

SPOTLIGHT

Dessert bars

WHETHER THEY'RE SERVING ELABORATE CHEESECAKES OR BUBBLE WAFFLES, A GROWING NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS ARE PUTTING THE FOCUS FIRMLY ON PUDDINGS

From top: Lemon tart at Figbar; vegan sticky toffee pudding pancakes, The Pudding Pantry; chocolate at Cakes & Bubbles



1 Figbar, Norwich

Husband and wife Jaime and Stephanie Garbutt run Figbar, a cosy cafe brimming with inventive desserts. Having worked as a pastry chef for the likes of Marcus Wareing and Gordon Ramsay, Jaime bakes fresh cakes, pies, tarts and more on site every day. Alongside glazed cinnamon rolls and brownies, there are also 'plated desserts' like a riff on a Snickers, with salted butter caramel and peanut butter parfait. figbarnorwich.com

2 BIGC100, London

For those with a sweet tooth who think they've tried it all, London's Chinatown is home to several dessert cafes that focus on Asian flavours. One of the best is Hong Kong-based chain BIGC100, which opened its first European branch in London in 2018. With bright lights and bold colours, it's made for the Instagram generation who come to try desserts such as Korean shaved ice, Cantonese mango pancakes, bubble waffles and ice cream flavoured with the notoriously potent-smelling durian fruit. facebook.com/bigc100desserts

3 The Pudding Pantry, Nottingham

Offering milkshakes, pancakes, cookie doughs, brownies, cheesecakes and a whole lot more, The Pudding Pantry has more sweet choices on the menu than many restaurants have savoury. Owned by Emma and Anthony Quinn, this modern dessert cafe serves some truly original standouts, such as the caramelised banana sticky toffee pudding and red velvet cheesecake brownie. It also runs special vegan nights as well as afternoon teas and film screenings. thepuddingpantry.co.uk

4 Pirlo's Dessert Lounge, Birmingham

Serving OTT desserts from a cool NYC-style loft space, Pirlo's is Birmingham's hippest dessert spot. Open until 1am every day, it's as much about the party atmosphere, complete with regular live music, as it is about what's on the menu. As well as waffles and crepes served piled high with freshly made gelato, and a range of flavoured cookie doughs, there are specialities such as an alcohol-free tiramisu made with Savoiardi biscuits soaked in Pirlo's own coffee syrup. pirlos.co.uk

5 Cakes & Bubbles, London

Perhaps the ultimate in dessert bars, this is an unabashedly luxurious spot in London's Hotel Café Royal. Run by Michelin-starred chef Albert Adrià — named World's Best Pastry Chef by The World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2015 — Cakes & Bubbles offers champagne and stylish desserts such as the signature cheesecake, which is designed to look like a mini cloth-bound cheese. It's not cheap, but it's the work of a true dessert master. cakesandbubbles.co.uk

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