

Cafe del Barrio Serves Authentic Latin Cuisine to New Yorkers

by Valerie Cario

If you have not yet visited Café del Barrio on 104th street in Manhattan, then you are missing out on delicious Latin American cuisine that's very reasonably priced for New York City standards. Due to the café's location adjacent to El Museo del Barrio, most frequenters tend to be largely tourist in orientation, but because of its mouthwatering cuisine, many locals enjoy coming in to the casual cafeteria to get their food to go. The café is set up deli-style; patrons can choose to dine either indoors or outdoors in very urban, bare surroundings. However, despite the appearances of this chic dining facility, Café del Barrio's food transfers guests straight into a traditional Latin American trattoria without taking a trambia to get there.

Customers shouldn't be fooled by the casual, cafeteria style of Café del Barrio. Upon entering, diners can find an assortment of imported fruit juices, wines, and other treats. All of Café del Barrio's ingredients are flown in from Latin America in order to keep tastes authentic. The rest is locally grown on the organic Katchkie Farms located upstate. The menu prides itself on its change of entrees every two weeks, which are derived from different countries. While the quesadillas and tostadas have remained on the menu due to its popularity, new favorites

for locals include tostada de tinga de pollo (Mexican), chile relleno (Mexican), and puerco en jugo de naraja (Puerto Rican). Each dish proudly boasts many unique colors and flavors without having to be suffocated with extra cheese.



Café del Barrio can transform lunch into a mind-blowing experience. On top of a warm, crispy tortilla is tenderized chicken slow cooked in a tomato based tinga sauce that's naturally heated by red chili peppers and onions.

Adorning the chicken is cool and creamy slices of avocado, decorated with flecks of feta cheese. The chile relleno features a medley of sweet vegetables inside a hollowed green chili. Toasted pumpkin seeds add a nutty flavor to the relleno's intensely spicy sauce, creating a rich combination of tastes that vamps up this vegetarian classic. Juicy pork is served with rice bathed in broth, black beans, and delicate collard greens. The orange glaze that tops the pork is the result of sweating the sweetness and tang of oranges, carrots, and yellow peppers.

What a feast diners will experience, all before heading back to class or the office! The zesty Latin meals prepared and served at Café del Barrio are, simply put, edible works of art.