



KID-FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

Local Spots for the Little Ones

YOUR GUIDE TO MELT-DOWN FREE DINNERS IN BLOOMINGTON

By Julie Warren

VILLAGE DELI

Dining out with little ones can be stressful, especially on vacation when you want to try a local restaurant but don't know if it's kid friendly. Don't fear: there are plenty of great local eateries in Bloomington that will happily accommodate kids' picky appetites and less-than-perfect table manners. Here are a few options.

BLOOMINGTON BAGEL COMPANY

Obviously they have delicious bagels, which are great for breakfast, but they also have a variety of sandwiches, salads and side items so it's a great place for lunch too. It's quick and tasty, and you can go as plain as your picky eater wants (plain bagel with no schmear, thank you). End the meal with a big cookie and everybody's happy. (113 N. Dunn St., 238 N. Morton St. & 913 S. College Mall Rd.)

BUB'S BURGERS AND ICE CREAM

Bub's is home to "the big ugly", a one-pound burger challenge that is definitely for grown-ups (though some kids have completed it, amazingly enough). But it's also very kid-friendly with options like mini burgers, corn dogs, grilled cheeses and even PB & J sandwiches. They also feature an ice cream parlor, and each kid gets a goodie bag with some pre-meal snacks and toys. (480 N. Morton St.)

BUCCETO'S SMILING TEETH

This is a college town, so of course there are great pizza joints aplenty. Bucceto's offers up some quality pie, with a variety of traditional and gourmet options. They also have plenty of pasta options, and a kid's menu with very reasonable prices. Both restaurants are light, open and cheery, perfect for little ones to enjoy. (115 S. SR 46 Bypass, Suite B & 350 S. Liberty Dr.)

DELICIOUS THAI KITCHEN

Most kids probably aren't too interested in trying Thai food, but this is Bloomington: there are too many great international restaurants to not list at least one for kids! So yeah, you can do the simple thing and get plain rice and maybe a chicken satay, but it's worth a shot to expose the kiddos to some new flavors like pad Thai (it's just noodles, after all). You can adjust the level of

spiciness, and this particular Thai restaurant has an airy, relaxed atmosphere so the kids won't have sensory overload. (519 S. Walnut St.)

SCOTTY'S BREWHOUSE

Okay, this is a brewhouse with Scotty's own Three Wise Men brews on tap (along with other beer and cocktails on the menu) but the food is creative and tasty. They've got all the pub favorites: burgers, sandwiches, salads and some fried goodies, plus kid sizes too and other kid-friendly choices like grilled cheese (with American, thank you!) and buttered noodles. But the very best part is that kids eat free on Tuesdays! Just sign up for their VIP club and you're ready to eat. For free! (302 N. Walnut St.)

VILLAGE DELI

This is one of Bloomington's hottest breakfast spots, and for good reason. The food is yummy, the service is quick (their mantra is "eat and get out") and the atmosphere is light and fun. Plus they serve breakfast all day, including pancakes as big as your head. So it's the perfect place for kids. (409 E. Kirkwood Ave.)

And for dessert, try these local favorites, offering ice cream, cupcakes, cookies and more!

THE CHOCOLATE MOOSE A legendary ice cream stand with traditional flavors and unique specialties, including vegan ice cream. (401 S. Walnut St.)

HARTZELL'S ICE CREAM They've got the classic flavors for the kiddos, plus gourmet creations for adults. (107 N. Dunn St.)

RAINBOW BAKERY Cookies, cupcakes, pies and donuts and they're all vegan, plus a few gluten-free varieties too. (201 S. Rogers St.)

SUGAR AND SPICE Unique cookie flavors (like the Special K chewy) plus brownies and other sweet treats. (Inside the Indiana Memorial Union)

UNDERGROUND CUPCAKE CO. & CAFÉ Cupcakes in a wide range of flavors, some fancy, some classic, so everyone is happy. (3631 W. SR 46) ■