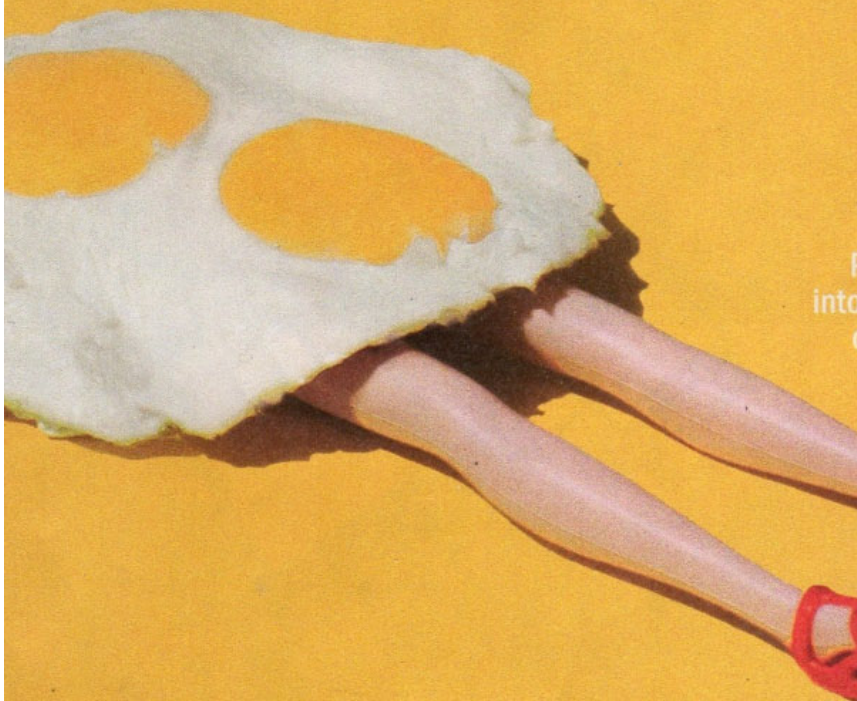


# TimeOut

NEW YORK

Feeling f



Cuban sandwich

## Pilar Cuban Bakery



Many new bakeries are opening in New York this year—Ole & Steen, Bourke Street Bakery and Michaeli Bakery—but none excites us as much about carbo-loading as Pilar Cuban Bakery, which opened back in February. At the decade-old Pilar Cuban Eatery's new Bed-Stuy sister spot, owner-chef Ricardo Barreras rethinks breakfast with underused-in-NYC Cuban ingredients. The casual menu is perfect for on-the-go bites. Or stay and nosh amid the kitsch of Miami cafés: an '80s-style painting of a papaya, a fake marlin geometric pastel tiling and a spunky neon sign that displays the shop's name.

The pressed-to-order Cuban sandwich (\$12) starts with slow-roasted pork in a sour-orange marinade, then adds smoky ham, just the right amount of gooey Swiss cheese, pickles and a coffee-infused mustard. The pastelitos, such as the ground-beef Spanish empanada (\$4.50), could supplant a New Yorker's go-to morning bagel: But while this pastry exhibits the same buttery, savory warmth, it's dipped in house-made cilantro or hot sauce. Try them alongside a café con leche (\$4.50 with condensed milk)—so strong that one shot down the hatch induces caffeine jitters.

Besides well-done classics, the daily specials include a dulce de leche brownie, a guava crumb cake, a mojito cupcake and other modern treats. We opted for a slice of the tropical layer cake (\$7); the sweet dessert was a bit too brittle, but the passionfruit buttercream, dollops of guava and coconut shreds gave it a little moisture.

Taking its name from Ernest Hemingway's fishing boat, Pilar has sailed into landlocked Bed-Stuy—if you close your eyes, you might just hear waves lapping in the distance.

■ Emma Orlow  
 → Bed-Stuy ([pilarbny.com/bakery](http://pilarbny.com/bakery))



OFF THE MENU

## The Ribbon Opens a Branch in Times Square

Roberto Deiacco of Armani Ristorante opens a spot in the former Da Silvano, Dell'anima reopens, and other restaurant news.



Ricardo Barreras at Pilar Cuban Bakery, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.  
Sasha Maslov for The New York Times

### Pilar Cuban Bakery

Ricardo Barreras, who is from Miami and has Cuban roots, said he felt he was filling a gap in New York when he opened Pilar Cuban Eatery almost 10 years ago. Since then, he has moved it to a larger space, and is now expanding with a bakery next door. Pillowy breads for Cuban sandwiches, filled empanadas, croquetas and tropical batido milkshakes are made and sold mainly to go; there are only about a dozen seats. Consider his classic pressed Cuban sandwiches for that Super Bowl party. (Thursday)

397 Greene Avenue (Bedford Avenue), Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, 347-350-9037, [pilarmy.com](http://pilarmy.com).

# The New York Times

KNOW YOUR CITY

## Sandwiches the Miami Way, at Pilar Cuban Bakery in Brooklyn



The Porkinator, Cuban and Savory Cuban Pastries

30 Photos • View Slide Show

Guido Ochoa for The New York Times

**Pilar Cuban Bakery** • NY City's Pick • Caribbean, Latin American • \$5  
301 Grove Street, Bedford Stuyvesant • 347-360-9007

By Marian Bur

March 11, 2018



Sandwiches, with all their permutations, are an invitation to overzealous Gakering. They can be stacked up toward heaven in multiple layers or stuffed with an entire Thanksgiving dinner. They can overflow with soupy meats and be eaten with a fork and knife. And then there was that time KFC used fried chicken instead of bread to do the hard work of containing sliced cheese and bacon. The risk is that a particularly kooky sandwich makes shock over legs.

At first glance, the Porkinator — served at [Pilar Cuban Bakery](#) in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn — seems to be one of these sandwiches, designed as a dare. It is named like a character in professional wrestling, and contains five different types of pig product.

But instead of veering into ramp-olddeshon territory, it turns out to be far more clever and earnest. There are crunchy starches of chicharrón, housemade chorizo that tastes as if someone bottled a smokehouse, and whole ham croquetas, their insides gently funky and hot-dog pink. A smooth ham-pimento spread acts as both condiment and stabilizer, keeping the thing from turning into a mess on the wax-paper-lined plastic boats that Pilar serves almost everything in. It's a wild sandwich that makes beautiful sense.



SWEET TOOTH | MAR. 12, 2019

## This Cake Tastes How Vacation Feels

By Nikita Richardson



Pilar Cuban Bakery's Tropical Layer Cake. Photo: Konstantin Sergeyev

Ricardo Barreras's No. 1 problem with Cuban bakeries and restaurants outside of south Florida is that most don't actually use enough Cuban ingredients. "Basically, every one of them uses Mexican ingredients or other Latin American ingredients," Barreras says. "Here, every Cuban place has tacos and quesadillas on its menu. I think Cuban food can stand on its own."

So, he's making the most of Cuban ingredients at his month-old shop, Pilar Cuban Bakery. Located right next door to his beloved Cuban restaurant in Bed-Stuy, the focus is on sweet and savory baked goods that make the most of Cuban ingredients, like the bakery's Tropical Layer Cake, which basically features a stacked deck of the best of Cuban fruit. Working from the bottom up, the cake goes coconut sponge, passion-fruit buttercream, dulce de mango (cooked down mango with sugar and vanilla), coconut sponge, passion-fruit buttercream, guava, coconut sponge, and more passion-fruit buttercream sprinkled with shredded coconut. It's not light and airy, but more like the taste of a tiki bar exploding.

"When I came up with my desserts, I wrote down all the ingredients I wanted to have: fruit, obviously. Pineapple is indigenous to Cuba. Citrus. Guava is a big Cuban thing. Sugarcane," Barreras says. "And I thought, *Let's have a showpiece*. Plus, passion fruit is one of my favorite flavors in the whole wide world."

It's a cake that pulls no punches, which is why the bakery only offers it by the \$7 slice right now. But with 24 hours notice, Barreras says he could easily whip one up for a birthday party, anniversary, or last-minute celebration (for \$60). Plus, he's not at all done with tropical bakes.

"We just came up with a mojito cupcake," Barreras adds. "It has a little rum in it and the frosting is made with lime and mint. It's really good."



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FOOD & DRINK

## Neighborhood Eats: Arroz con Pollo at Pilar Cuban Eatery in Brooklyn



Lauren Glassberg reports on Pilar Cuban Eatery in Brooklyn.

By Lauren Glassberg  
Friday, September 14, 2018

**BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, Brooklyn (WABC)** -- Pilar Cuban Eatery started small and quickly gained a following. Ricardo Barreras owner, who is also the chef, came to professional cooking in a nontraditional way - and he has made it work for the past nine years.

The eatery is located at 397 Greene Avenue in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.

"Our first spot was pretty tiny - 400 square feet. Busy all the time, so we built out a much nicer spot two blocks away," Barreras said.

Pilar Cuban Eatery is now nine years in, which is pretty impressive considering Barreras is not a trained chef - he is a psychologist, whose passion is cooking Cuban food.

"I have an iconic image of what something is, and I'm trying to replicate that - keeping it Cuban, not altering it. Keeping the DNA intact," Barreras adds.

Barreras only visited his parents' native Cuba for the first time a year and a half ago, but customers say he has got the cuisine and the vibe totally right.

"I love the Cubano ropa vieja, and of course the pernil," said one customer.

One dish that will also leave you smiling is the arroz con pollo.

Barreras marinades the chicken in herbs and sour orange. The meat is then browned. To that, he adds the sofrito made of garlic, onions and green pepper. Then he adds crushed tomatoes, homemade chicken stock, beer and spices, including saffron - and then the rice.

"We use a special rice called 'valencia,' which is short grain, typical Cuban way of doing it - very hard to find, but we sourced it," says Barreras.

The rice then cooks for 20 minutes and is a puddle of Cuban flavor.

A puddle of Cuban flavor, Barreras plans to open Pilar Cuban Bakery next door - after all, it is his neighborhood, and he is here to stay.

### ARROZ CON POLLO - RECIPE

Serves 4

*For the Sofrito:*  
4 cloves garlic, peeled

- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 medium green pepper, diced
- cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp kosher salt (1 tsp to be combined with the garlic)\*

Smash salt and garlic with the back of a knife and combine to make a puree. Add olive oil to a pan and sauté garlic, onion and peppers for 15 minutes over medium heat. Set aside to add to the main dish.

*Chicken*  
3 - 4 lbs chicken  
*For the Mojo*  
1 cup sour orange juice,  
4 cloves fresh garlic  
tsp cumin  
tsp oregano  
1 tsp salt  
cup olive oil

*For the Dish:*

- 8 oz crushed tomatoes
- 1 quart chicken stock
- 12 oz beer (Lager or Pilsner)
- 12 oz Valencia short grain rice (or substitute medium-grain rice)
- 2 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 bay leaf
- Pinch Saffron (approx 1 gram)
- 1 - 2 tbsp kosher salt (if using regular table salt but by half)

Marinate the chicken in mojo for 24 hours. Pat it dry to remove excess mojo. In a heavy bottom pot, brown the chicken in a sauté pan over medium high heat, approximately 5 minutes each side. Add the sofrito, tomatoes, stock, beer, rice and seasonings. Cook on medium heat for 20 - 25 minutes. The dish will still be soupy when done.

\* If using regular salt instead of kosher salt, cut amount in half

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The latest dish on healthy foods and delicious living

# Eating Right

# RISE AND DINE!

New York Post, Wednesday, February 20, 2019 nypost.com



Chefs from around the globe are bringing a new kind of breakfast to NYC — and sharing their tasty tips



### Switch your starch

"Nobody else eats plantains for breakfast — only in Cuba," says Pilar Cuban Eatery's chef and owner, Ricardo Barreras. While that's not quite true — you'll also find plantains on the morning menu in other Latin American countries — Barreras gives them pride of place. At his new Bed-Stuy eatery, he serves Cuban eats, such as café con leche (\$4.50) and breakfast sandwiches on Cuban bread (\$8), with a side of the sweet tropical starch, sliced thin and served crispy. 397 Greene Ave., Bed-Stuy; 718-623-2822, PilarNY.com

**Try it at home:** Swap out your usual white-potato hash browns for a hash made from plantains, sweet potatoes or even parsnips.

By LAUREN STEUSSY  
Photo by ANNIE WERMIEL

**N**OTHING against omelets, yogurt or a classic bodega sandwich, but they're not the only way to start your day. Just look at other countries' morning meals: In Korea, for example, brunch might mean a soothing bowl of broth, whereas in Israel, the first salad of the day hits the table at breakfast, not lunch. India serves up spicy curries as a sort of sensory alarm clock, while Italy brings its hallmark sense of la dolce vita to otherwise ho-hum scrambled eggs and pancakes. Get a taste of breakfast from far-flung places at these new New York eateries — then try chefs' tips for using global flavors and techniques to zip up your own homemade breakfasts.



Zanoy Mangold (2)

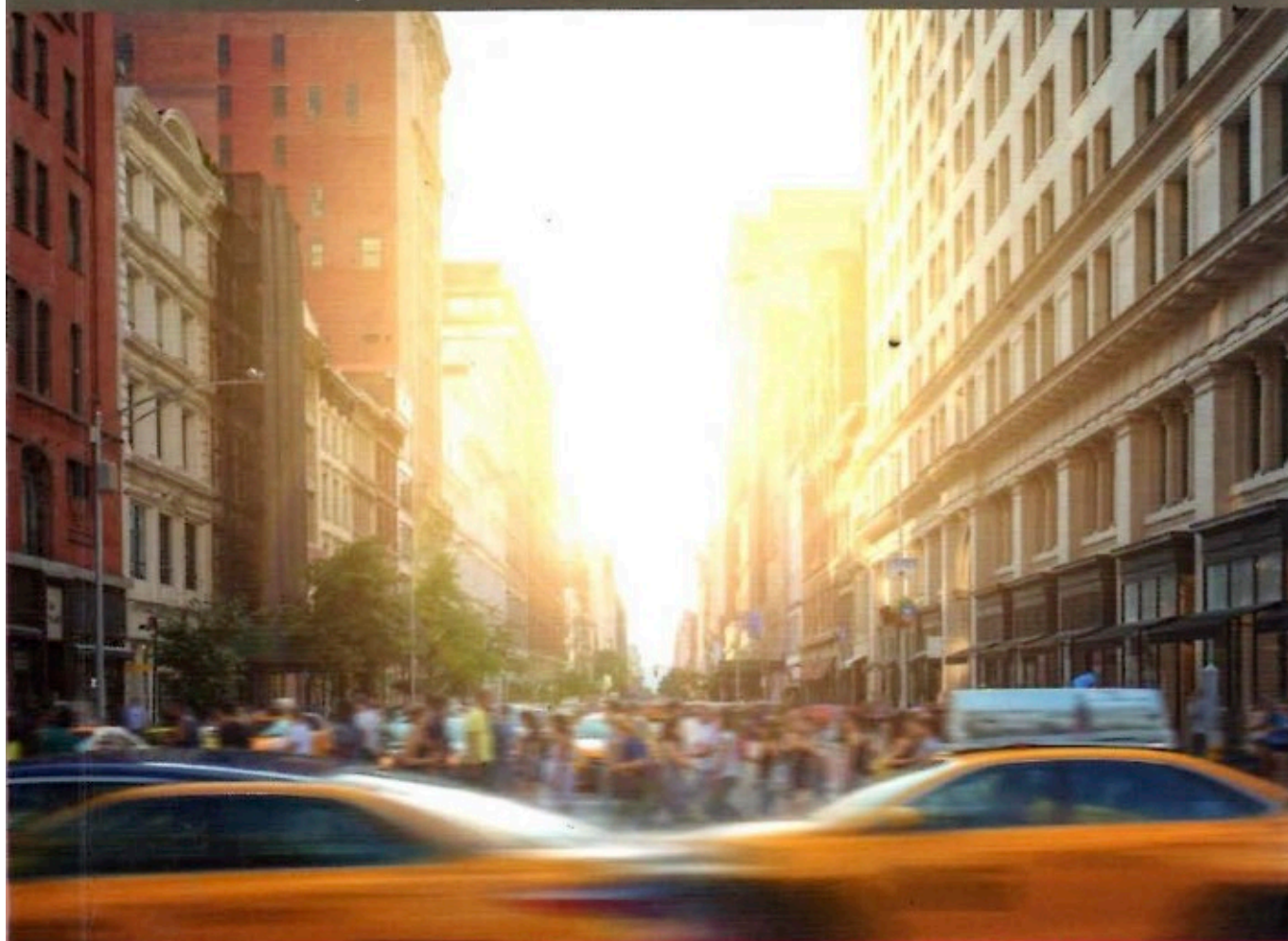
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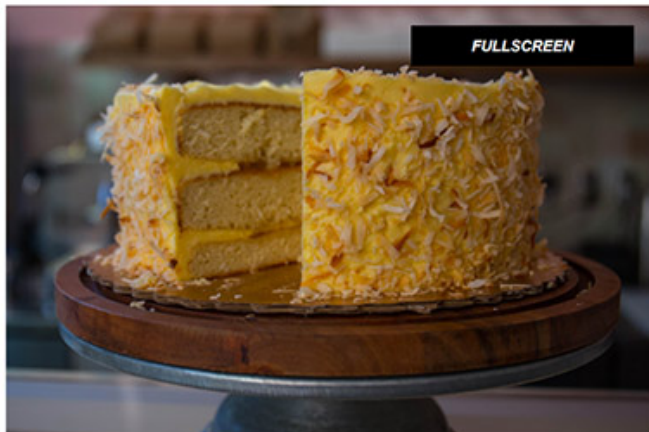
TIPS



## Inside Bed-Stuy's Bright New Cuban Bakery

BY PAULA MEJIA IN FOOD ON FEB. 3, 2019, 3:15 PM

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Tropical Layer Cake (\$6 a slice)  
(Scott Lynch / Gothamist)



Step inside Bed-Stuy's Pilar Cuban Bakery and you might, for a moment, think you're in Miami instead. The bright space, which opened this week, is awash with pastel, brilliant tiled floors, and an ever-present neon sign advertising sweet wares. And that transportive quality is the idea: Cuban-American owner Ricardo Barreras, who grew up in Florida, styled his new outpost to be like the no-frills mom and pop shops that line Miami's sun-drenched streets.

Barreras wasn't intending to make a bakery, he tells Gothamist during a recent visit. A desire to see traditional Cuban food more visibly represented within New York City evolved from selling Cuban sandwiches at Brooklyn Flea to owning Pilar Cuban Eatery, which he has for nearly ten years. (Before then, Barreras was a social psychologist by trade). The restaurant, which specializes in modern Cuban cuisine, has stood on the corner of Bedford and Greene since 2015.

The new bakery, attached to Barreras's restaurant, initially sprouted from his goal to make Cuban bread in-house. The problem? They had no room. But the space next door to Pilar had been vacant for a while, so he set about trying to find a way to take it over. Given the locale's size, it became clear that he could make more than bread: Empanadas followed, then pastelitos, then it snowballed from there. The idea, Barreras says, is for people to stop by the bakery for a cafecito and dessert after dining, perhaps taking home a box of treats with them. During warmer days, the window that opens up onto Greene Avenue will be crucial for those on the move looking to buy café con leche.

The preposterous cold on Thursday didn't deter locals and passersby from stopping by Pilar, scooping up beef picadillo empanadas, tortilla española, and pastelitos to take back home. There's a lot to choose from, both savory and sweet. The dense empanada Gallega (a Spanish meat pie) is crafted from house-smoked chorizo next door, is a mighty treat. As are the smoked ham, potato leek, and bacalao (salt cod) croquetas—but don't let their diminutive size fool you. The cilantro sauce, imbued with orange and roasted garlic, makes a perfect dip for Pilar's savory offerings. A tropical layer cake, loaded up with mango jam and pineapple, topped with a passionfruit buttercream and then toasted coconut, is a dream. Don't sleep on the guava bars, stacked with shortbread, and topped with a crumble and guava glaze.

Ingredients indigenous to Cuba, such as sour oranges and cachucha peppers, are central to Pilar's food, as are harder-to-find staples: He says they buy hundreds of small packages of Goya short-grain rice—it doesn't exist in bulk—to make bonafide arroz con pollo and paella. Some people might be surprised with the presentation and preparation of several items—Barreras's twist on tres leches, for one thing, is infused with pomegranate, which slightly cuts its signature sweetness.

"All those really iconic things that people grew up with, we have," he says. "Pretty much most of the stuff you find here is stuff you're going to find in a Cuban bakery. Some of the stuff isn't, but uses ingredients that are typically Cuban."

Barreras says there's much more to come on the menu (see [the current version here](#)), including tamarind cinnamon rolls with a peanut brittle, a cake flan (half cake, half flan) made of red velvet and cream cheese, batidos (milkshakes) with flavors including guanabana and mamey, and salads. The iconic capuchino, an ever-present treat at Cuban bakeries, is also on its way.

*Pilar Cuban Bakery is located at 397 Greene Ave., between Bedford and Franklin Avenues, and is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. (347) 350-9037; pilarmy.com.*

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The Best Bites Of 2018

The 14 Best New Burgers  
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## TABLES FOR TWO

**Pilar Cuban Bakery**  
397 Greene Ave., Brooklyn

**Win Son Bakery**  
164 Graham Ave., Brooklyn

On a recent morning in Bed-Stuy, a young boy pressed his face against the glass case at Pilar Cuban Bakery and began to moan. “Mom, Mom, Mooooom. I want this!” he declared plaintively, pointing to an enticingly glossy Key-lime pie, sliced into neat wedges. “And what about this?” he exclaimed, moving on to the coconut-chocolate bars.

As for me, I was eying the fat squares of drippy yellow tres-leches cake in plastic clamshells, each wearing a heavy crown of pink whipped-cream rosettes and jeweled with berries; the puff-pastry *pastelitos*, encasing guava paste, cream cheese, or beef picadillo; and the miniature tin cups of rice pudding, topped with cubed pineapple and a healthy sprinkle of cinnamon.

There is hardly a happier place than a bakery, and, if this city could do with more of them, 2019 has been an auspicious year, thanks to both Pilar and Win Son Bakery, in East Williamsburg. Each is an offshoot of a restaurant, and each brings to Brooklyn relatively hard-

to-find delicacies from an island nation.

Chief among these delicacies is Cuban lard bread, which is what inspired the opening of Pilar Cuban Bakery: Ricardo Barreras, the owner of Pilar Cuban Eatery, next door, decided to start baking it himself, using dough, shipped frozen, from a trusted supplier in Florida. When he realized that his kitchen wasn’t big enough for the operation, he figured he might as well open a second place.

More than the eatery, the bakery evokes Barreras’s native Miami, with its mint-green façade and retro neon signage. You can order inside, where the walls are pastel pink and there are a few round wooden tables, or from a window that opens charmingly onto the sidewalk.

The lard bread is used for a decent Cubano and for a sandwich called the Porkinator, which features five forms of pork and is as silly as it sounds. You’re better off with a much simpler tostada, for which a quarter loaf gets sliced lengthwise, brushed generously with butter, and crisped on a big press. A smear of mashed avocado or *bocadito*, a pimienta-ham spread, is optional.

A tostada and a café con leche is a breakfast duo as iconic as a cappuccino and a croissant—or, if you prefer, a fried cruller dipped in frothy, freshly made soy milk. You can get that quintessential Taiwanese combo at Win Son Bakery, born of the Taiwanese-American restaurant Win Son, across the street. You can also get a mean *fan tuan*, a traditional breakfast treat that consists of sticky rice rolled around a fragment of cruller, a bit of

hard-fried egg, and a tangle of pork floss.

A coffee drink called the *xiao huai huai*—a shot of espresso poured over velvety five-spice crème anglaise and showered with powdered ginger—is decidedly nontraditional, but I’d like to nominate it for entry into the canon. The same goes for the scallion-pancake breakfast sandwiches and the savory-sweet pastries, including a millet mochi doughnut that’s bewitchingly elastic in texture and subtly nutty in flavor.

In the evening, Win Son Bakery moonlights as a restaurant, with counter service and cocktails. Instead of cookies and cakes, its white cardboard boxes get filled with excellent fried chicken and five-spice fries, both of which should be dipped in “ginger deluxe,” a spectacular Thousand Island-esque mixture of ketchup, mayo, and mustard punched up with ginger, garlic, and fermented tofu. I could take or leave most of the rest of the dinner menu: a short list of overwrought salads and sandwiches, including a dry-aged burger, on milk buns. But a dish called *ya fan*—featuring a glistening confited duck leg, slow-cooked in soy, red-rice wine, and rock sugar; a salty, jammy soy egg; fresh basil; and half-moons of daikon pickles, all atop fluffy white rice—sets a new standard for fast casual. And where else will you find barley soft serve in a white-chocolate magic shell? It’s served in a waffle cone, baked, of course, on the premises. (*Pilar Cuban Bakery, baked goods \$1.50–\$6. Win Son Bakery, baked goods \$3–\$4.*)

—Hannah Goldfield