0150  
<http://www.cheersboston.com/>

We said:

A fun place to go just to say you've been there - the food is good (not great) and can be pricey. It's definitely a tourist location, so be prepared for wait times and/or bus tours. The Faneuil Hall location has the same food, but not the same atmosphere as the original.

**Coolidge Corner Clubhouse \$\$**

307A - 309 Harvard Street  
Brookline, MA 02146  
Phone 617-566-4948 • Fax 617-566-2607

They said:

The newly renovated Coolidge Corner Clubhouse located in Brookline MA, is a sports fans and pub goers dream come true. This great neighborhood pub boasts 17 TV's, 36 Micro-brews on draft, keno, great pub food, full menu until 1:15am and brunch Saturday and Sunday. This is without a doubt one of the best values in the city, The Clubhouse offers an enormous menu of quality items at unbelievably low prices. Although the restaurant is very busy there is rarely a wait do to an efficient, friendly staff.

We said:

A huge menu - with fun catchy Athlete names for all of the sandwiches! It gets crowded around game time (so come early) and space is extremely limited (not too many tables). The brunch is good and they give generous portions for all of their meals. It should be popular - it was just named Best of Boston 2003 for Sportsbars.

**Golden Temple \$\$-\$\$\$**

1651 Beacon St.  
Brookline, MA 02445  
(617) 277-9722

We said:

Extremely funky setting - it's more like a club on the inside (complete with a DJ in the room near the bar) than a traditional Chinese restaurant. The food is good, but can be pricey (\$15 and up for entrée/ dishes). In our experience, the service has also been less than friendly.

**The Ground Round**

1120 Soldiers Field Rd  
Allston, MA  
Phone: (617) 254-2896

We said:

A Friendly's/Friday's establishment where you can get traditional no frills appetizers (i.e. nachos, wings) at no frills prices. The staff is extremely friendly and it could be a casual spot before your hit the movies next door at Cleveland Circle Cinema. We went in expecting not a lot and left relatively impressed at the quantity and quality of the food.

**India Quality Restaurant \$\$**

484 Commonwealth Ave.  
Kenmore Square  
Boston, MA

We said:

They offer a tasty and generous variety of Indian fares. We LOVE their traditional breads and chicken with spinach dish hits the spot. A surprising selection of international beers and a mixed is-this-from-the-80s/ Indian décor.

**King's and Jasper White's Summer Shack \$\$**

**50 Dalton St.**  
**Back Bay, Boston**  
**617-867-9955**

We said:

KINGS IS SO MUCH FUN!! It's a bowling alley - it's a dance club - it's an arcade - it's a sports bar - it's all of those things. Bring your friends for a fun night, although be prepared to wait as much as 2+ hours for a lane.

### **La Boom \$\$\$**

25 Boylston Place Boston, MA  
Located off of Boylston Street  
between Charles and Tremont Streets  
<http://www.laboomboston.com/>

We said:

A truly hip scene! (but pricey - admission alone is \$20!) But if you love dance/ techno music - this is your place. If you long for the cool scene of NY nightlife - check out La Boom, complete with a raw bar.

### **Maggiano's Little Italy \$\$\$**

4 Columbus Ave at  
Park Square Back Bay  
Boston, MA  
(617) 542-3456

They said:

Beginning with the first Maggiano's opening in 1991, Maggiano's blends the tradition of family, the celebration of friends, and the cuisine of authentic Italy in an atmosphere often said to be reminiscent of pre-World War II Little Italy. In a vibrant atmosphere, filled with the nostalgic Italian charm of red-checked tablecloths and family portraits, Maggiano's welcomes you to a warm and unique dining experience.

Maggiano's offers an enticing menu full of Old and New World southern Italian recipes, popular house specialties, irresistible desserts, and a large selection of wines. The "made from scratch" kitchen replicates everyday recipes that have been in Italian families for many, many years. The "varied" wine cellar boasts flavors from all over the world.

The festive dining spaces make Maggiano's the perfect setting for any event. In the beautiful main dining room, tables for two to fourteen abound with "off the menu" selection or preset menus of "Family Style Dining" and for larger groups, elegant banquet rooms are available.

Bring a big appetite and big expectations to Maggiano's! The name is a promise of quality, value, family, and friends...one meal at a time!

We said:

It is certainly bustling - in the middle of the theater district and so a Saturday night pre-show favorite. Request a booth here - you'll feel more privacy and get a better view of the action on the giant dining room floor. The food is good, but not spectacular (although the fried zucchini is light and delicious!). Come with a crowd for a fun meal sharing time. If you're not in the mood, the noise may be too much!

### **Maison Robert \$\$\$!**

45 School Street · Boston, MA 02108  
LUNCH: M-F 11:30-2:30, DINNER: M-SA 5:30-9:30

Tel.: (617) 227-3370 Fax: (617) 227-5977

We said:

For a beautiful French dinner, this is the place (and your wallet will pay the price).  
For a beautiful (and less expensive) dinner, try the café downstairs. Oh, those popovers, the salads.....we are drooling as we type!

**McCormick and Schmidt's \$\$\$**

In the Park Plaza Hotel  
Park Square Back Bay  
Boston, MA

We said:

A traditional steakhouse, prone to pre-theater dinner crowds. It's a nice dependable restaurant, but with so many non-chain places in Boston, go somewhere local.

**The Pour House \$**

909 Boylston  
Boston  
617-236-1767

We said:

Oh the burgers!!! This place has great food at extremely cheap prices! Go on Saturday night for ½ price burgers (there are other ½ price nights for chicken sandwiches and Mexican specialties). Also a popular brunch spot. Follow up your burger with a black and white milkshake! A perfect hang-out for a cheap dinner and good conversation.

**Rod-O-Cha**

Harvard St.  
Brookline, MA

We said:

Good Thai food in a clean and informal setting. The prices are really reasonable and we just love their vegetable pad thai (with Tofu). They also offer other both Chinese and Japanese fair, although we have only sampled their Thai offerings. Extremely friendly staff. Try the Thai bubble teas!

**Tasca \$\$**

1612 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MA 02135  
(617) 730-8002

They said: (Zagat Resturant Survey 1999)

With its "awesome tapas", "great wine" and "delightful atmosphere created by live guitar music", this "romantic, sexy" Brighton Spaniard provides patrons with "an escape to the Mediterranean"; the "new chef has a different style", but most report it "seems to just get better" and rave about "the most knowledgeable staff around."

We said:

We agree. We've always opted just for the tapas and been completely satisfied. Also, ask to be on their e-mail list, they have great special offers and a free \$25 gift certificate for your birthday!

**Tsunami \$\$**

(617) 277-8008

10 Pleasant Street (Coolidge Corner), Brookline

They said:

As far as I can tell after two visits, Tsunami has picked the hardest sells of all: authenticity and quality. They're doing all the regular Japanese-restaurant things, but with a little more creativity and flair. With a small space and three chefs at dinner, Tsunami sends everything hot to the table hot, everything cold quite cold, and all the sushi and sashimi freshly cut.

See more of this review at:

[http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/food\\_drink/dining/documents/01730518.htm](http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/food_drink/dining/documents/01730518.htm)

We said:

Very very fresh food and a diverse menu. If it's more upscale sushi neighbor (Fugakyu) is busy or you are in need for a more casual setting, try it here. It's BYOB, but the atmosphere is friendly, the lighting is warm and the bathroom is super clean.

**Twin Donuts Diner \$**

Brighton/ Allston

We said:

No frills. But we love the 1950s sign on top (recently featured in a beer commercial). A place to eat a cheap breakfast and be relatively satisfied.

**Vinny T's \$\$**

Various locations

Brookline, MA and Boston, MA

We said:

SKIP IT!! This is where every undergrad takes their parents on parents' weekend. The portions of Italian food are generous yes, but the food is sub-par. Go to the North End, stumble into a small little eatery and enjoy. Trust us, you'll be happy you did.

**Zaftigs \$\$**

335 Harvard St

Brookline, MA 02446

Daily 8:00am-10:00pm

Tel: (617) 975-0075

Fax: (617) 975-0775

Email: [zaftigsboston@aol.com](mailto:zaftigsboston@aol.com)

We said:

Great pre-meal bagel chips with "spread of the day" cream cheese, although Kosher pickles on the table would give it added NY deli feel. Sandwiches (and FRIES!) are tasty, but pricey and portions don't come near legendary NY overstuffed versions. For those, go to Coolidge Corner Clubhouse down the street - particularly at brunch time where waits for Zaftigs can be over an hour!!