

The Grand Strand's Top 10 Most Healthy Restaurants

by Judi Burton



Myrrtle Beach has an unbelievable number of restaurants that cater to the tastes and whims of the typical beach tourist. However, it is difficult to find a variety of options for the picky eater looking for healthfulness or special needs. *Natural Awakenings* has compiled a list of our favorite local healthy eateries to inspire you to support these establishments that “get it.” The criteria we looked for when we made our selection include sustainability; buying local; serving whole farm-raised foods; and offering choices for the vegan, vegetarian, dieting, gluten free and allergic diner. Not to mention, the food served at these fine venues is out-of-this-world delicious.

Bombay at the Beach

Indians believe cows are sacred, so you won't find any “holy cows” on the menu; but you will find lamb, goat, chicken and seafood. The smell of curry permeates the entire neighborhood and pulls you in by your nose. A white tablecloth setting might intimidate the low-budget eater, but it shouldn't. The prices are very reasonable for the high quality of food and service. There are plenty of dishes for vegetarians and vegans, and there is a buffet as well. 702 N Kings Hwy, Myrtle Beach; 843-444-9090. Their menu can be found on *Urbanspoon.com*.

Lulu's Café

This breakfast, lunch and dinner café boasts an unobstructed view of the beach in a brand new energy-efficient building. Lulu's recycles boxes and plastics, and

even gives wine bottles to the local art company Groovy Green Glass. The managers post their utility bills for their employees to see, so that they'll be inspired to keep the costs down. A wide variety of vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free dishes are available, and they will even separate the egg whites for you. Speaking of eggs, theirs comes from Loris, and their crabmeat is also local. The bread, which comes from Benjamin's Bakery, is made fresh daily, and they can make anything allergy free, except for nuts. (They use a lot of peanut butter and the chocolate-hazelnut spread Nutella.) The prices are very low, and the atmosphere is bright and cheery. Favorite dish: Green Eggs and Ham, which includes ham, eggs, pesto, tomatoes and fresh mozzarella, \$6.50. Tell them *Natural Awakenings* sent you. Facebook: Lulu's Café Myrtle Beach; 1903 N Ocean Blvd, Myrtle Beach; 843-712-1890.

Froyoz

Finally, a dessert place that won't make you feel guilty. Located at Broadway at the Beach, this recently opened frozen yogurt paradise offers only low-fat or nonfat choices that are simply delightful. You can make your own combination of active culture frozen yogurt, like “Grandma's Pumpkin Pie,” “Skinny Vanilla” or “Peanut Butter and Skinny Chocolate.” Mention *Natural Awakenings* and get your first 4 ounces at the unbeatable price of “free.” Trust me, that's all it will take to get you hooked. *FroyozUSA.com*; 1316 Celebrity Circle, Broadway at the Beach, Myrtle Beach; 843-444-COOL.

Mellow Mushroom

This place is fun and full of alternative food for picky eaters. You can get a huge pizza, like the new Holy Shitake Pie, which has three different types of mushrooms, caramelized onions, garlic aioli, black truffle oil, Montamore and mozzarella cheese; or if you're not that hungry, maybe just a half tempeh hoagie with marinated and grilled tempeh on fresh bread and grilled mushrooms, onions, green peppers, pesto mayo, lettuce, tomatoes and

sprouts. Huge selections of craft beers are available and the entire inside of the restaurant is nonsmoking. Mellow Mushroom also does a lot of charities every year for children. Roger Chestnut, the general manager, says, "We hear you loud and clear and want you to know we have gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian and allergy-free options for people who have food restrictions." Mention *Natural Awakenings* and get 10 percent off your next meal. *MellowMushroom.com*; 1571 21st Ave N, Myrtle Beach; 843-444-1122.

Bay Naturals

Most people who have never been inside this establishment think it's just a health food market, but the truth is a large portion of Bay Naturals is a deli—and a very good one at that. Grab a *Natural Awakenings* and sit down at one of the inside or outside tables for a delightful curry chicken salad sandwich, complete with lettuce, tomatoes and sprouts—all preservative and antibiotic free, no added hormones—with a side of quinoa and an organic iced tea. Top off your lunch with a shot of wheatgrass for a healthy oxygen boost that will keep you going for the rest of the day. There are options for everyone, and most of the choices are organic. Bay Naturals is now serving breakfast, too, much to the delight of its fiercely loyal customers who eat there every day. *BayNaturals.com*; 7611 N Kings Hwy, Myrtle Beach; 843-448-0011. See ad, back page.

Habibi's Café and Lebanese Market

As you walk in, you'll be pleasantly greeted by smells like saffron and spices; and you'll feel as if you've stepped into a market in Morocco. Huge jars of stuffed grape leaves and tahini sauce line the shelves as you make your way to the counter. The menu is brief, but everything is made to order and extremely yummy. A veggie plate with falafels and baba ganoush is brought to your table as you decide which aloe juice you want to imbibe with your meal at the drink cooler. The cooler next to it has Greek

yogurts and hard-to-find halal meat, which is the Moslem equivalent of kosher meat—meaning the animals were raised and killed humanely, and have not been given antibiotics or hormones. Pickled radishes refresh your palate after your meal. Before leaving, check out other hard-to-find items like olive oil soap, dried fruits, Turkish coffee and dried mint leaves for tea. Tell them *Natural Awakenings* sent you. 3310 Waccamaw Blvd, Myrtle Beach; 843-236-0150.

The Humble Crumb

Urbanspoon has rated this small pizza shack the number one pizza place in South Carolina for many months. It is well deserved. Linn and Stefan Wikoski run their little slice of heaven with love, and you can taste it in the food. This restaurant has certified humanely raised beef, kept without using antibiotics or hormones. All of the food is made in-house including the salad dressings and the fresh bread. They boast that there is absolutely zero chemical additives or preservatives in their food. The artisan pizzas are phenomenal, and they hold the title for the best burger I've ever eaten. All of the food is made to order. Mention *Natural Awakenings* and get a free cannoli with the purchase of two entrees. *TheHumbleCrumb.com*; 2521 Highmarket St, Georgetown; 843-546-7090.

Perrone's Gourmet Market, Café and Wine Bar

This restaurant has just reopened after a very long year of a move and renovations. The once tiny establishment is now a grand 3,000 square feet. The menu looks like it's straight from the Bravo TV show *Top Chef*. For instance, there is an entire portion devoted just to eggs, titled "Sexy Eggs." These "ain't yo' momma's eggs." Here is a taste: Raviolo al Uovo—Each enormous raviolo houses a whole, soft egg yolk, along with a ricotta and spinach filling; cut it open, just like sliding your fork into a perfectly poached egg, and the yolk oozes out joining the pool of browned truffle butter, Parmigiano and shaved truffles in a single marbled sea of deliciousness. Is your mouth water-

ing yet? That is not the breakfast menu, by the way. There are plenty of vegetarian dishes and many organic options. If you are an adventurous eater, this is the place to be. *PerronesMarket.com*; 13302 Ocean Hwy (Hwy 17), Litchfield/Pawleys Island; 843-235-9193.

Bliss

This restaurant is owned and run by chef Ernest Bledsoe, who studied at Johnson and Wales Culinary School but received most of his training from the famous Café Max in Miami, which changes its menu almost daily. Bliss boasts a menu bursting with locally produced fresh agriculture. Its lettuces, herbs and much of its produce comes from Inlet Culinary Garden, located right around the corner. The food is never frozen, and the menu switches often according to the season. Ninety percent of the menu is gluten free, and you are encouraged to ask for your own vegetarian or vegan creation, as long as the ingredients are available. Try the Stuffed Baby Pumpkin with lobster and vanilla risotto, butternut squash veloute and toasted pumpkin seeds. *True-Bliss.com*; 4606 Hwy 17 Business, Murrells Inlet; 843-282-6737.

Limpin' Jane's

This is the locavores temple. The menu is strictly local, and even identifies the farms the food comes from. The prices are not exceedingly expensive, considering what you are getting, and the taste of the food is incomparable. Chef Tara Tracy has a constantly changing seasonal menu, and is always whipping up something that is just unbelievably delicious and healthy, and still Lowcountry traditional food, not often thought of as health food. The menu does not have a huge array of vegetarian or vegan options, but Tara is a master and can make you something that your taste buds will never forget. Try the mushroom and barley pie with Rebecca Farms oyster mushrooms. There are also hard-to-find entrees available, like quail, elk burgers and frog legs. Yummmmm! *LimpinJanes.com*; 713 Front St, Georgetown, 843-485-4953. See ad, page 21.