

Basking in the beauty at the Beachcomber Cafe in Crystal Cove

I don't know how it is that I've never eaten at The Beachcomber Cafe. It's so quintessential Orange County that it seems like every citizen of this county has had to have dined there, at least once. With fresh food and unique cocktails the cafe has quickly become one of my favorite haunts. The open-air patio offers sweeping views of the coastline and if it gets too chilly, the friendly staff will offer diners a warm blanket for their laps.

The cafe was once one of the many quaint cottages that pepper the intimate coastline of Crystal Cove State Beach. It was transformed into The Beachcomber Cafe in 2006 by restaurateur Doug Cavanaugh, of Ruby's Cafe fame. (See my interview with Doug here.) In the short time since it opened it has been acclaimed by Gayot and Open Table as "Top Outdoor Dining Experiences in the United States." Not bad and right here in our own county.

It takes a little work to get down to the cafe – either by shuttle or hoofing it – but it's well-worth the time. Get there early as the waiting lists begins to grow starting at 10 a.m. You can book a table online at Thebeachcombercafe.com.



My boyfriend, Tim, and I had loads of luck on our last visit. It was a warm and crispy clear November morning in Crystal Cove. We only waited about 15 minutes for our tiny table.

When I mentioned I had never had a Bloody Mary Tim ordered me one promptly at the Bootlegger Bar that's located directly behind the restaurant. It immediately became my favorite

cocktail and I have not had its equal since – though I have tried them on several occasions since Beachcomber.



The menu for breakfast isn't as expansive as most breakfast establishments, but what is offered is fresh, simple and fantastic! The menu rotates seasonally and always offers one omelet, scramble and frittata.

For me the specialty breakfasts are the show stealers. Apple Pecan or Coconut Macadamia Pancakes look delicious but for me, The Florentine Benedict is the clear choice for best on menu. They also offer a Traditional and Crab Cake Benedict. You can go to the Beachcomber website to see what is being served right now.



The Lowdown on The Beachcomber Cafe

Time

Breakfast is served from 7 to 11:30 a.m. Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dinner (yes dinner!) is served from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Parking

Park in the Los Trancos parking lot off PCH. The shuttle cost is \$1, one way. Kids under 12 are free.

Boozy fact

Full bar

Show stealer

The Florentine Benedict

Insider tip

The cafe offers rentals of beach essentials like beach chairs and umbrella rentals during the summer months.

Ruff-rules

No dogs on the patio

Instagram must

Shot of your cocktail from the Bootlegger Bar