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Gordon Ramsay strikes a pose at The Carnaby at the Downtown Disney District in Anaheim.

London Calling

Gordon Ramsay makes his Orange County restaurant debut at The Carnaby, bringing modern British fare, London swagger and a playful dose of Disney magic to Anaheim. *by* ALLISON MITCHELL

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRAND

One of the culinary world's biggest names has finally landed in Orange County with Gordon Ramsay at The Carnaby (gordonramsayatthecarnaby.com), a spirited slice of swinging London that's now open at the Downtown Disney District. For the Michelin-starred chef, restaurateur and television powerhouse, the Anaheim opening marks a notable first—one wrapped in bold pop art, British nostalgia and the polished theatricality that has become a Ramsay signature.

Inspired by London's Carnaby Street, the epicenter of '60s fashion, music and counterculture, the restaurant delights with colorful artwork, a soundtrack steeped in British hits and an expansive terrace that puts diners amid Downtown Disney's perpetual energy. Ramsay describes the formula simply: "There's sophistication without being over-intimidating."

That balance carries through to the menu, which mines British nostalgia without feeling beholden to it. Ramsay's signature beef Wellington makes the expected appearance, alongside bangers and mash, cottage pie and sticky toffee pudding. A gleaming tableside prime rib trolley adds an interactive element, while lighter, globally influenced dishes broaden the experience.

But the essential order may also be the most tried and true. "I would go for the fish and chips because it's pure comfort and packed with nostalgia," he says. "We all relate to a dish that can bring a memory to the forefront. For me, it's fish and chips."

Ramsay also lays out his road map for dining at The Carnaby, suggesting starting with the Waldorf salad, then moving on to the fish and chips, and sharing the sticky toffee pudding—a lineup that progresses from bright and crisp to sweet and indulgent.

Recently launched, the daily lunch brings its own reasons to visit. Try The Idiot Sandwich—thrice-fried chicken breast with G.F.C. sauce and dill pickle on brioche—or dive into the prawn cocktail roll, which layers poached prawns with Marie Rose sauce, avocado puree, American caviar and malt vinegar crisps.

Indeed, The Carnaby's strength is its versatility. It works for a midday reprieve from the parks, cocktails on the terrace or, best of all, an evening meal as the fireworks illuminate the night sky. For Ramsay, that setting completes the experience: "It's an entirely complete package to spend eight to 10 hours visiting the park and then come and have a fitting, incredible dinner after."

And when Ramsay ventures into theme parks himself, there's one attraction that keeps drawing him back: Soarin' Across America at Disney California Adventure, which he's ridden as many as four times in a single day. "I'm like an eight-year-old," he quips. It's a fitting sentiment for The Carnaby itself—a restaurant that brings a grown-up dining experience to the Happiest Place on Earth without losing sight of the fun that brought everyone here in the first place.





From top: The Passion Fruit Royale cocktail includes Tito's handmade vodka, passion fruit, vanilla, prosecco and a passion fruit bubble; sticky toffee pudding; the expansive dining room and outdoor terrace at Gordon Ramsay at The Carnaby.

