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Raymond's strong culinary background is evident when you taste the depth of flavors in each dish at Mother's from-scratch kitchen. She described her approach, "For me with Mother's, we don't necessarily call it a health food restaurant, but it's good for you food. You are going to leave here feeling good. You're not going to feel super weighed down. We try to use as much organic and sustainably sourced product as we can and try to keep our portion sizes down. You're not going to get a giant plate of french fries." Raymond doesn't use a ton of cream or butter. Rather than offer specific gluten-free dishes, all items can be made according to the diner's needs and wants — gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, etc., just ask when ordering.

This last year has brought changes to Mother's. The Galveston location has expanded to a full menu, and there are now just two locations — one near Costco on the east side and one on the west side. The downtown kitchen was located next to the Oxford Hotel. It closed about a year ago for reasons outside the pandemic.

The west Bend location was a Mother's Juice Cafe, but after 22 years in business, it was time to renovate. The Galveston eatery has been closed for a remodel and reopened on March 17.

It has an unmistakable new look inside and out. Replacing the wooden exterior is an aqua, chartreuse and white wall. Matching furniture set next


**Mother's Kitchen on the Westside has a new look.**

to a long fire pit and small rock fountain invites us to enjoy sunny days and smoothies. Not only is it a facelift, inside and out, it now has a full kitchen. As the restaurant was able to upcycle the tables, cabinetry, countertop and fixtures, it now looks much like the downtown location. While it is airy and clean and gives a healthy feel, I have to admit to missing the sofas and comfy chairs where I'd curl up settling in to meet a friend for a smoothie or coffee and a bagel.

**Breakfast**

Aside from the menu, there are a smattering of baked goodies like banana bread and bagels available for a

lighter breakfast. The Good Morning Sunshine has been available at Mother's from the start and is popular. I chose an egg dish from the list of breakfast sandwiches and wraps and a sweet bowl.

The Perfectly Sunny is two organic perfectly cooked sunnyside eggs atop a sweet potato-kale hash with caramelized onions and blistered tomatoes. Like Mother's bowls, the hash is where Chef Raymond's talent really shines, exhibiting a depth of flavors. The variety of sweetness from the sweet potato and onions are balanced with a bit of acid from the tomatoes, plus earthy avocado and bright mint pesto.

Oatmeal is an unexpected place to find a complexity of flavors. Yet, the Chai Oatmeal is a tasty mix of sweet, savory and tart. It may be the best oatmeal I've had at a restaurant. It starts with steel-cut oats and healthy chia seeds; it is cooked with chai that adds a cinnamon, brown sugar flavor, and hemp milk to make it creamy. It is topped with sliced almonds that enhance the nuttiness of the other ingredients. Fresh strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries bring tartness that counters the creamy sweetness. It's finished off with real maple syrup.

**Lunch**

From the wraps and sandwiches section of the menu, I chose the Mother Clucker. This is no typical chicken sandwich. It starts with a basic juicy chicken breast, fresh greens and avocado. Pickled onions brighten the flavors. Smoked gouda cheese and ro-

**Mother's Kitchen**

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mesco add a rich, earthy smokiness. Romesco is often made with a blend of smoked paprika, chili powder for a bit of spice and nuts, contributing to a wonderful blend of satisfying flavors.

Since I don't typically think of a burger when I go to Mother's, I had to try the Burger She Wrote. The burger item changes regularly, as they offer different types of meat and toppings. For the opening, it was a teriyaki turkey burger. The burger is mixed with Asian seasonings like lemongrass, ginger and scallions, so it pairs well with Sri Lankan style pineapple chutney that adds both a little heat and sweetness. Grilled red onion adds to the sweet balance. It's topped with Swiss cheese and mayo on a Big Ed's brioche bun.

Both the burger and sandwich are served with a "side of Mother's love." I wasn't fond of the day's offering. It was a slaw with shaved Brussels sprouts and cabbage. While it tasted farm fresh, it was too bitter for my palate. I would have been happier with a side offered another day — a Moroccan lentil salad with shaved carrots and golden tandoori spice.

As I've tried many rice and quinoa-based bowls, the savory Renee's Roasted Chicken stood out as it is served over creamy polenta. The shaved Brussels sprouts were deglazed in Bragg's amino acid to add earthiness and a salty balance to the sprouts' bitterness and contrast to the gentle polenta. Tender chunks of roasted chicken were laid atop the polenta, its mustard rub was also a punch to the taste buds. Spinach with a grilled lemon vinaigrette added another dimension that cut into the creamy polenta flavor, and goat chèvre added coolness to the biting tastes on the tongue.

If you are a Mother's Kitchen regular, you won't find anything you aren't used to seeing from Mother's.

For those on the west side, the remodeled location is a lovely new spot to get the full Mother's menu. And, it's well worth a visit if you've never been to Mother's.

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**Mustard rubbed tender chicken atop creamy polenta in Renee's Roasted Chicken.**