

# TORONTO'S PASTRY PRINCESS TELLS THE HOLE STORY — BIG CITY BAKER DUFFLET ON T.O.'S BEST BAGELS

by Hailey Eisen



Dufflet weighs in on the bagel debate

**WE CAN ALL** agree that on a cold Sunday morning there's nothing more comforting than a fresh, just-out-of-the-oven bagel, slathered with cream cheese and topped with smoked salmon. But what we can't seem to agree on is where to get these bagels. There are those among us who adamantly prefer chewy, sweet Montreal-style bagels while others will only eat bagels of the Toronto persuasion — crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside. But, after a survey of the city's most popular bagel shops, it seems there is one thing nine out of 10 bagel lovers agree on — the poppy seed is king! We're not sure if it's because of the opium or the way those little black seeds get caught between your teeth, but even our celebrity taste tester, Dufflet Rosenberg, agrees. This month, after buying a dozen poppy seed bagels from nine of the city's top bakeries, we called upon Rosenberg, Toronto's Queen of Cake, to help put an end to the great bagel debate. This renowned pastry chef says she grew up on Toronto bagels but often shops for Montreal-style bagels at the St. Lawrence Market. At her downtown Dufflet Pastries headquarters, we conducted a blind taste testing of each bagel on its own and topped with Western Creamery cream cheese. The results were simply delicious!



**T.O.'s top bagel! 1st**  
**BAGEL WORLD**

336 Wilson Ave., 416-635-5931

This popular bakery has been serving bagels in the community since 1965. After one bite Rosenberg can tell this is the winner. This doughy treat is moist yet dense, typical of a Toronto-style bagel. These bagels are sturdy enough to hold up any topping but also taste fabulous on their own.  
Price per dozen: \$7.20.



**Magical Montreal style 2nd**  
**ST. URBAIN BAGEL BAKERY**

895 Eglinton Ave. W., 416-787-6955

Rosenberg suggests that these bagels are almost a hybrid — a cross between the Montreal and Toronto style. They are sweet like a Montreal bagel, but also quite moist. They taste great with cream cheese, but Rosenberg would prefer butter and sea salt. In the Montreal category, these are the best!  
Price per dozen: \$5.50.



**Freshest by a country mile 3rd**  
**GRYFE'S BAKERY**

3421 Bathurst St., 416-783-1552

These bagels taste like cake and are so irresistible you may find yourself eating the whole dozen right out of the bag. There is a bit of salt on the outside, which Rosenberg loves. Gryfe's soft, fluffy texture helps her identify them right away. Available plain or with extra poppy seeds.  
Price per dozen: \$5.75



**Big, bold and beautiful** finalist  
**KIVA'S BAGEL BAKERY**

1027 Steeles Ave. W., 416-663-9933

Kiva's bagels are solid and heavy and will keep you going throughout the whole day. They are delicious, especially when served warm. They have a crispy exterior that's a bit salty. Rosenberg says these are authentic Toronto bagels and they go well with a hearty breakfast.  
Price per dozen: \$7.92.



**Sweet dreams** finalist  
**THE BAGEL HOUSE**

1548 Bayview Ave., 416-481-8184

This bakery has lineups out the door. Perhaps it's because these bagels taste like they've been sugar-coated. They are sweet and very chewy in the traditional Montreal fashion but a bit lighter than usual. Though they taste a bit bland on their own, top them with cream cheese, and you're all set.  
Price per dozen: \$5.75.



**The price is right** finalist  
**HAYMISHE BAGEL BAKERY**

9301 Bathurst St., 905-737-4532

These traditional Toronto bagels are fluffy and light with a cake-like consistency. Rosenberg says they are a bit bland on their own but with lots of peanut butter and honey they would be delicious. Warning: these bagels are so light that it's easy to eat way too many at one time!  
Price per dozen: \$4.29.



**Kid friendly fave** finalist  
**WHAT-A-BAGEL**

808 York Mills Rd., 416-916-1237

What-A-Bagel is known for its wide selection of bagels that come in a variety of flavours. They are very fresh and fluffy and Rosenberg says they are the perfect shape and softness for making school lunch sandwiches. Plus, they'll give you a free dozen on your birthday!  
Price per dozen: \$4.50.

**INSIDE** ▶  
**MARCH FOOD**

**HOLIDAY SNACKS**

Our resident foodie Rose Reisman provides easy recipes for snacks to enjoy on the go. Also, find out how to stay fit while on your March vacation.

**MARCH UNBREAKABLES**

Tony Aspler's guide to Toronto's best bargain wines in a box. And how a good bottle of wine can help you relax this March break.

**THE GODFATHER IS BACK**

Franco Prevedello is in the game again, this time teaming up with chef David Lee of Splendido fame. Plans are in the works for their new restaurant.