

10 Best Baguettes: Chew on This

By Clare Kleinedler, Mon., Feb. 1 2010 at 7:40 AM

Those on the Atkins diet, read no further. This is for the carb-loving folk who liken finding the perfect baguette to meeting the love of his or her life. Is there anything that evokes as much happiness as a warm, crusty, slightly chewy and somewhat airy loaf of golden French bread? Baguettes, much like teen heartthrobs and political causes, can inspire complete and utter devotion by the people who love them. So here's a look at L.A.'s 10 best baguettes, in no particular order, where you can indulge your cravings.



Courtesy of Breadbar

Crusty baguettes for the taking at Breadbar

1. **La Brea Bakery**: Though a bit chewier and more dense than the standard French baguette, a number of Angelenos swear by this beloved baton of baked breadiness. The slightly moist interior is full of beautiful, large craters, perfect for cradling bread-friendly foodstuffs such as butter, jam or paté. Mixed and partially shaped by machines, each baguette is then lengthened and tapered at the ends by hand. There are two varieties: the thinner French baguette and the larger French bread baguette (which is a bit softer than the latter), and both garner the same insane dedication.
624 North La Brea Ave; Los Angeles; (323) 939-6813

2. **Breadbar**: The baguettes here are so good, you might make like Jerry Seinfeld and wrangle the last one out of the hands of a little old lady. Made with no enhancers or additives in the true artisanal style - no par-baking, no freezing - the Breadbar baguette is carefully hand manipulated, fermented, stretched, rested and scarred before being baked under the watchful eye of its baker (no timer necessary). "Our definition of a good baguette is that the crust is always crispy, the color golden brown with a nice, even shape and lots of large, emphasized cavities in the off-white colored dough," says Mohsen Beydoun, COO of Breadbar's Wholesale division.

8718 West 3rd St; Los Angeles; (310) 205-0124

10250 Santa Monica Blvd; Los Angeles; (310) 277-3770



Amy Scattergood
Bags of baguettes at Euro Pane

3. Euro Pane: Sumi Chang's cozy little café in a non-descript mini-mall in Pasadena is well known for its authentic croissants, pastries and cookies, but the first thing to disappear off its shelves is the delicately crusty and light baguette. With a slightly softer texture than the baguettes made famous by Chang's mentor, La Brea's [Nancy Silverton](#), the baguette is a popular bread choice for the café's irresistible sandwiches like pressed ham and cheese and chicken salad. But if you want a baguette to go, be prepared to wake up early. Even on a weekday, they're gone by around 10 a.m.
950 East Colorado Blvd; Pasadena; (626) 577-1828

4. [Le Pain Du Jour](#): The fantasy: A lovely park, a view of the Eiffel Tower, a picnic blanket, a bottle of red wine and you, whispering sweet nothings to your crusty, still-warm baguette just before devouring it with complete animal abandon and a slab of French butter. The baguette from Le Pain Du Jour is the stuff that twisted, Francophile dreams like these are made of, *mon amour*. Like many small bakeries in Paris, Le Pain Du Jour closes its doors as soon as the bread runs out, which even on a slow day is around 2 p.m.
828 Pico Blvd; Santa Monica; (310) 399-4870

5. [Mr. Baguette](#): Trying to get someone at Mr. Baguette to reveal even a hint of what makes its namesake product so flawless is slightly more difficult than trying to convince Paula Deen that butter is not a major food group. No wonder, considering the cult-like following the bread and sandwiches coming out of this humble little local chain enjoy. Somehow, these baguettes are hearty enough to hold the contents of Mr. Baguette's famed "Special" banh mi (mayo, paté, ham, pork meat loaf, head cheese and veg -) yet retain a fluffy, easy-to-squish-but-won't-fall-apart quality. And perhaps most importantly the crust, while crisp, will not tear up the roof of your mouth - a major requirement for any great sandwich bread.
*400 S. Atlantic Blvd #288; Monterey Park; (626) 282-9966
9661 E. Garvey Ave #101; South El Monte; (626) 575-8623
8702 E. Valley Blvd; Rosemead; (626) 288-8733*