

Rockford Dining

The American Midwest must be a very spiritual place, because the inhabitants have risen above such petty concerns as good food and drink. Rockford is not the Nadir of Midwestern dining—we can always take comfort from Minnesota and the Dakotas—but it is not much better than the regional average. After living here for several decades, I have come to know some of the better opportunities for eating reasonably well and having a good time.

Warning: *Try not to go out in groups larger than 6-8 if you do don't want to spend hours waiting for your food. Few Rockford restaurants are prepared to handle large parties during the lunch rush. If you do have a party of 10-12, split up. The waiters will try to accommodate a large party, but their politeness can be counter-productive.*

Deli Italia 3004 North Main. Open for lunch, not far from Cliffbreakers.

Hope and Anchor 5040 North Second St. Not far from Cliffbreakers is this “British-style” fish and chips place. Decent fried fish and chips, beer. Huge portions, moderate prices, spotty service.

Hai Quynh 324 7th St. Vietnamese. Best Asian food of any type in the area, but a bit, uh, unostentatious. Our favorites: Vietnamese pancake and Dim Sum appetizers (either is enough for lunch). combination bowls with egg roll and pork, wonton soup, vegetarian curry, chicken or catfish in clay pot. Surprisingly both the egg rolls and the spring rolls (with pork and shrimp) are pretty good. Closed Monday. Other OK Asian places are **Thai Hut** and **Rock Pho'd**

The Latham Tap 2402 Latham St. Not too far from Cliffbreakers. Take a trip in the WayBack Machine. Old-fashioned neighborhood bar with good sandwiches, especially steak sandwich and daily specials.

Beefaroo A local hamburger chain with a place on North Second near Riverside. It beats the national chains. The new one outlet in Highcreek Center may be the best, but overall the chain has improved.

Garrett's 1631 North Bell School Rd. On a driving range, Garrett's has a sort of country club feel. The portions are huge, and the appetizers (dynamite shrimp) big enough for a lunch. Burgers and reuben sandwich both good. Wednesday there are wine specials, which endear it to one local resident. Warning: It's a 20 minute drive from Cliffbreakers.

The Olympic Tavern 2327 North Main. It is close by and some people like it. Service is sometimes slow. Good selection of beers.

Tad's On the Rock 10 East Riverside Blvd. On the river near Cliffbreakers, a favorite dive for boaters. Strictly bar food but the best place you can walk to. If you can sit on the deck on a nice day, it can be pleasant. **CJ's** on lower East State is among the better bars for food, and **Fozzy's** in Love's Park (They defied the governor and stayed open during the false plague panic.

Midwest diner breakfast and lunches are available at the **Swedish Pancake House** in the parking lot of the hotel, **Johnny Pancakes** on East State, and **Potato Shak** on North 2nd St, Many locals swear by (I swear at!) the **Stockholm Inn** on Charles.)

If you go online or ask a desk clerk, you will hear that Rockford has fine dining establishments such as Joseph's, Stone Eagle, Woodfire Pizza, and Green Fire, Abreo, Italian restaurants like Franchesco's [sic] and Lino's. Everyone I know prefers Marc's Fusion Cafe (Asian Fusion), but they don't take reservations. Weekdays they are often free for lunch. If you want to trust Tripadvisor or Yelp, please accept my condolences in advance.