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Clockwise: The Works, a combination of four sausages, mustards, and pickles, all made on site; the salty-sweet breaded chicken with sourdough waffles; and the duck fat-brined cabbage stack.



## First Bite: Euclid Hall Bar & Kitchen

A LARIMER SQUARE HOTSPOT DELIVERS SOME SERIOUSLY GOOD BAR FOOD, FROM SAUSAGES TO SCHNITZEL TO SPAETZLE. by Gretchen Kurtz

**When** someone invites you over for dinner, friendship shines as much as the food. Why, then, do so many restaurants lack the warmth and personality you'd expect from a business that's all about feeding people? Thankfully, Euclid Hall Bar & Kitchen, the third venture from Chef-Owner Jennifer Jasinski, has personality in spades. After years of wooing us with fancy fare at her more posh Larimer Square eateries, Rioja and Bistro Vendôme, this Denver star has opened a restaurant much like herself: playful and refreshingly down-to-earth.

The fun starts with the beer list, an amusing ode to Euclid, the Greek mathematician behind the establishment's name. Lighter flavors are categorized under Arithmetic while more complex brews are grouped under Quantum Mathematics. While the bar offers a respectable list of wines — including the Denver-made Infinite Monkey Theorem Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc-Sémillon, and Malbec (on tap, no less!) — beer goes so well with Jasinski's

hearty tavern fare that it's hard to choose grapes over hops.

### Meat and Potatoes with a Kick

Whichever libation you choose, make sure you pair it with The Works. No dish symbolizes the deceptive simplicity of the restaurant as this collection of four sausages (currently kielbasa, boudin blanc, boudin noir, and *weisswurst*), pickles, mustards, and *bretzel*, all made in-house — save the pretzel-like bread, which is baked by City Bakery using Euclid Hall's recipe. As you try them, think about your favorite. Is it the curry-spiked boudin noir? Maybe it's the hand-mixed boudin blanc with pork, veal, cloves,

**vitals:** 1317 14th St.; 303.595.4255; euclidhall.com

**hours:** Mon.–Thurs. 11:30 am–midnight; Fri. 11:30 am–1 am; Sat. 3 pm–1 am; and Sun. 11 am–midnight

**prices:** drinks \$3.75–\$32.75; appetizers \$3–\$19.50; entrées \$9.50–\$17.50

star anise, and cinnamon? They're all good, so picking a favorite becomes a foodie version of a Rorschach test.

If you don't eat pork, don't worry. Jasinski and Chef de Cuisine Jorel Pierce couldn't resist including what the menu describes as a "kick-ass" turkey corndog, so named because that's what they said to each other when they tested the recipe. "I definitely have a silly streak, and so does Jorel," says Jasinski, who admits having a soft spot for the dish. "Euclid Hall is about being silly."

Many diners follow the sausage sampler with another hefty dish: poutine. This Canadian specialty traditionally features french fries topped with cheese curds and gravy. In my mind, the best of the three options features hangar steak, braised short ribs, and a rich Bordeaux gravy that would be at home on Jasinski's two other menus. Even fancy poutines are still poutines, however, and if you like your fries crispy, the dish won't be for you because all that gravy makes for soggy spuds.

If you came really hungry, go all out and order the millimeters-thin veal schnitzel or the whimsical chicken and waffles — a pounded, breaded chicken breast served with sourdough waffles, maple syrup, and

walnuts. Half breakfast, half heaven, the dish simultaneously satisfies every fatty, salty, and sweet longing you've ever had.

Marginally healthier is the fish and chips with a batter so light and crisp you'd swear it had sweetener in it. (It doesn't — it's only the beer's natural sugars shining through.) Oysters, scallops, and mussels are also offered, but it's the marlin crudo, an exquisite plate of seared marlin medallions flecked with fried capers and pine nuts and bathed in nutty argan oil (made from the seed of the Moroccan argan tree), that reminds us this isn't your uncle's brewpub.


Less successful is the Euclidean cheese-steak, with strips of hangar steak and pickled peppers draped over a cheddar gougère. In a spot so full of excess, this take on the Philly classic seems cerebral if not scanty, with not enough meat per bite of bread. Better is the seared duck foie gras, served as a mini poutine with hoisin sauce and kimchi to counterbalance the meteoric fat content.

### **Veggies and Desserts with Style**

Vegetables come with some entrées and can also be ordered separately. An order of roasted vegetables should be obligatory, so

delicious is the honey-rosemary glaze. The cabbage stack, with pickled and grilled cabbage on a skewer, tastes marvelous (an adjective not normally associated with this cruciferous vegetable), probably from the stealthy addition of duck fat to the brine.

Like the rest of the menu, desserts are fun. And heavy. Skip the funnel cake fried bananas, which should be shipped back to the state fair. Instead try the pretzel fried pies, little pockets of dough filled with chocolate, cheesecake, and peach preserves, or the car bomb float (a play on the old-fashioned drink) with Guinness ice cream, Baileys chocolate seltzer, and a shot of Jameson-spiked caramel to pour over the top.

Eastern European food- and beer-pairing menus are trendy now, but Chef Jen, as she's known, has been working on the concept for years. Indeed, the menu sprang, in part, from notes recorded in a journal as she traveled the last six or so years. My only concern is with sustainability. How much poutine — or schnitzel or spaetzle — can one eat, even in Jasinski and Co.'s very talented hands? 



For additional restaurants be sure to check our Dining Guide (page 121) or go to [denvermagazine.com/eat-drink](http://denvermagazine.com/eat-drink).