If you only have time to eat three meals in Durham, N.C., make sure they’re here

By Dave Dombrowski

For the past decade, the food scene in Durham, N.C., has blossomed from a base of hardy Inches joints and a handful of interesting restaurants to a culinary destination where sophisticated palates are surrounded by top-notch bar programs, outstanding seasonal produce, and top-notch beer. In this week’s three-meal challenge, I’ll focus on Durham’s three most noteworthy restaurants: Mellow Mushroom, Big Star, and Hush.

Mellow Mushroom

Located in the heart of downtown Durham, Mellow Mushroom is a casual, laid-back eatery that offers a variety of pizzas, salads, and sandwiches. The atmosphere is cozy and welcoming, with exposed brick walls and a relaxed vibe that makes it perfect for a casual meal with friends or family.

Big Star

Situated in the affluent Raleigh neighborhood of Midtown, Big Star is a chic spot for those looking for a sophisticated dining experience. The menu features a variety of small plates, such as fried pickles, oysters, and truffle fries, along with a selection of entrées, including burgers, fried chicken, and steak.

Hush

Hush is a trendy newcomer to the Durham dining scene, offering a unique fusion of flavors and a vibrant, modern atmosphere. The menu includes a variety of small plates, such as crispy calamari, braised beef short ribs, and roasted root vegetables, along with a selection of entrées, including seafood and hearty meats.

Breakfast

Black Walnut Buggin’ Chew at Durham’s Breakfast in downtown Durham. Black Walnut Buggin’ is a popular Durham establishment known for its Southern-style breakfast and brunch menu. The atmosphere is cozy and welcoming, with a large selection of both sweet and savory options available. If you’re looking for a delicious breakfast in Durham, Black Walnut Buggin’ is definitely worth a visit.

Tips for dining in Durham:

- Make reservations in advance, especially during peak hours.
- Be prepared to wait for a table during busy times.
- Try to sample as many dishes as possible to get a true sense of the restaurant’s offerings.
- Consider checking out the downtown Durham food scene for a unique dining experience.

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Birch Restaurant

Birch Restaurant offers a unique and modern twist on traditional American cuisine. The menu features a variety of appetizers, such as fried green tomatoes, deviled eggs, and oysters, along with a selection of entrées, including steak, chicken, and seafood.

Leisurely Lunch Special

Leisurely Lunch Special at Birch Restaurant. Birch Restaurant offers a variety of lunch specials, such as the “Build Your Own” sandwich, which allows you to choose your preferred protein and sides.

Kadence

Kadence is a popular downtown Durham eatery known for its creative and flavorful dishes. The menu includes a variety of small plates, such as fried chicken wings, grilled chicken andouille, and fried green tomatoes, along with a selection of entrées, including burgers, fried chicken, and fish and chips.

Longbranch

Longbranch is a trendy newcomer to the downtown Durham dining scene, offering a unique fusion of flavors and a vibrant, modern atmosphere. The menu includes a variety of small plates, such as crispy calamari, braised beef short ribs, and roasted root vegetables, along with a selection of entrées, including seafood and hearty meats.

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