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CHEF ON THE MOVE

Benny's on the Beach chef has new flavors to match killer view

Meet the hot new chef in the kitchen at Benny's on the Beach

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By [Liz Balmaseda](#) - Palm Beach Post Food Editor

The oceanfront [Benny's on the Beach](#), perched upon [Lake Worth beach](#), already has one of the best dining views in the county. Now it's got a kitchen with ambitions to match that view.

Leading that kitchen is Chef Jeremy Hanlon, who brought along his achiote paste for nutty notes and flavor depth and some zingy tomatillos to rev things up.



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The Banana Bonanza is on chef Jeremy Hanlon's "Fearless Favorites" menu at Benny's on the Beach in Lake Worth. The dish [... read more](#)

Hanlon is in the process of rolling out some new comfort food-inspired menu items. His culinary experience includes stints at [Daniel Boulud](#) restaurants in New York and Palm Beach, Charlie Trotter's in Chicago, and Michelin-starred restaurants in France and Spain.

He also competed on Food Network's "Chopped" series some years ago and won the National Restaurant Association's 2010 Hot Chef Challenge.

Hanlon joined [Benny's](#) as executive chef and partner in January, two months after New York entrepreneur Lee Lipton took over as owner.



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Jeremy Hanlon is executive chef and partner at Benny's on the Beach in Lake Worth. (Contributed)

The chef is calling his new special menus "Fearless Favorites" (priced from \$8 to \$20). He's running new special menus for the next nine weeks, aiming to craft Benny's new permanent menu with the help of some customer feedback.

Hanlon says he's striving for a slightly smaller menu of fresh, made-to-order dishes, in which each dish has "a unique story to tell."

“I know there are guests that have been coming here a while and we do not want to get rid of longtime favorites – trust me – I would get thrown off the pier! However, there is always room for fresh ideas when it comes to food,” he told The Post by email last week.



Benny's on the Beach is perched oceanfront at Lake Worth beach. (Contributed by Benny's on the Beach)

New menu items include a glammed up banana bread French toast, a Jersey-style pork roll that's topped with a trio of over-easy eggs, and a dessert he calls the Maple Bacon Explosion – a sugar rush of vanilla ice cream, caramel, brown sugar, maple syrup and bacon that can be consumed as a sundae or shake.

Hanlon says the restaurant is working with some local breweries to create a “Beer on the Pier” event in the fall. He's also planning a dinner menu for fall, when the eatery will be open later past its usual daylight hours.

Q & A WITH JEREMY HANLON

The Benny's beachy concept seems quite different from your earlier work in high-end kitchens – what attracted you to take on this challenge?

How can you say no to working on the beach? When I began discussing being a part of Benny's, my first thought was how I cook at home for my family and friends. I take the same pride in choosing my ingredients and taking the time to create memorable flavors as I did in fine dining but in a more relaxed, simplistic manner. Food should be fun, simple and taste great. I saw Benny's as an opportunity to take this approach to food and deliver memorable flavorful dishes to our customers. Did I mention the beach?

What's the best part of working by the beach? Swim breaks between service periods?

Swim break! Haha – I have not incorporated that into our daily routine yet, but this summer heat is making it sound very appealing. The sunsets, sunrise and how the weather affects the ocean is amazing to watch. Not to mention watching rain, thunder and lightning develop. As long it does not happen to often! One of my favorite elements to the restaurant is the pier which extends over the ocean. When I have stressful days inside I can take a long walk on our pier – most of the time it does the trick!

How would you describe your style of cooking?

I have had the opportunity to taste new ingredients and cook in over 20 countries. I always gravitated toward the coasts of Europe. The Basque region in Spain and the Côte d'Azur in France. I think the

freshness and respect for ingredients used so the flavors are not overly complicated is what describes my food the most. Allowing the food to speak for itself while focusing on technique.

Who was your greatest influence in the kitchen?

Daniel Boulud. I was part of the culinary team at Boulud's flagship restaurant in Manhattan as well as Café Boulud in Palm Beach. In New York City, right before service would start, he would run in to taste sauces see how everything was setup, look at your prep – everything. He was so passionate and such a perfectionist; it elevates you to have higher expectations and respect for the ingredients you use and how you cook.

BENNY'S ON THE BEACH

- Located at 10 S Ocean Blvd., Lake Worth; 561-582-9001; BennysOnTheBeach.com
- Open daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. for breakfast, brunch and lunch.

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