

Dining in Hampden & Woodberry

Never Run of the Mill

Just about four miles north and west of Baltimore's Inner Harbor are the neighborhoods of Hampden and Woodberry. Once home to the employees of flour and cotton mills that lined the Jones Falls in the 19th century, these areas are now better known as the source of terrific shopping and even better dining.

The highest concentration of restaurants, cafés, and bars in Hampden are located on what locals like to call "the Avenue"—West 36th Street, from Chestnut Avenue to Falls Road. Tucked between and around hair salons, vintage shops, and purveyors of fine crafts are several choices

for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Among these are Golden West Café, where one can indulge in an eclectic selection of goodies, including plenty of vegetarian options. But if you're a hard-core carnivore, Corner BYOB, down the street, might be just the place for you.

Daniela's, located in a wee storefront, features Sardinian specialties and other more-familiar Italian dishes. Most people opt for carry-out, but if you get there early enough, you can snag one of the few tables inside or out. The Food Market has more tables, but they're usually filled with boisterous diners in the mood for upscale comfort food, from Amish soft pretzels to pork schnitzels and cracker fried oysters.

Stroll off the Avenue onto Chestnut and you'll find a taste of Italy at Emporio Grano, big brother to Grano Pasta Bar on 36th. A little further down is Rocket to Venus, famous for its roasted Brussels sprouts





and its banh mi sandwich. Moving out of the neighborhood entirely, wander over a little north and west of Hampden to Woodberry, home to James Beard Award nominee Spike Gjerde's acclaimed Woodberry Kitchen, plus Birroteca, Artifact Coffee, and Union Craft Brewing. Woodberry Kitchen's vibe is hip farmhouse, but the food is upscale by merit of the great care taken in its preparation. Most of their ingredients are sourced locally, and the kitchen even does whole-animal butchery. Don't miss their house-made charcuterie or any of their flatbreads.

Birroteca, over on Clipper Mill Road, specializes in craft beers and rustic Italian food. The tender calamari alla plancha, perhaps the best calamari you'll ever eat, is a must-try, as are any of the crisp-

crusted pizzas. Do try one of the Union Craft Brewery selections, like the hoppy Duckpin Pale Ale. And if you can make it to the brewery itself, which is down the road apiece on Union Avenue, they are open to the public on Saturdays from 1-4 for tours and tastings. Non-alcoholic libations including coffee, teas, and even kombucha can be found at Artifact Coffee. They also serve simple suppers Wednesday - Saturday nights.

If you're lucky enough to be in town during the Christmas holidays, make sure to visit Hampden's own "Miracle on 34th Street." The 700 block of West 34th Street, between Keswick Road and Chestnut Street, is ablaze with Christmas lights and decorations galore; a grand finale to a day spent shopping and dining in the Hampden area. 📍

By Kathy Wielech Patterson and Neal Patterson

Authors of *Food Lovers Guide to Baltimore* (Globe Pequot 2013) and Minxeats.com

Woodberry Kitchen photos by Dusan Vuksanovic