

OC WEEKLY®

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FIRST BITES: BREAKFAST REPUBLIC AT UCI

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Trying to name a handful of places that solely specialize in breakfast in OC isn't an easy task. Sure, you can serve the meal, but to base your entire menu around our favorite time of day (and make it damn tasty) takes skill. So when Breakfast Republic launched this week in Irvine, we cancelled our gym session to get reacquainted with the brand. Here are a few things you should know before stopping by.

Been There, Done That

This isn't their first foray into brekkie. In fact, Irvine is location number **eight!** Founder and Owner Johan Engman is passionate about the industry, and launched his first BR spot within San Diego's North Park neighborhood in 2015 after being inspired while on vacation in Borneo. Orange County expansion is a first for Engman, as his other Republics are based out of SD. However, Costa Mesa is already in the works. They're expected to launch along what we consider the busiest street around late summer/early fall.

Where It's At

For those not quite acquainted with the University of California at Irvine (nor the plaza it's located in), here's your mini orientation to University Plaza. First off, check the parking stalls. While there are many 4-hour designated spots close to the entrance, many more are also 45-minute spots. When you consider that they don't take reservations, where you park will matter. Locate the Edwards movie theater or Trader Joe's, and you're right there. Also, they're open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. Random fact: It can also be rented out in the evenings for private events.

Their Specials Are Special

With a comprehensive menu already in place, we were a little surprised to learn there were additional tastes to learn about. For the month of May, consider the Creamsicle Mimosa or Iced Cherry Mocha to start things off. When it comes to entrees, Pork Loin Breakfast Tacos and Tres Leches Pancakes are featured. We'd like to pause for a moment to inform you that those pancakes were delish. Topped with strawberries and cream, be sure to use all the sauces it comes with. Makes all the difference.

It's All In the Details

Breakfast Republic's branding is exactly where it should be. Clothing options: check. Silly mugs: of course. Egg-themed furniture: brilliant. Instagram wall that reads "Run Cock Run": Heh. Their bar looks right into the kitchen for full transparency. Nothing to hide over there. Oh, and the house prosecco is produced just for them by way of Verona, Italy. Speaking of beverages, we also dig their kombucha and cold brew growler program. There's currently a contest involving the hashtag #restingbrunchface. Those who tag are in the running for a \$250 VIP experience, plus t-shirts for five of your favorite people.

What We Tried

Since this is the type of place we plan to frequent, we went relatively light. Our server sold us on the tres leches pancakes, but also on Jurassic Pork (not Park), which upgraded our breakfast burrito experience. The pancakes were fluffy, and our burrito was even better with the add-on. To drink, we requested a Sweetie Cockie, filled with 12-hour cold brew, half-and-half, vanilla and coffee ice cubes! It was definitely a good morning.

Breakfast Republic is located at 4213 Campus Dr., Ste. P166B, (949) 379-7177; www.breakfastrepublic.com.