

Brunch Classic: Day by Day

One of Philadelphia's best replies to the decline of the diner has been the rise of the funky bruncherie, with standbys such as **Sam's Morning Glory Diner** (735 S. 10th St.); the **Sabrina's** chain (910 Christian St.; 1804 Callowhill St.; 227 N. 34th St.; 50 E Wynnewood Rd., Wynnewood; 714 Haddon Ave., Collingswood); **Hawthorne's** (738 S. 11th St.); and **Honey's Sit 'N Eat** (800 N. Fourth St.; 2101 South St.). One of my favorites, though, is also one of Center City's oldest restaurants, **Day By Day** (2101 Sansom St.). Founded in 1981 by Robin Barg, initially around the concept of take-out box lunches and catering, this cafe morphed into an unpretentious neighborhood standby for earnest, scratch-cooked lunch and brunch. There are tall blackboard menus of appealing daily specials such as cauliflower-kale Gruyere scrambles, deep dish quiche du jour, creative stuffed french toast, oven-fried chicken tossed salads with buttermilk dressing, and an eggs Benedict with smoked salmon over the irresistible lacy crunch of fresh latkes.



The latkes eggs Benedict at Day By Day. (TIM TAI / Staff Photographer)

"I was never trendy," Barg says, even if, in those early days, some customers mistook her red-bliss potato salad for apples. Her children are now involved in the operation, helping to keep the menu current with fresh-baked kouign-amanns and mochi muffins to go along with the old-school pecan pie and carrot cake. With more than 300 meals served to a diverse crowd on a busy weekend day from its 60 seats — including many savvy brunchers who bring their own splits of Champagne to pair with the perfect blueberry pancakes and chorizo-sweet potato hash — this restaurant renaissance classic remains as vibrant as ever.