

# RESTAURANTS



ANNIE WELLS/LOS ANGELES TIMES

Owner Joan McNamara walks by as patrons enjoy a meal at the communal table at Joan's on Third.

## FIRST LOOK

### Sit down with friends (and strangers) for a civilized breakfast at Joan's

#### JOAN'S ON THIRD FOR BREAKFAST

**WHERE:** 8350 W. 3rd St. (between La Cienega and Fairfax), L.A.

**WHEN:** Open for breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Mon.-Fri., from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Regular hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mon.-Sat.; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sun.

**PRICE:** Morning pastries, \$2.50 to \$2.75; breakfast items, \$4 to \$12. Street parking. (There are also a few spots in the alley behind.)

**INFO:** (323) 655-2285; [www.joansonthird.com](http://www.joansonthird.com)

IT'S Saturday morning and my neighborhood buddies and I have just been to the Santa Monica Farmers Market. The idea is to have breakfast afterward, and I suggest *Comme Ça* in WeHo. But when we get there sometime around 9, the place is shuttered. Since the hours aren't posted on the door, we don't know whether the wait is five minutes or two hours. How about Terroni, I suggest. When it debuted in the fall, the hours were from 9 a.m. every day. We head east, but when we get there, the chairs are still stacked inside and nobody is around.

Two strikeouts in one morning? OK, I say, let's try Joan's on Third. It has expanded and is now serving hot breakfast along with morning pastries. Besides, I want to see what the reconfigured café and gourmet grocery looks like.

It looks open. And it looks incredibly inviting. The space has almost doubled in size, giving plenty of room for antique farm tables heaped with tempting goodies and wobbly, wooden bakers' racks stacked with gourmet snacks, chocolates, crackers, olive oils and vinegars. At the front is the pastry section where you can survey the store's pretty

scones, cupcakes and cookies set out on cake stands. Look carefully before you choose or you might miss two of the best: the fluffy brioche or the French breakfast muffin, which is something like a delicious cake doughnut without a hole.

The new breakfast menu includes a stack of buttermilk pancakes, steel-cut Irish oatmeal served with brown sugar and steamed milk, and a classic *omelette aux fines herbes*. The smoked salmon plate with bagel, sliced red onions, cream cheese and capers is very generous for the price, and the salmon is excellent. The best seller is the New York-style breakfast sandwich — scrambled eggs, bacon and Monterey Jack on toasted country bread. But my favorite has to be the perfectly cooked soft-boiled

egg with tender *pain de mie* toast, butter and jam for \$4. Add in a *café au lait*, and it's breakfast heaven.

You'll have to scramble, though, to get a seat at the long communal table at the back. To our right, two couples with babies in tow enjoy a quiet moment together. To our left, three octogenarians gossip away over mixed berry scones and coffee laced with milk.

If you can't fit at that table, not to worry — there are smaller tables on the other side and a row of outdoor tables in front.

I don't often indulge in a lazy breakfast on a Saturday morning, but now I'm thinking it's just so civilized, I'd like to make it a weekend routine.

— S. IRENE VIRBILA  
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