

## The Mouth

# Panned cakes

Meneer Pannekoek

Raadhuisstraat 6, 627 8500

Kitchen open daily 12.00-20.00

Cash, PIN, credit cards

Mr Pancake is having a bad day. Lost orders. Fake topiary flying across the restaurant. It's not all his fault, of course. But, truth be told, today is not adding up to the best dining experience I've ever had in Amsterdam.

It all begins two weeks ago, when I wake up with the urge for pancakes—big fluffy, buttermilk pancakes with handfuls of blueberries and rivers of maple syrup. In other words—NOT Dutch *pannekoeken*. Realising my geographic limitations, I amend my cravings and today, Partner-in-all-things-gratifying and I finally head out to Meneer Pannekoek to satisfy my hankering.

It's a long, miserable bike ride through rain and wind to the busy tourist corner on Raadhuisstraat. Partner and I arrive soaking wet.

Meneer Pannekoek's decor is an odd mix of memorabilia: pigs in chef hats hold chalkboards; stuffed Dalmatian toys line the walls; Bing Crosby flaps his ears from a large black-and-white movie poster in the corner. It's not completely bad. The music is soothing—mostly jazz, with an appropriate rendition of 'Singin' in the Rain' on the jukebox.

The menu is another eclectic assortment. The monthly three-course special (€18.50) offers chicken salad, fish stew and apples with cinnamon ice cream. There is a long list of Dutch favourites: pea soup with black bread and bacon (€3.75), *witsmijter* (€6.75)



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By Nanci Tangeman

and *stamppot* (€10.25). I've heard from a friend of a friend that the Wiener-schnitzel (€13.25) is the best in town. There's even a children's dish (€4.25) that comes with a surprise. But no buttermilk pancakes with blueberries.

Still, I'm determined to order something that I can squirt syrup on... so I take a long look at the pancake and toast selections. I settle on Toast Meneer Pannekoek with ham, pear and cheese (€6.25). Partner passes on the Cajun pancakes and those covered with shawarma, mussels, smoked salmon or artichokes, and settles for a *pannekoek* with salami, onions, cheese and mushrooms (€9.25).

We order and the long wait begins. All around us, diners are served. A giant serving of *stamppot* with smoked sausage, bacon and cracklings barely makes it past our table, as my stomach growls. Eventually, the waitress fesses up—she's lost our order, but the drinks are on them. I contemplate the pancake house's full bar, but settle for sparkling water.

About now, the topiary begins to fly. A diner from the next table stands up and somehow trips on a fake tree. Its beautifully manicured top careers through the air, landing right next to hungry Partner. If it had been real, he would have eaten it.

When our food finally arrives, my two pieces of toast, with crisp pears and grated cheese (straight from underneath the broiler) are just the slightest bit bland. I squirt a little syrup on top. That helps. Partner cuts into his pancake. The mushrooms are canned and the salami is soft, not hard. Still, we're so hungry that we finish every bite. If there's another visit to Meneer Pannekoek, we hope he's having a better day.