



FYI
Angels & Kings (710 N. Clark St.) will relocate to a spot in the Hard Rock Hotel Chicago sometime in January.

Comfort and joy

6 tummy-pleasing classics for your cold-weather chow list

By Erin Brereton

Sorry, salad. As temperatures drop, we're craving hearty, buttery, high-calorie cuisine. From meat-filled pies to gooey mac 'n' cheese, these restaurants and bars put together some creative takes on comfort food favorites. We've got a good six months before bathing suit season starts, so bring on the bread pudding.

Pigs in a blanket at The Red Canary

695 N. Milwaukee Ave. 312-846-1475

A new dinner menu by Neal Harper (called "chef de comfort" by staff) includes Vienna beef mini-dogs wrapped in homemade pastry dough (\$3), PB&J bites (\$2) and other snack-size American classics. This River West restaurant and lounge also serves a Texas toast grilled cheese with smoked gouda and tomato soup (\$10). For a sweet finish, try the apple pie with homemade caramel ice cream (\$7).

Meat pie at Owen & Engine

2700 N. Western Ave. 773-235-2930

At this British-inspired Logan Square pub, the protein used in the popular meat pie (\$8) changes frequently: Selections range from a turnover-like Cornish pasty to an open-faced rabbit confit pie with rutabaga and potato. "What's not great about braised meat in a pie crust?" co-owner Bo Fowler asks. Pork lard makes the crust lusciously flaky, while a dose of butter gives it extra flavor. Pie accompaniments change often too, ranging from cherry chutney to arugula salad.



Rudy's mac and cheese
LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE

Le Fleur de Lis' bread pudding

JASON LITTLE PHOTO FOR METROMIX

Fried chicken sandwich at The Southern

1840 W. North Ave. 773-342-1840

Because The Southern's hearty fried chicken takes some time to prepare (it soaks in buttermilk and spices for 12-24 hours before cooking), it's usually served only on Wednesday and Sunday nights as a full dinner (\$14) with biscuits made from executive chef Cary Taylor's mother's recipe. To please its poultry-loving patrons all week, the Wicker Park eatery added a fried chicken sandwich served with mashed potatoes (\$12) to its everyday menu. "Fried chicken has [a sense of] nostalgia to it," Taylor says. "It's something your grandmother used to make."

Bread pudding at Le Fleur de Lis

301 E. 43rd St. 773-268-8770

The Creole-style bread pudding (\$4) at this Bronzeville eatery goes back to co-owner Allen Rochelle's roots. During his childhood in Louisiana, his family used to cook it up on Sundays and holidays. The decadent mix of bread cubes, sugar, raisins, walnuts, amaretto and Grand Marnier is topped with powdered sugar, rum sauce and a strawberry.



Root vegetable casserole at South Water Kitchen

225 N. Wabash Ave. 312-236-9300

The seasonal menu at this downtown eatery includes flavorful Midwestern fare such as root vegetable casserole (\$18) made with rutabaga, turnips and smoked gouda and cooked in a cast iron pot. Can't imagine your comfort food without meat? Warm up with the pot roast (\$25), a slow-roasted combo of celery root, chanterelles, carrots and red wine, and a side of butternut squash gratin with goat cheese and sage (\$7).

Mac and cheese at Rudy's Bar & Grille

69 E. Madison St. 312-332-8111

The menu at this burger-centric bar and grill also includes a create-your-own macaroni and cheese section. Customize yours with add-ons such as Italian sausage, bacon or caramelized onions (\$7 half-order, \$12 full order). "[Mac and cheese] is something that everybody loves from their childhood," owner Rudy Malnati Jr. says. "It never gets old."

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