



It might be Pancake Day, but crumpets are what everyone is talking about as the British staple has been elevated to a restaurant-worthy dish

WORDS: JENNY TREGONING ILLUSTRATION: JO BIRD

Words you may associate with crumpets: oozy, buttery, comforting. Words you probably don't: Michelin star, fine dining, tasting menu. But the tables have turned for the British classic. Crumpets are officially cool. It all started last year, when chef Tom Brown unveiled a shrimp crumpet on the menu at his restaurant

Cornerstone in London's Hackney. He was soon joined by Yotam Ottolenghi, who introduced a much-Instagrammed lobster crumpet toast to the menu at new opening Rovi. "No one else was doing them at the time and I thought that should change," says Brown. "I loved the idea of two humble ingredients coming together and creating something really special. People have been eating crumpets since childhood – nostalgia's a powerful thing."

And that nostalgic pull has been inspiring chefs across the country. From Edinburgh to Birmingham, gourmet crumpets are appearing on everything from inventive brunch boards to entire courses on tasting menus. Why restrict your crumpet to a smear of plain old butter when you could top it with wagyu brisket or halloumi and smoked chilli jam? Turn over for *Stylist's* pick of the coolest crumpets and prepare to feel very hungry.

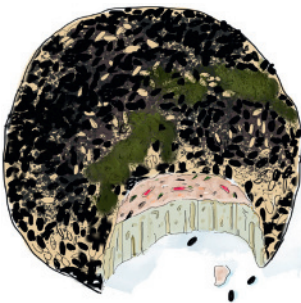




THE NOSTALGIC TWIST

When *MasterChef: The Professionals* winner Anton Piotrowski's wife was pregnant, her craving for egg crumpets inspired a dish at his restaurant, Röski: a wagyu fat crumpet with hog's pudding and a quail's egg.

Try it: Röski, Liverpool, L1; roskirestaurant.com



THE INSTA-STAR

The crumpet lobster toast at Rovi, Ottolenghi's latest London opening, is as beautiful as it is delicious. A spin on prawn toast, this decadent snack is topped with lobster meat, coated with sesame seeds and served with a kumquat and chilli sauce.

Try it: Rovi, London, W1A; ottolenghi.co.uk/rovi



THE VEGAN ONE

Ambulo, a stylish cafe from Matt Helders (of the Arctic Monkeys) and the group behind award-winning bar Public, has a whole crumpet menu. The Korean fried chicken deserves a mention, but the one laden with roast peaches and vegan yoghurt is the star.

Try it: Ambulo, Sheffield, S1; weareambulo.com



THE NEW BRUNCH ESSENTIAL

The natural successor to eggy bread is this egg-dipped crumpet on the brunch menu at Wayland's Yard cafe in Birmingham. The crumpet is dipped in a secret egg and herb mix, fried, then topped with thick slices of grilled halloumi, a dollop of homemade smoked chilli jam, fresh chilli and ketchup. You can also add bacon, chorizo or smashed avocado for an additional fee (we *highly* recommend that you do). Originally a special at the cafe's Worcester outpost, the dish proved so popular with customers it is now a permanent fixture on the menu. We can see why.

Try it: Wayland's Yard, Birmingham, B4; waylandsyard.com



THE MEAT FEAST

Taking a very British tradition and adding its own Japanese twist is Cottonopolis – nestled inside a beautiful grade II listed building in Manchester's Northern Quarter – with its inventive brunch menu. Skip straight past the avocado on sourdough and order the standout dish: wagyu brisket crumpets. These beefy beauties are served with poached eggs, onion ponzu and a tangy sake mustard sauce (like hollandaise, but better) – perfect for soaking all the way through that delicious, springy crumpet.

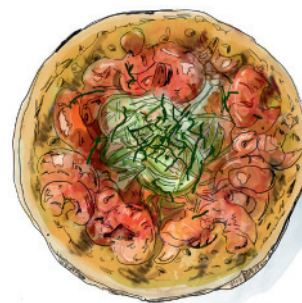
Try it: Cottonopolis, Manchester, M1; cottonopolis-nq.com



THE HIGH-END HIT

Want proof that the crumpet has reached gourmet status? Enter Michelin-starred Winteringham Fields. When head chef Gareth Bartram put bacon and Marmite custard crumpets on the menu, we booked our next UK break...

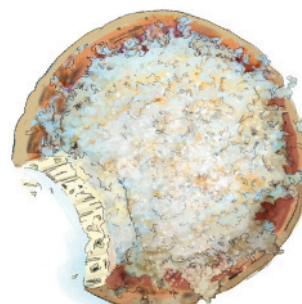
Try it: Winteringham Fields, North Lincolnshire, DN15; winteringhamfields.co.uk



THE TRENDSETTER

The one that started it all. This crumpet is baked fresh daily by Cornerstone pastry chef Kelly Cullen then piled with potted shrimp, parsley and kohlrabi. Chef Tom Brown updated it for 2019 with large prawns, a good excuse to go back for more.

Try it: Cornerstone, London, E9; cornerstonehackney.com



THE SOUPED-UP SIDE DISH

We have been known to spread nut butter on crumpets, but The Little Chartroom takes it a step further, topping them with grated walnut as a side to celeriac soup.

Try it: The Little Chartroom, Edinburgh, EH7; thelittlechartroom.com

