

Authentic America in old Edinburgh



[The City Café](#), situated just off the Royal Mile, launched its Ultimate Burger Challenge at the end of January, and Hannah Swann went along to try it out.

Drawing inspiration from the TV show 'Man vs. Food' It was a busy and excitable spectacle as the public watched contestants in the area of 'awesome' attempt to conquer the meaty mountains of food in their allotted 45 minute time frame. Head chef John Mckendrick kept on producing these bulging burgers, but competitors were wavering in the last few minutes.

Eyes darting between their plates and the timer placed beside them; tactics were tested out. People tried massaging their necks, taking off layers, coating the meat in mustard as well as dipping the bread in water to keep up the moisture and for an all-important change in consistency. Cutting the whole thing into baby sized pieces was another popular method set in motion – but no contestant seized a winning title despite some earnest attempts. Those looking to take it on in the future will now be seated around the bar. The challenge will continue running throughout 2013 so hopefuls have the opportunity to try & try again. The restaurant accommodate those with allergies so ingredients can be swapped for alternatives.

The fixings are all freshly prepared, emulating high quality- but there is a tall price to pay for your failure (£30). City Café has plans to bring out new challenges in the future too. Including mini-challenges every month covering pancakes, milkshakes, hot dogs and all things U.S.A to put emphasis on their laid-back diner feel.

The restaurant has fully indulged in their American roots now.

Boasting impressive menus for breakfast, lunch & dinner the diner has found its niche amidst an already vast and diverse food scene in Edinburgh. With their ultimate challenges set to be a trademark they might rival any diner on Route 66! The evening this reporter undertook the challenge also marked the birth of their brand new Stateside cocktail menu, paying homage to the notorious happy hour across the water. After practicing and perfecting the drinks all week, the bar staff have got them down to a fine art. The diversity is impressive.

A particularly quirky one is their 'Bacon Mary'; consisting of homemade Bacon Vodka, Tomato Juice, Lemon, Worcester, Tabasco, Capers, Horseradish and Seasoning -this is packed with a punch not for the faint hearted! My personal favourite was the Dawn Julio; a Tequila Sunrise with a twist. A perfect balance appears to be struck here. With a relaxed ambience the friendly and efficient staff leave you feeling cared for but not hassled. City Café is a hive of entertainment and the staff are constantly grabbing opportunities to improve and produce what people want by asking for feedback on their Facebook and Twitter pages

Slight changes are now being considered to the Ultimate Burger Challenge rules with the intention of finally finding some winners in Edinburgh! The evening proved that no-one had what it takes to conquer Mckendrick's masterpiece so the side dishes are being reconsidered as they appeared to be the unbeatable element. With allowances being made, and a competitive fever in the air, we imagine it will not be long before someone's name graces the wall of fame..



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The Reporter Food reviewer, Hannah Swann works at [The Lifestyle Company Scotland](#) You can follow the company and their lifestyle tips on [Twitter](#)