

On The Menu

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Claire's on Cedros

- 246 N. Cedros Ave., Solana Beach
- (858) 259-8597 ■ www.clairesoncedros.com
- **The Vibe:** Eco-friendly, eclectic, casual, relaxed
- **Signature Dishes:** Caprese Frittata, Pumpkin Clairecakes, Divorciados, Fried Green Tomato Sandwich, Sweet Potato Parmesan Fries
- **Open Since:** 2009
- **Reservations:** Recommended for parties of six or more, weekdays only
- **Patio Seating:** Yes ■ **Take Out:** Yes
- **Happy Hour:** No
- **Hours:**
6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Friday
7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday



Fried Green Tomato Sandwich, with a side of Sweet Potato Fries.



Eggs Benedict, topped with homemade hollandaise sauce.

Eco-friendly dining puts Claire's on Cedros on the national map!



Claire's on Cedros guests may await seating on the patio or on benches near bike racks in front of the restaurant.



A lamp made from wire whisks and ladles hangs over the baked goods.



Eclectic furnishings can be seen inside Claire's, such as the bird's nest lamps and a cow portrait. PHOTOS BY KELLEY CARLSON

BY KELLEY CARLSON

From its organic ingredients to its LEED Platinum-certified building, Claire's on Cedros is definitively "green."

Some of it's obvious: The majority of the landscaping is edible, such as the cardamom grown in the back patio's whimsically decorated central garden, surrounded by colorful insect sculptures. Plenty of windows inside cut energy use by providing natural lighting and ventilation. And of course, recyclable containers are used for takeout.

But some of the eco-friendly aspects are relatively hidden jewels. Recycled blue jeans serve as treasured insulation; bricks salvaged from buildings that were on the grounds of Petco Park became prized materials for Claire's interior.

Such features enabled the restaurant to be recognized as the first in San Diego to receive the U.S. Green Building Council's highest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, and one of only several in the United States.

To complement the environmental components, eclectic elements were incorporated into the interior design. A lamp created from wire whisks and ladles hangs over delectable goods for sale that are baked in-house; a nearly human-sized turner utensil stands upright on a wall.

The atmosphere is so casual, guests have come in their pajamas.

"We wanted to make it feel like home instead of a restaurant," said Claire Allison, who co-owns the establishment with Terrie Boley.

But the building isn't the only reason

On The Menu Recipe

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■ This week: Claire's Caprese Frittata

customers from across the county are drawn to Claire's; Allison is one talented chef. She uses organic ingredients "whenever possible," and obtains meat and dairy products from farmers who raise their animals humanely and without hormones. Claire's makes its own sauces, salad dressings, jams and even cheese, and the food is "pretty much prepared from scratch," Allison said.

"There's not a lot of canned products in the kitchen," she added. "It's mostly about knowing what's in the food. What's important is knowing that it's healthful."

The menu also changes quarterly, depending on the availability of ingredients. Breakfast is served all day, while lunch starts at 11:30 a.m.

Among the current specialties offered are the Divorciados, two eggs your way on corn or flour tortillas with black beans, queso fresco, grilled green onions, guacamole, salsa fresca, tomatillo and rancho sauce; and the Chicken Bahn Mi

Sandwich, consisting of grilled Vietnamese marinated chicken thighs, pickled daikon radish and carrots, butter lettuce, tomato, jalapeno, cilantro and mayonnaise on a homemade baguette.

Allison offers some tips for first-time customers. If it's raining, sit inside next to a window, where it's "very cozy." But if it's one of Southern California's trademark sunny days, choose a spot on the patio next to the fountain or under a tree.

Next, select a coffee beverage such as a caramel latte or mocha. The restaurant makes its own ganache for the mocha; the lattes contain homemade caramel that Allison prepares.

For the main dish, order the award-winning Original Clairecakes. Multigrain and pumpkin options are also available, and they come in short stack, tall stack or a combination with eggs and your choice of meat.

Guests who desire to take Claire's goods home with them can opt for takeout or buy trademarked goods from the store. Items include pancake mix, granola, multigrain hot cereal, jams, and the pear mostarda that is an ingredient in the Tuscan Pork Loin Sandwich. Catering is also available.

While reservations can be made during weekdays for parties of six or more, they are not accepted during the weekends. However, customers can call Claire's when they are on their way over, to be put on a waiting list. There's typically a wait at lunch during the week, and between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the weekends, Allison said. The slowest time tends to be 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays.