

DESPITE ITS NAME, THE UBIQUITOUS **FRENCH FRY** HAS ALL BUT BECOME AN AMERICAN FOOD ICON. AFTER MAKING ITS WAY ACROSS EUROPE AND TO THE UNITED STATES, THE FRENCH FRY LARGELY BECAME A FAST FOOD STAPLE BEFORE ITS RECENT REBIRTH AS THE DARLING OF COUTURE COMFORT FOOD. FROM TRUFFLE-SCENTED TO THICK-CUT AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN, FRENCH FRIES HAVE GROWN UP – AND WE’RE LOVING EVERY BITE. COAST TRACKED DOWN OC’S MOST DELICIOUS FRIES.

BY JESSICA FORSYTH :: PHOTOS BY ED OLEN



### The Crow Bar & Kitchen

**THE PLACE** OC’s original gastropub, The Crow Bar introduced the coast to the culinary world’s latest mega-hit equation: Innovative food, plus classic preparations, plus off-the-beaten-track beers equals the perfect dining experience. With an atmosphere that’s one part social English pub and one part casual OC hot spot, there’s really something for everyone, whether it’s a cold microbrew, a best-kept-secret wine or a gourmet burger.

**WHAT’S HOT** Where do we start? If you must choose one thing to go with one of The Crow Bar’s burgers (we recommend trying the “grandma Jane” burger with a toasted English muffin, herbed cream cheese, red onion, organic tomato, and sprouts), it has to be the duck fat fries. Exceedingly crispy on the outside, with rich flavor and silky smooth insides, these fries are only improved by the side of truffle allioli. Homemade ketchup is also available for purists.

**WHAT’S NOT** The Crow Bar can get a bit noisy on weekends. Bring your party voice.



### Valhalla Table

**THE PLACE** A relative newcomer to OC’s dining scene, Valhalla Table has taken the “great post-battle dining hall” concept from Norse mythology and transformed it into a modern-day urban eating experience that showcases the best of chef-influenced street food. Known mainly for its house-made sausages, craft beers and traditional Belgian fries, Valhalla Table is destined to become an OC favorite.

**WHAT’S HOT** There’s really nothing better to accompany one of Valhalla Table’s fresh-from-the-grill sausages than their Belgian fries. Thick cut, irregularly-shaped and twice fried, they’re a fantastic base for any one of the side dipping sauces – everything from mango curry mayo to smoky barbecue sauce and beyond. Try the spicy sambal ketchup with the Cajun andouille sausage for a match made in heaven.

**WHAT’S NOT** Go for the food, not the ambiance. After a sausage, some fries and a beer, it won’t matter anyway.



### Eat Chow

**THE PLACE** A casual, under-the-radar spot in Costa Mesa, Eat Chow has arrived with a big gastronomic welcome. Beginning at breakfast, the eatery starts the day right with dishes like eggs with asparagus, gouda and caramelized onions, all topped with Hollandaise sauce, or “simple” fried eggs with truffle and arugula nage. It’s like your favorite diner, taken up a few notches.

**WHAT’S HOT** The lengthy menu offers everything from salads (try the warm goat cheese salad with sweet red wine gastrique and basil oil) to burgers to fine dining fare (the ancho- and coffee-crusting filet mignon is spectacular). But for authentic, upscale diner fare, always add a side of the truffle-parmesan fries – pungent, rich and more decadent than the usual suspect. There are also classic French fries for traditionalists.

**WHAT’S NOT** The menu is very extensive, so if decisions are not your strong point, it may be best to ask your waiter for a recommendation.

## DEVOUR IT

■ **THE CROW BAR & KITCHEN** :: 2325 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar  
949.675.0070 ::  
thecrowbarcdm.com

■ **VALHALLA TABLE** :: 2981 Bristol St., Costa Mesa  
714.549.2960 ::  
valhallatable.com

■ **EAT CHOW** :: 1802 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa  
949.650.2469 :: eatchownow.com