

SPECIALTIES of the *House*



Sweet Grass
MODERN SOUTHERN KITCHEN



(812) 333-1043 | SweetGrassBtown.com | 405 W Patterson Dr

Sweet Grass Returns To its Southern Roots

General Manager Sadie Clarke began her career with Sweet Grass Restaurant last December, just one month after the restaurant's newest owners took possession of the Bloomington locale. Since then, Sweet Grass has returned to its roots of offering southern food while also undergoing transformations that will allow the space to offer guests a menu that includes both low country and southern-roots dishes, an expanded bar selection, expanded patio seating, and more.

"We are working toward getting back to the restaurant's original concept of low country southern food," Clarke says. "But, because we're adding some variety to incorporate food associated with Louisiana into the menu mix, we'll be more of a southern-roots restaurant."

To help reach that focus, Sweet Grass courted Chef Noah Ciasto-Poor. The Bloomington native is quite familiar with the restaurant's origins, as his father was one of the creators of the initial menu offered by the first Sweet Grass owners.

Under his guidance, Sweet Grass will offer a menu that includes shrimp and grits, tenderloin, roast pork, fried green BLT, gumbo, and more. Sweet Grass also has plans to incorporate weekend brunch into its mix and hopes to offer breakfast seven days a week beginning this summer. Guests can enjoy brunch items like bananas Foster waffles, fried chicken and waffles, and fried green tomato Benedict.

To complement the heavy southern influences of the food menu, Sweet Grass offers an expansive bar menu that includes specialty drinks rooted in southern tradition. For menus, hours, and more information, visit sweet-grassbtown.com or call 812-333-1043.

Authentic Like The Old Country

Whenever Salvador Cuahuizo, president of Juannita's authentic Mexican restaurant, visits his grandmother, she immediately offers him something to eat and drink. It was during a visit with his grandmother, after whom the restaurant is named, that Cuahuizo said, "Grandma, that's what we need to be doing at the restaurant. We need to make our customers feel special by giving them that extra 'grandma' attention and care. That's what the 'authentic' is supposed to reflect—the old country hospitality." Together with other family members who participate in the restaurant's day-to-day operations, Cuahuizo hopes the atmosphere at Juannita's demonstrates just that.

The restaurant, located at 620 W. Kirkwood, runs like a well-oiled machine thanks to the team effort of the family members involved. Though Cuahuizo has taken the lead role in daily operations, he views the restaurant as belonging to all the family. "If it wasn't for the family, we wouldn't be here," he says. "It's their restaurant; I just lead them." Juannita, Carmen, Letisa, Aaron, Josefina, and Salvador have each played an integral role in establishing the restaurant.

With the debut of the Juannita's food truck last year, the family has also been busy extending the restaurant's reach beyond its four walls. The Juannita's food truck offers tacos, burritos, beverages, and more for about \$5 to \$8. The Juannita's food truck is often found downtown during evenings and nights, and its LED lights make it an easy find for hungry passers-by.

For more information, visit juannitas.com or call 812-339-2340.

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A Locally Sourced Bloomington Classic

For 29 years, Lennie's has offered fresh, comforting cuisine with a slight Italian bent from their location on 10th Street next to the Indiana University campus. Serving a full menu until midnight Sunday through Thursday and 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, Lennie's is a near-perfect, late-dinner choice after shows, games, and other events. "We call it real food, real late," says Mike Fox, director of operations at Lennie's. Every night from 10 p.m. to midnight, Lennie's features \$4 flatbreads—thinly rolled house-made dough available with a variety of standard topping combinations, including weekly vegetarian and omnivore specialties.

Lennie's recently set out to make the best Reuben sandwich in Bloomington. "We searched out the oldest corned beef purveyor in America—Sy Ginsberg of Detroit—and we were blown away by their product," Fox explains. Lennie's then sourced a great Jewish rye, sauerkraut, and Swiss (they already were making a popular Thousand Island dressing), and after 29 years of serving Bloomington, a new classic was born.

Lennie's has long focused on sustainability and is currently the only restaurant in Indiana certified by the Green Restaurant Association. Lennie's actively courts local suppliers, with all of the eggs and most of the meat coming from local farms. The restaurant also uses greens from the Growing Opportunities program, which is operated by people with developmental disabilities. "We find value in it, and I know our guests appreciate it as well," Fox says. "Doing our part to help sustain local agriculture is important to us."



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