

## **Eat Cheap**

### **Breakfast: Part II**

Once again, the three Eat Cheap reporters made the rounds of open-early eateries to seek out breakfast options that won't start your day in the red. The budget:\$7, not including tax or tip.

But this time, we bypassed Twin Falls altogether to feature restaurants in some of Magic Valley's smaller cities.

As usual, we asked Jill Sherman Skeem, a local health counselor, to evaluate our meal choices too. You'll find her column on page C2.

We suspect that Jill went easy on us this time. Perhaps it was a little leftover holiday goodwill.

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## **Veggie omelet**

### **Price:\$6.95**

The restaurant side of Chubby's - occupying the street-corner section of a historical brick building - opened this summer on Kimberly's Main Street.

There's a bit of disconnect between the restaurant's name - which it shares with the bar on the other side of the building - and its soaring ceiling, heavy woodwork and huge windows.

Fresh paint, new booths and one tasteful, potted tree constitute the decor. A nice effect (if you ignore graffiti visible through a doorway).

As I considered the menu - I had the restaurant to myself and felt free to linger - I asked about the building's history. Brothel, bank and jail, among other uses, the server said. There's still a cell in the basement.

The veggie omelet looked promising. Any broccoli in it? No, she said.

But she returned soon, offering to pick broccoli out of the vegetable mix Chubby's serves for dinner. Hurrah!

My omelet - served with hash browns and wheat toast - arrived with generous vegetables (broccoli, tomatoes, green peppers, onions, mushrooms, etc.) and scanty cheese, just as I'd requested.

Chubby's, it seemed to me, is a place that wants to please.

And I was pleased until, having eaten half my toast, I found tiny spots of mold on the crusts of the remaining pieces.

- Virginia S. Hutchins

## **Waffle and eggs**

**Price: \$6.45**

Eating at the Farmhouse Restaurant in Wendell is a lot like eating in, well, a farmhouse kitchen. Most diners wear seed caps, the coffee is hot and fresh, the biscuits are fluffy and the gravy flows freely.

Because I had bacon and eggs (my favorite breakfast meal) on my last Eat Cheap outing, I thought I'd try something I don't normally eat for breakfast: waffles (\$4.95).

And I ordered a side of two scrambled eggs (\$1.50) for familiarity.

I grew up in a Midwestern town settled by Belgians who set the waffle bar quite high. They wouldn't be disappointed by the Farmhouse fare.

I had two options with my waffles: blueberries or strawberries. I chose blueberries, my favorite fruit. When my meal arrived, I couldn't tell whether there were more blueberries or waffle batter. To my delight, the berries were really packed in there.

I drizzled a bit of syrup over the top - but not too much because I knew the berries would provide enough flavor and sweetness. They did.

I managed to ingest both eggs and most of my light, tasty waffle. A great start to my day.

I highly recommend breakfast at the Farmhouse. It has nearly 40 breakfast items, including many egg-and-meat combination plates and omelets. Prices range from \$3.50 to \$7.95, and the restaurant offers breakfast specials, as well.

- Matt Christensen

## **Outrageous Omelet**

**Price: \$6.99**

Cholesterol isn't anybody's friend, but it's particularly unwelcome when you're over 50.

That's why egg yolks and I parted fondly a couple of years ago.

But I still like eggs, so whenever I get the chance when I'm dining out, I opt for Egg Beaters or one of its many clones.

Most commercial egg substitutes are really egg whites juiced up with various nutrients - but not the cholesterol - found in egg yolks.

In a three-egg omelet, you avoid roughly 600 milligrams of cholesterol, 15 grams

of fat and 225 calories.

So it was with not an excessive amount of guilt that I ordered the Outrageous Omelet at the Flying J Truck Plaza east of Jerome.

It contains sausage, bacon, cheese, onions and red peppers and is served with hash browns and toast. It's a trucker's size breakfast of which I could eat only about half.

The omelet was satisfying, though - better than similar egg-white omelets that I've sampled. It reminded me that in France, which has more or less claimed the omelet as a national treasure, it's considered a main dish - served more often as a light supper than as breakfast.

The French have something there. Next time, I'll skip the hash browns and the toast.

- Steve Crump

### **Breakfast sandwich and broccoli**

**Price:\$4.75**

It's a well-stocked gift shop, but there's still plenty of seating inside Gina's Bistro & Gifts. Customers are served with the friendliness of folks who hope you'll come back, and flavorful fare gives you reason to do so.

In a strip mall on Jerome's South Lincoln, Gina's specializes in lunch but offers a tasty breakfast option: a scrambled-egg-cheese-and-meat sandwich on English muffin, toast or croissant, for \$3.50. I asked for whole-grain toast and ham (other choices were bacon and sausage) and added cooked green chilies for 25 cents.

And I threw in a special request: How about a green vegetable on the side?

For \$1, I got a little cluster of cooked broccoli florets, garnished with a dab of butter and a bit of spice. The sandwich arrived with a nutty bread and a generous slice of ham. The chilies were a nice touch, lightly applied. A mayonnaise-mustard mixture on both slices of toast - though it finished off the flavor nicely - was rather too plentiful. The breakfast sandwich could afford to lose some goop and still be moist, so next time I'll ask Gina's to go easy on the mayo-mustard. I'm sure they'll happily comply.

- Virginia S. Hutchins

## **Eat Cheap – Breakfast Part 2**

Going out to breakfast or brunch is such a weekend pleasure that the Eat Cheap reporters did it again. But ordering traditional breakfast items can be challenging when you are watching your weight or want to eat healthy.

I'll show you how to order and make healthier choices - so you can have your omelet and eat it too. The Times-News reporters are making better choices these days; I think they are reading my columns. Ahhhhh progress!

### **Flying J Truck Plaza**

Steve crump, I am so glad you ordered this omelet with Egg Beaters. With three eggs in addition to the sausage, bacon and cheese, the cholesterol level in this omelet would match its name: "Outrageous".

Substituting a vegetable or two for the sausage or bacon or both would be a great way to reduce the cholesterol and saturated fat even more. You did not mention whether the toast was white or whole-grain. Americans severely lack fiber in their diets, so whenever possible order the whole-grain or whole-wheat option for bread, wraps or whatever. Fiber moves fats and toxins out of your body quickly, keeping your body happy.

Steve, you pleasantly surprised me with your choice of Egg Beaters. However, next time, skip the sausage and bacon instead of the hash browns and toast. Your heart will thank you!

### **Gina's Bistro and Gifts**

Virginia, by Jove, I think you've got it! Ordering whole-wheat toast instead of the English muffin and croissant was the best choice. Choosing ham over bacon and sausage was the best choice. Ham is a leaner cut of meat but is salty, which can cause liquid or sweet cravings. Omitting the ham would reduce the saturated fat in this meal.

Ordering broccoli with your breakfast was terrific, even though the butter garnish looked excessive. Requesting the broccoli to be sautéed in olive or vegetable oil is always an option. We all need fat in our diets because not only does it help us feel satisfied, it fuels activity. However, we need good- quality fat, and if we do not have it in our diets, we will crave potato chips, French fries or chocolate. So, add some oil sauté to your diet and you will feel so much more satisfied. There is more to a healthy diet than steamed vegetables. Kids will like the sauté too.

Virginia, since you were not familiar with this menu item and the mayo-mustard sauce, it was hard to know how much they use on this sandwich. So, next time, reducing the quantity or omitting it would make this breakfast sandwich healthier.

I am impressed with how you ordered this breakfast. Way to go, Virginia.

### **The Farmhouse Restaurant**

Matt Christensen, I am proud of you for resisting the biscuits and gravy – a meal that sounded like it had your name written all over it.

And I am surprised blueberries are your favorite fruit, because they are so healthy for you. Although it is better to eat fruit in season, it is hard to resist blueberries in a waffle or pancake. Matt, since you are not a fan of sweet breakfasts, you were smart to use less syrup because of the fruit's sweetness.

Waffles and pancakes usually come garnished with butter and powdered sugar. So if you do not want the sweetness or extra fat, remember to order them without the garnishes.

It is natural to want something savory such as eggs when you order a sweet breakfast. The salt helps to balance the sweetness of a dish, which is why many people put maple syrup on their bacon or sausage.

Matt, good for you for trying something other than your favorite: bacon and eggs.

### **Riley Creek Restaurant**

It is fun to try something different for breakfast. Serving the Denver omelet as a breakfast burrito was an unusual take on the traditional omelet. The cheese, ham and eggs can add up to a lot of saturated fat and cholesterol, so only eating half of this burrito was a great idea.

A wheat or whole-grain tortilla would be a better choice than the white tortilla. Often flour tortillas are made with lard, so it is important to ask how the tortillas are made.

The freshness of the salsa and the sweetness of the orange juice helped balance the saltiness of this breakfast.

Riley Creek definitely named this meal appropriately. I hope the second half of this Big Hearty Breakfast Burrito was just as good later.

## **Chubby's**

Virginia, you get a gold star for ordering such a healthy omelet. Requesting a veggie omelet with additional broccoli instead of a meat- and cheese- filled one is a great way to reduce the saturated fat and cholesterol in this meal.

If you enjoy omelets and are concerned about cholesterol or saturated fat, ordering a veggie omelet is a great compromise. Reducing or eliminating the cheese in and on an omelet will help, too.

I know mold was not what you ordered, but don't worry, Virginia – penicillin is made from mold, so perhaps you received some health benefits.

Mold aside, this meal was the healthiest breakfast ordered.