

*A little idiosyncratic guide to eating out in Oxford based largely on my own preferences and experiences. Please be prepared for variations in prices (current as of Spring 2007)!! (Kalpen Trivedi).*

**A. Summertown** – North Oxford (hang a right outside of the house and walk about 6-8 blocks north on Banbury Road; approx. 2 miles from the City Centre)

1. Cibo, South Parade (just off Banbury Road), Summertown

Amazing Italian food – clean and modern décor, but traditional *ristorante* food (so no pizza!), several courses, expensive. You should budget for about £50 per person or so if you plan to have a couple of courses, wine, dessert, and coffee. For the pasta, nothing beats the Pappardelle al tartuffo nero (pasta with a black truffle, cream, and garlic sauce). Good salads. Lamb chops and fish pretty good too. The desserts are fab – try the hazelnut ice-cream drenched in espresso!

2. Mama Mia, South Parade, Summertown (about two doors down from above)

Very good Italian café – great pizzas and pastas. The gnocchi with ham and cream is fab! Decent house wines by the carafe. Great pizza. Their pastas are pretty good too. Their 'Med-Bread' appetizer (flat bread with olives and sun-dried tomatoes) is amazing and almost a meal in itself. About £10-15 per head without wine.

3. Greek Taverna, Banbury Road, Summertown

Delicious, homey little Greek restaurant among the Summertown shops. Nice to sit outside when the weather is clement. Good, cheap house wines. Delicious food, especially the Moussaka and the grilled halloumi! £12-15 including house wine.

4. LB's, Banbury Road

Cheap and cheery Lebanese take-away place. Lamb and lentil stew is unbelievable! £5-7 for a sandwich and a drink, or an entrée and a salad.

5. The Bakehouse, Banbury Road

Good place for hearty, cheap breakfasts, salads, sandwiches, and creamy, gooey pastries! c. £5-7 per person.

**B. Jericho** – Northwest Oxford (hang a left outside the House, walk south on Banbury Road up until Bevington Road, then take Bevington Road across to Woodstock Road, another little left for ½ a block until Observatory Road, and take Observatory Road to Walton St. This will put you right in the heart of Jericho – a funky, artistic, kinda

*edgy/kinda yuppie neighbourhood with a fantastic Arthouse Cinema – The Phoenix – and great pubs, shops, cafés, and bookshops!)*

6. Al Shami, 25 Walton Crescent, Jericho

Really good Lebanese food. £15-20 per person. A bit full of themselves. They have an off-shoot on Park End street with equally good food and less officious service. Also Tarbouch on George St is a good, cheap Lebanese café to have lunch at.

7. Le Petit Blanc, Walton St, Jericho

Affordable (by British Standards) fine dining. Oxford city's only establishment from the stable of award winning Michelin starred restaurateur Raymond Blanc. His signature restaurant, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons is in Great Milton just outside of Oxford in a wonderful historic manor house. Expect to spend close to £30 at lunch at the Petit Blanc and about £80 at dinner. Prices at the Manoir, £120 for lunch and upwards of £300 at dinner.

8. Branca, Jericho

Italian Tapas bar. Urban chic – cold and angular décor (sort of like Mia Madonna in Athens) – lovely food. Great value. You'd be well-advised to book Thurs-Sunday nights. £25-40.

***C. South of the House, but not quite City Centre (sort of around the Little Clarendon St, St Giles area, where Banbury and Woodstock meet)***

9. Gee's Brasserie, Banbury Road (mid-way between House & city centre)

Fabulous, expensive food. Oxford's answer to 5 & 10. Innovative nouvelle anglaise cuisine in a fab atmosphere, good wine list, and great service. Can't recommend what to eat because their menu changes seasonally. All I can say is if they have the clams with samphire, you must eat them! £50 or so per person.

10. Bageecha, North Parade St (halfway up the Banbury road between City centre and the House)

Decent Indian restaurant. Do a great Sunday night 3 course deal for £10. Affordable, if crappish wine.

11. Chez Gaston, North Parade St

Cheap and cheery French crêperie. Delicious desserts. £12-15. Can get very hot in there – badly ventilated.

12. Brown's Restaurant, southern end of Woodstock Road

Stuck in the mid-90s, large and busy restaurant, with good, if unimaginative food. Go there for the chicken pot pie, or the livers and bacon in onion gravy. Cramped, but efficient and friendly bar with potent martinis! £15-20.

13. Café Rouge, Little Clarendon St.

Chain French café, with dependably good salads and desserts (my friend Juliet and I had a Sunday tradition of making an afternoon trip there to eat their chocolate mousse!). £12-15 without wine. The Duke of Cambridge next door is Oxford's only air-conditioned pub serving expensive cocktails and bottled beers, which keeps the draft drinking crowd out, which is what you want sometimes!

14. Porter's, Little Clarendon St.

Good wine list, interesting tapas. £12-15 per head. Not recommended if you're really hungry!

### ***D. City Centre***

15. Ask/Zizzi, George Street, City Centre

Slightly more expensive at dinner than at lunch. In my opinion, these two informal Italian eateries, owned by the same people, used to be brilliant, but have deteriorated somewhat of late. If I'm having pizza, I'd rather just go to Pizza Express in the city centre – much better pizza and fab ambience (more below). If you're up at the Residential Center, I wouldn't make a trip in when you could just go to Mama Mia (see above)! That said, they're both good value for money, and despite crap service, the food is pretty good. Zizzi is overall a couple of ££ more expensive than Ask. Zizzi's pizza is a little bit thinner and crisper and they have a better choice of pastas than Ask. At Ask, get the Tuna pasta, the spaghetti with meatballs, the Genovese pizza (courgettes, pesto, aubergines, olives), or the diavolo (pepperoni, hot peppers), or the Emilia. Ask at Lunch would be £6-10 (depending on water/wine, etc.) and £10-15 at dinner. Zizzi, £ 8-12 at lunch and £15-18 at dinner.

16. Pizza Express, Golden Cross, Cornmarket Street

Great Pizza and salad place. Very nice ambience in a medieval building that used to be an inn. Shakespeare might well have stayed there. Right above the Covered Market – great for stopping off to lunch between shopping. Really nice bar downstairs too where you can wait for people or a table if you have to. Good tomato juice. I love the pizza Soho (roquette, fresh garlic, and shaved parmesan) or the Veneziana (capers, raisins, pine-nuts).

17. Liaisons, Castle Street (dodgy western end of City Centre)

The best Chinese food you will ever eat! Their lunchtime dimsum is not to be missed. It is imperative, though, that you get there by about 11.45 and that you get your order in by about 12.10. If you miss that window, trust me, you'll be there until 3.30 in the afternoon. You can eat and eat and eat, but you definitely want to try the Char Siu pork buns, the Glutinous Rice with Pork, the Singapore Vermicelli, the Golden Rolls with Prawn, the cuttlefish cakes, the turnip paste (fabulous greasy fried pieces of turnip & bacon), vegetable or prawn Chow Feung, and the similar long soft white rolls with prawns, the prawn dumplings with chives. The more of you there are the cheaper it will be. Be prepared to

use chopsticks, make a mess, and have fun. Always just under £10 per person including service – infallible calculation this; I must have had over 50 meals there!. Not great for vegetarians who don't eat fish or seafood.

18. Chiang Mai Kitchen, High Street (city centre)

Totally fabulous Thai food – named Thai restaurant of Europe several years now. Impossible to get in without reservation no matter what day of week unless you go at 6 p.m. Good for lunch too and probably easier without booking. Great vegetarian menu. Fabulous curries. Try the whole fried fish in sweet chilli sauce...unbelievable!!

19. Prêt à manger, High Street (city centre)

Great sandwich shop for lunch. Their Pret salad (humus and vegetables) is amazing, as is their chocolate fudge cake. The crayfish and roquette sandwich is good too. £4-6.

20. Fasta Pasta, Covered Market

Fab Italian delicatessen with gorgeous expensive antipasti that will leave you begging for more. Their sandwiches, however, are very cheap (£2.50-3.50) – this is my favourite sandwich shop in Oxford. Try the mozzarella, grilled aubergines, and harisa on tomato ciabatta (bring a breath-mint!).

***E. East Oxford (Cowley Road - best take a taxi – or a bus into city centre and then another one out onto the Cowley Road, or it will take you about 45 minutes to walk there!)***

21. Aziz, Cowley Road, East Oxford

Best Indian food in Oxford. Middle of the road – dinner with wine should be about £22-25. Absolutely must try the fish there. Also cream and black pepper chicken is divine. Lamb boti is out of the world – must have with Dal Tarka. Lamb with pumpkin is really fantastic too! Really good vegetarian dishes – the Sarso Baigan (aubergines with mustard seed) is fabulous.

22. Pizzeria Trattoria Mario e Mario, Cowley Road near the Bingo

I know – cheesy name, but some of the best pizza and pasta you will eat outside of Italy, and really cheap too! The food never tastes the same twice in a row – just depends on which grandma or aunt is in the kitchen, but it's wonderful each time! £10 or so.

***E. Castle Area - The newly re-developed area around Oxford's medieval castle and Victorian prison towards the Western edge of the City Centre has a number of new restaurants and bars.***

23. Carluccio's

Wonderful Italian deli and restaurant. The take-away section is as tempting as the menu! Informal atmosphere. £15 or so per person.

24. Krispy Kreme

Oxford's only Donut shop should you feel like you need a taste of home!

25. The Living Room

A very trendy new "piano" bar full of beautiful people wearing black. They do food too, but I've never been able to last long enough there to actually eat something. Good cocktails, although the bar staff can be over-twirly!

26. Pizza Express

A less atmospheric version of the same restaurant to be found on Cornmarket St. Same menu and quality of food as the original Pizza Express discussed above.

27. La Tasca

Variable Spanish tapas bar. Good wines. £20-22 per person in the evening.