

# Your field guide to the U-District coffee scene



By Alex Olson The Daily

Seattle is known for its coffee scene, and the U-District is no exception. With literally dozens of options on and around the Ave, it's easy to get overwhelmed by choice, but The Daily has your back – compiled below are 21 coffee spots on or just off the Ave, so you can get a head start on finding your new favorite place to hang out that isn't the Starbucks next to your dorm.

## Northeast 47th Street and beyond:

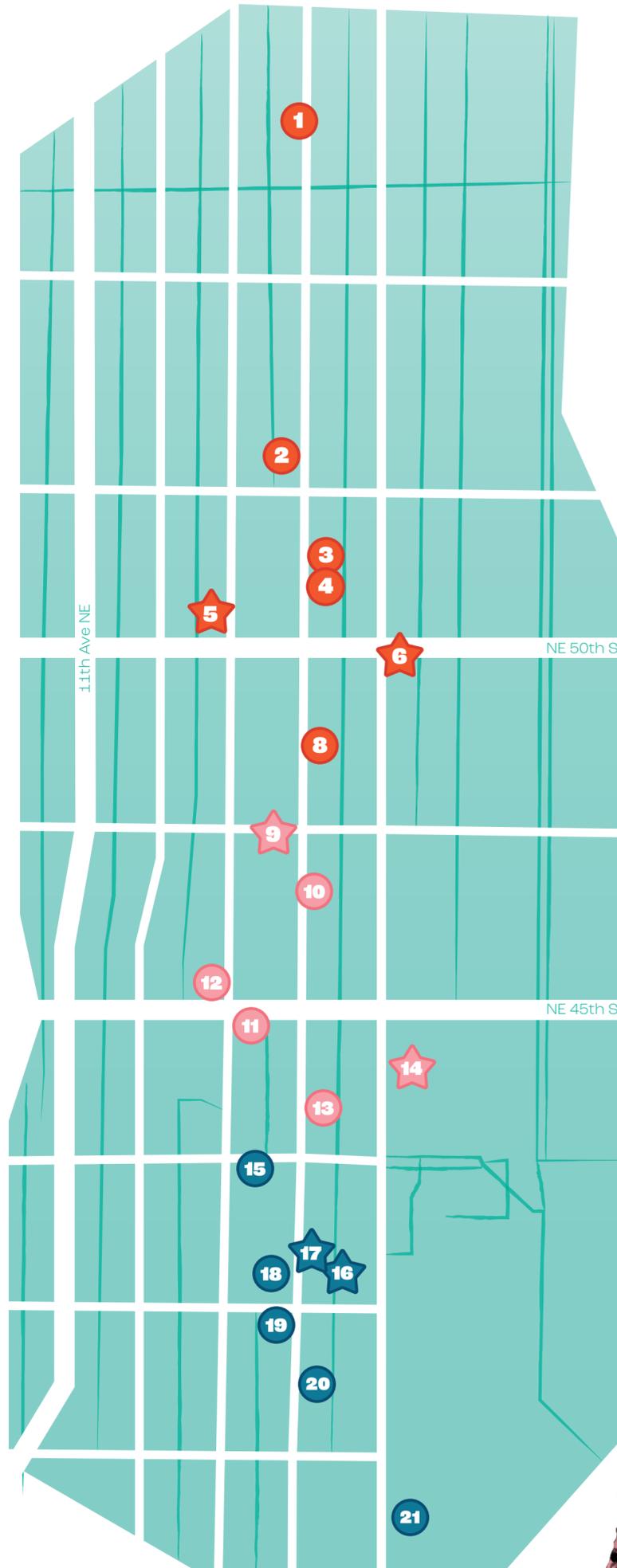
- ① **Henkimer Coffee 7/10**  
Standard drinks at standard prices at the far north of the Ave, classics done well but without any clear standout moments. It's hard to go wrong with Henkimer, but it won't blow your mind either.
- ② **Westman's Bagel and Coffee 6/10**  
A walk-up window with outdoor seating, convenient to the U-District Saturday Farmers Market. Good bagels, decent coffee, reasonably priced. It's no NYC bagel spot, but it's a decent substitute.
- ③ **Lune Cafe 7/10**  
Late-night dessert and coffee. The marketing is clearly aimed at influencer culture (Dubai chocolate etc.), but the iced specialty drinks are excellent and the beverage prices are surprisingly affordable (though the basic lattes aren't the best).
- ④ **Monsel 7/10**  
Killer biscuits and decent coffee, great spot for a chill breakfast. Nothing too out of the ordinary and the prices can be high, but the food and drinks satisfy and the interior is surprisingly cozy. Try their biscuit sandwiches.
- ⑤ **Sip House 9/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
Vietnamese-inspired drinks in a modern setting filled with more potted plants than you can count. Can get pricey, but the Vietnamese latte, pistachio cream latte, and fresh mint mojito iced coffee are all well worth the cost.

- ⑥ **TOASTED 9/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
Bagels and coffee with a Middle Eastern twist, run by two UW graduates. Their food and drinks are all some of the best on the Ave, so be sure to check them out – but don't be surprised if there's a line.
- ⑦ **Scorpio Cafe 5/10**  
Tiny hole-in-the-wall just south of Northeast 50th Street. Their specialty waffles and breakfast fare are all popular for a reason, but the coffee itself leaves something to be desired in terms of strength and flavor.
- ⑧ **Cafe Canuc 6/10**  
Faux-Parisian decor, excellent desserts, good specialty drinks, and decent traditional lattes and espresso. The styling often feels more like a gimmick than a genuine aesthetic, but it's a solid spot for a sweet treat.

## Between Northeast 47th Street and Northeast 43rd Street:

- ⑨ **George Coffee and Pastries 10/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
Subjectively, the best coffee shop on the Ave. Homemade pastries and creative drinks alongside classics done to perfection, with rotating seasonal croissants. A great place to study or meet friends (unless there's a crowd) – dark, hole-in-the-wall, retro vibes.

- ⑩ **Ancient Gate Coffee 7/10**  
The drinks are good, if you don't mind the fact that it operates as a front for a Christian fundamentalist sect that opposes gay marriage and believes downtown Seattle was chosen by the Holy Spirit (not kidding). As far as the coffee is concerned, they serve solid takes on classic lattes and cappuccinos, with an emphasis on curated roasts.
- ⑪ **Leon Coffee House 7/10**  
Traditional drinks alongside Mexican-inspired specialty coffee (think horchata lattes and a spicy Mocha Diablo), also serving pastries, waffles, and sandwiches. Bright, spacious, and especially great for those with a sweet tooth.
- ⑫ **Poindexter Coffee 4/10**  
Located in the lobby of the Graduate Hotel, with a mid-century Americana aesthetic and surprisingly reasonable prices. Unfortunately the drinks don't live up to the vibes, tasting more like milk than espresso. Come for the interior design, not the coffee.
- ⑬ **Boon Boona Coffee 7/10**  
Classic drinks behind rows of Husky merch inside the University Bookstore, with a focus on single-origin African roasts. Unfortunately the prices are some of the highest on the Ave (\$5 for a shot of espresso and \$6.25 for a basic latte) but the convenient location and quality coffee mostly makes up for it.
- ⑭ **Off the Rez Cafe 9/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
Native American food and great coffee inside the Burke Museum. The traditional drinks are a sleeper pick for some of the best in the U-District, and their pulled pork Indian taco will blow your mind. Added bonus: it's easy on the wallet, and it's closer to your classrooms than the Ave.



## South of Northeast 43rd Street:

- ⑮ **Ugly Mug Cafe 8/10**  
Funky, cozy, bohemian, vintage, with good drinks and pastries at reasonable prices. The fare is mostly classics done right – if you're a beatnik poet looking for a new hangout to match your aesthetic, or you just like good coffee in a chill and welcoming environment, give this place a try.
- ⑯ **Cafe Allegro 9/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
Seattle's oldest espresso bar, tucked away in an alley and celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The drinks are excellent, the vibes are chill, and it's a perennial favorite among students seeking out a slice of the quintessential Seattle coffee culture. Don't mind the prices, the crowds, or the occasionally stale pastries – it's all worth it.
- ⑰ **Bulldog News 9/10 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**  
The other quintessential U-District espresso bar, serving solid classic and specialty drinks at a walk-up window alongside a chill interior. A hub for the Ave community, and an excellent candidate for your home-away-from-home off campus – check out the free jazz nights every month.
- ⑱ **Cafe on the Ave 4/10**  
More restaurant than coffee shop, with mediocre food, average drinks, and unsatisfactory prices. Tries to do too many things and does none of them well. Convenient, but nothing special (although it's undeniably fun to drink a 20oz latte out of a cup that looks like a soup bowl).
- ⑲ **Starbucks 2/10**  
Subjectively, the worst coffee shop on the Ave. Unless you want to get ripped off paying too much for burnt espresso, it's hard to think of any reason to go here when so many better options exist.
- ⑳ **Cafe Solstice 6/10**  
Dark, cozy, plenty of seating, and great for studying, so it's unfortunate that the coffee itself is just okay. It's not bad, and would probably score higher if it wasn't surrounded by half a dozen better alternatives, but as it is Solstice fails to stand out.
- ㉑ **City Grind Espresso 5/10**  
The only independent coffee stand on UW campus, located inside Henry Art Gallery with some of the cheapest fare around (only \$4.15 for a 12oz latte). The drinks aren't the best, but the prices and convenient location pull their weight to almost make up for it.

**Best study spot**

Cafe Allegro

**Best classic drinks & best pastries**

George Coffee and Pastries

**Best quick lunch**

Bulldog News

**Best specialty drinks**

Sip House

**Best breakfast spots**

TOASTED & Off the Rez

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