

# BAGELS BY THE SEA

This Seaside restaurant will more than meet your cravings

Sometimes nothing else will suffice: You need coffee and a bagel.

On the North Coast, however, that's easier said than done — at least when it comes to finding a half-decent bagel. Besides big box grocers like Safeway and Costco, fresh bagels are dang-near hard to come by.

Helping filling that round, supple, reassuringly chewy void is Seaside's Bagels by the Sea. The place has done this yeoman's work for over a decade. And, almost wherever you are, when you find yourself with bagel-in-hand, there's a good chance Bagels by the Sea made it. As a wholesaler, Bagels by the Sea provides numerous coffee shops and the like with the donut's savory cousin.

Each morning at the high-ceilinged bank-turned-bakery a myriad of bagels are baked. There are the standbys — like onion and cinnamon raisin — to more au courant variations, such as asiago, pumpnickel and bacon-cheddar. The bagels are separated into three tiers: plain for \$1, "fancy" (like garlic or poppy seed) for \$1.25, and "designer" (like pepper jack or butter nut crunch) for \$1.50. They're all moderately sized, kettle-boiled, and not overly oily. They're firm, hearty and generally robust. And while they won't cause you to rethink the bagel itself, nor take the crown as the best you've ever had, Bagels by the Sea's offerings will more than suffice when that hankering comes.

Regular cream cheese costs \$1. Flavored cream cheeses — like strawberry, olive and pimento, sun-dried tomato pesto and so on — are \$2. All of the cream cheeses I tried were of a light, easily spreadable consistency, just short of runny. The cream cheese flavors accurately appropriated the characteristics of their sources. The herb and garlic, for instance, was enough to make me wary of my breath for the rest of the afternoon. Then there are the sandwiches. Many offer a protein and roughage, like turkey, tomato, onions and mustard and so on. A few go off the beaten path.

From the breakfast bagels, I tried the Brunch Bagel (\$6.75) and the Goodmorning Santa Fe (\$5.25). While it's my own fault for assuming and not reading closely enough, I remain stupefied that the brunch bagel — with bacon, avocado, tomato and Tillamook cheddar cheese — doesn't come with eggs. The otherwise adequate sandwich cries out for them.

The Santa Fe had eggs in abundance, light and fluffy, about an inch thick. And while the tomato-based salsa included some chopped green

chilies, when I think Santa Fe I think purely green chili, no tomato. With all that salsa — plus cream cheese and the moisture of eggs — the bagel should've been toasted much, much more. It got soggy fast. In the end, I wished I'd just kept it simple and gotten the simple Eggle (\$5.25), which came with eggs, cheese and choice of breakfast meat. (Or, conversely, that the darn Brunch bagel came with eggs! It really should!)

I sampled a few of the more lunchtime-y sandwiches as well. The Open-Faced New Yorker was my favorite by far. Much like the Lox bagel on the breakfast menu, the New Yorker adds tomato and red onions to the cream cheese, capers and lox. (For only 50 cents more than the Lox it's a no-brainer: Get the New Yorker.) I had it on a focaccia bagel — which was more taut bagel than egg, spongy focaccia — and I appreciated the added saltiness. The brined salmon was velvety smooth, and the onion, capers and tomatoes of-



The Brunch Bagel is adequate with bacon, avocado, tomato and Tillamook cheddar cheese, but it cries out for some eggs.

The Western Bar-B-Q Bagel is a heavy, messy lunch choice.

fered nice bite against the creamy cheese and buttery fish.

The Western Bar-B-Q (\$6.75) offered a choice between roast beef and ham. I went with the roast beef, which was thickly sliced, and thankfully free of any extra fat. The cheese was nicely melted, the barbecue sauce not too sweet, and the addition of onions offered some critical edge. All together, the sandwich was heavy. A lot of that was due to the denseness of the bagel itself, especially after it sopped up the barbecue sauce. And, as barbecue is wont to be, the Western Bar-B-Q was supremely messy. Every bite left both hands and cheeks ruddy with sticky sauce, in need of napkins and finger-licking.

Indeed, neither the Western Bar-B-Q nor the Santa Fe could or should be eaten in the car,



which is a legitimate concern since Bagels by the Sea offers drive-thru service.

There's more than bagels, though I can't say I was enticed by the pint-sized plastic containers of chilled potato and pasta salad. I did enjoy, however, the very bagel-y, gooey-centered, sugar-coated Strusels (\$1.50, available in blueberry, raspberry and apple). I also tried the yogurt, fruit and homemade granola. The granola itself was nicely spiced and crunchy fresh. But there wasn't enough of it — after pouring it into the yogurt it was a like an unsatisfying treasure hunt. At least three or four times the granola would be necessary for an adequate balance. The pumpkin cake (\$2) was a simple delight, similar to carrot cake with its spongy texture and sweet cream cheese frosting. It was also a good size for the money. The smoothies, however, should be avoided. They use no real fruit, just concentrated syrupy juice, water and ice.

Then, finally, there's the coffee. Bagels by the Sea serves Seattle's Best, and the espresso shots I had were pulled properly, bold and strong. (Though surely it wouldn't hurt to add some more local roasts.)

Nonetheless, the coffee gets the job done. And so do the bagels. Consider the cravings met.

## mouth OF THE COLUMBIA

COAST WEEKEND'S LOCAL RESTAURANT REVIEW

Story and photos by THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA • [mouth@coastweekend.com](mailto:mouth@coastweekend.com)

### Bagels by the Sea

Rating: ★ ★ ★

210 S. Holladay Drive, Seaside

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**HOURS:** 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily

**PRICE:** \$ – Bagels and bagel sandwiches run from \$1 to \$7.75

**SERVICE:** Helpful, cherubic teenagers and a drive-thru window

**VEGETARIAN / VEGAN OPTIONS:** Vegetarians should do well

**DRINKS:** Espresso, coffee, tea, bottled juice and soda

#### KEY TO RATINGS

- ★ poor
- ★★ below average
- ★★★ good & worth returning
- ★★★★ excellent
- ★★★★★ outstanding, the best in the Columbia-Pacific region