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TAQUERIAS AND TACO TRUCKS DOT PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS *South Philadelphia Leads The City's Taco Craze*

PHILADELPHIA, June 4, 2019 – Philadelphia has turned into a bona fide taco town. Between the authentic, mom-and-pop taquerias of South Philly, tried-and-true tequila bars, roving food trucks and the newest crop of Mexican joints, there's truly a taco for everyone and their *hermano*. Here's where:

South Philly:

- **Blue Corn** – Distinguished among its quick-serve counterparts on the 9th Street Italian Market, this family-owned and -operated restaurant has genuine warmth and hospitality—not to mention a liquor license and incredible tacos made with a rotating lineup of specialty tortillas pressed on the premises. 940 S. 9th Street, (215) 925-1010, [@bluecornrestaurant](https://www.facebook.com/bluecornrestaurant)
- **South Philly Barbacoa** – The full-service eatery from chef Cristina Martínez offers the incredible barbacoa, *pancita* (tripe), fresh-pressed tortillas and soulful consommé that has helped earn “best new restaurant” honors from *Bon Appétit* and made Martínez a James Beard Award 2019 finalist for “Best Chef, Mid-Atlantic.” 1140 S. 9th Street, (215) 360-5282
- **El Jarocho** – Everyone has a favorite neighborhood taco joint, and for many, this is it. A humble corner storefront slings memorably flavorful al pastor and nopales-tangled carne asada. Diners eat in to enjoy their signature sour cream-chipotle dipping sauce, which goes great with fresh salsas and tortilla chips. 1138 S. 13th Street, (215) 463-2020
- **El Zarape** – Should taco cravings take a turn for the burrito, or even, say, a sizzling fajita salad, this place delivers. Fried fish, carne asada and chorizo tacos share the menu with Tex-Mex classics. 1304 S. 9th Street, (215) 336-1293, elzarapephiladelphia.com
- **Los Gallos** – Colorful flags wave overhead at this South Philly storefront, where friendly service beckons with platters of generously appointed tacos, available in combinations of grilled and roasted meats, fragrant huitlacoche and spicy beef and chorizo *campechanos*. 951 Wolf Street, (215) 551-1245, losgallosmexicantaqueria.com
- **Philly Tacos** – This spot's gigantic menu of tacos of all textures and regional styles features grilled smoked pork chop, steak with Chihuahua cheese, several varieties of al pastor, beef eye and tripe. The owners also vend at the popular Headhouse Square Farmers Market, held on Sundays at 2nd and Lombard Streets. 2011 Reed Street, (215) 334-1200, phillytacos.com
- **Pistolas Del Sur** – Jose Pistola's (see below) South Philly outpost offers up a menu of more than a dozen land and sea tacos. The restaurant distinguishes itself with duck mole cocas and shrimp al pastor tacos. 1934 E. Passyunk Avenue, (267) 519-2612, pistolasdelsur.com
- **Prima Taqueria Mexicana** – Those in the know entrust their late-night taco needs to this tiny, no-frills shop, a lifesaver among Philly's restaurant industry folks and anyone who craves pork skin tacos at 3 a.m. 1104 S. 9th Street, (215) 339-5000
- **Tacos El Rodeo** – Diego Rivera-esque murals giveaway this South Philly truck: This spot, popular with workers and bar-goers, isn't messing around. Of special note: spit-roasted pork and various meat tacos served with salsa on the side. 1000 Washington Avenue, (267) 997-3415

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- **Taco Loco** – Like all the best taquerias, this Pennsport-parked truck has it all—the red, white and green motif; Jarritos; tortas; and simple but punchy *al suadero*, tripe and *choriqueso* tacos, right in front of Jefferson Square Park. 4th Street & Washington Avenue, (215) 883-9191
- **Veracruzana** – The original authentic South Philly taqueria has paved the way for countless others with its super affordable soft tortilla-wrapped delicacies, such as stewed bistec, grilled shrimp and cheese-stuffed jalapenos. 908 Washington Avenue, (215) 465-1440

Center City:

- **Dos Tacos** – This shoebox-size Center City joint is known for fun-loving fusion, mixing the classic (chipotle-braised chicken, blackened mahi-mahi) with the unconventional (fried plantains, chipotle cream and queso fresco). 120 S. 15th Street, (215) 567-8226, dostacosphilly.com
- **El Rey** – An old Center City diner sets the festively retro scene for lamb tacos and chile relleno alongside *Micheladas* (beer, spices and lime). Tacos are also available in the speakeasy Ranstead Room, located in the back. 2013 Chestnut Street, (215) 563-3330, elreyrestaurant.com
- **Jose Pistola's** – The food and beverage choices are extensive at this Center City hang. Among the taco options at this Mexified craft beer bar are Korean-style short rib with Asian pear pico de gallo and tempura-battered rock shrimp with pepitas and tom yum aioli. 263 S. 15th Street, (215) 545-4101, josepistolas.com
- **Lolita** – Part of the Marcie Turney and Valerie Safran empire, chic little Lolita brings modern Mexican flavors to busy 13th Street. The street food-style menu features tacos of the fish, carrot and chicken variety, along with interesting cocktails and margaritas. 106 S. 13th Street, (215) 546-7100, lolitaphilly.com
- **Mission Taqueria** – This hopping upstairs Center City spot from the owners of the landmark Oyster House (just below) balances tradition and innovation, slinging beef short rib and chicken mole tacos alongside red bean croquettes with chipotle mayo. The busy bar serves stirred, shaken and frozen cocktails. 1516 Sansom Street, 2nd floor, (215) 383-1200, missiontaqueria.com
- **Revolution Taco** – Carolyn Nguyen's just-off Rittenhouse Square spot specializes in “Tacos without borders,” exemplified by global spins like barbecue-spiced cauliflower or roasted duck served on a scallion pancake. 2015 Walnut Street, (267) 639-5681, therevolutiontaco.com
- **Tio Flores** – The prolific owners of Hawthornes Cafe and The Cambridge hold down the west side of South Street (officially the Graduate Hospital neighborhood) to satisfy taco cravings, happy hour through late night. Menu highlights include tacos topped with interesting flavor combos, like garlicky shrimp and bacon and lentil-cauliflower. 1600 South Street, (267) 687-2220, tioflores.com

River Wards & North/Northeast Philly:

- **El Purepecha Mexican Kitchen** – An under-the-radar taqueria on an unassuming corner in the Callowhill neighborhood (also called the Loft District) impresses with fillings such as crispy breaded fish and grilled shrimp, plus extensive sopes, burritos, tortas and *platos* (dish) selections. 469 N. 10th Street, (215) 765-2369
- **Heffe Tacos** – Both Heffe's walk-up stand in Fishtown and bi-level restaurant in Spring Garden serve fancifully named, unconventionally filled “Tacos That Don't Suck,” their description. 1431 Frankford Avenue, (215) 423-2309; 1543 Spring Garden Street, (215) 665-1397, heffetacos.com

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- **Loco Pez** – This dive-y, cash-only Fishtown spot found inspiration in L.A.’s fusion-y taco trucks, resulting in a mix-and-match selection of fun—and sometimes unexpected—flavors. Classic preparations like al pastor and *pollo pibil* share menu space with unconventional choices, like vegan-friendly seitan and spinach, and soy chorizo. 2401 E. Norris Street, (267) 886-8061, locopez.com
- **Nemi** – Nemi’s menu follows the traditional flavors of Mexico complete with house-made tortillas, salsas, guacamole and ceviche. As far as tacos go, there are confit pork shoulder, marinated skirt steak, fried cauliflower and other options for the choosing. A full tequila and mezcal bar add to the authenticity of this Port Richmond newcomer. 2636 Ann Street, (267) 519-0713, nemirestaurant.com
- **Que Chula es Puebla** – With a name that translates to “How beautiful is Puebla,” a shoutout to the owner’s home state, this fresh and friendly Kensington bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) spot serves three meals a day, with a wide variety of *platos tipicos* that include spicy shrimp stew and decadent chimichangas. But the taco selection here is no slouch, with *carne desebrada*, *tripa* or *bistek* fillings in the traditional soft tortillas, or in a crunchy shell, gringo-style. 1356 N. 2nd Street, (215) 203-0404, chulaespuebla.com
- **Sancho Pistola’s** – Jose Pistola’s (see above) Fishtown *hermano* offers a similar selection to hungry locals hanging out along Frankford Avenue. Nearly 20 types of tacos are served two to an order and come in varieties not often seen on other menus: pork belly banh mi, Korean rib, lobster, and calamari and chorizo. 19 W. Girard Avenue, (267) 324-3530, sanchopistolas.com
- **Taco Riendo** – Sating Mexican-craving masses north of Market Street from breakfast through dinner, this Old Kensington spot has a cozy interior, excellent tamales and generously filled tacos such as *choriqueso* (spicy Mexican sausage and Oaxaca cheese) and salsa-draped chicken. Quesadillas, platillos and *guisados* (Mexican stews) round out the menu. 1301 N. 5th Street, (215) 235-2294
- **Taqueria del Norte** – Mexican food is not typically associated with Northeast Philly, but this relaxed sit-down is doing its part to add south-of-the-border style here. This is a non-traditional taqueria by design, slinging tortillas filled with General Tso’s chicken, fried Brussels sprouts and Cajun-spiced mahi-mahi. They also offer Tex-Mex snacks, like nachos and “fancy cheese” quesadillas. 2859 Holme Avenue, (267) 538-4788, facebook.com/Taqueria-Del-Norte-268221967132901

West Philly:

- **Distrito** – Chef Jose Garces’ University City spot channels Mexico City with bright décor and authentic tacos: filled with chile-braised beef or vegetarian chorizo made from tofu. Elsewhere, the tequilas are plentiful, and the décor is fun loving and kitschy (a vintage VW Beetle converted into a booth, for example). 3945 Chestnut Street, (215) 222-1657, distritorestaurant.com
- **Honest Tom’s Plant-Based Taco Shop** – Evolved from a popular food truck and now further evolved with a vegan palate, this casual eat-in West Philly restaurant serves tacos, burritos and bowls filled with carrot and lentil-based barbacoa, “chickpotle,” fresh fruit juices (and the fruits themselves) and more. 261 S. 44th Street, (267) 838-2119, honesttomsplantbasedtacoshop.com

Suburban Spots:

- **Blue Route Taco Truck** – Not a moving vehicle per se, the seasonal visitor to the roof of Whole Foods Plymouth Meeting turns out some tasty fish, pork and veggie tacos, offering craft canned beer to go along with them. 500 W. Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, (610) 832-0010

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- **El Limon** – Grown from a grocery-store taco operation, this thriving suburban mini chain is famous for tortillas that are soft enough to sleep on. Each of the nine locations offers a small but tasty lineup of tacos, featuring traditional meats like chicken *tinga*, tilapia, carne asada and al pastor. 38 E. Butler Avenue, Ambler, (267) 460-8949; 61 W. Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore, (484) 413-2999; 845 Lancaster Avenue, Bryn Mawr, (484) 222-6929; 103 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, (610) 567-0120; 446 Lancaster Avenue, Malvern, (484) 329-7969; 1000 Sandy Hill Road, Norristown, (484) 322-2735; 451 West Ridge Pike, Royersford, (610) 474-2895; 1371 Wilmington Pike, West Chester, (484) 301-3352; 15 E. Lancaster Avenue, Paoli, (484) 328-3475, ellimontaqueria.com
- **El Primo Taqueria** – Behind a Mexican grocery store lies this three-meal-a-day taco heaven—and a bakery. Besides dessert, there’s an extensive menu of traditional Mexican dishes, including tacos filled with chicken, pork skin, tongue, tripe and more, along with the Middle-Eastern-spiced pork tacos *arabes*. 1719 Markley Street, Norristown, (484) 322-5323, elprimotaqueria.com
- **La Corita Taco Shop** – This surprising Bucks County spot serves up Salvadoran *pupusas* (cornmeal flatbreads) and traditional Mexican tacos, along with tamales made the Mexican or Salvadoran way. Taco fillings include shrimp, fish, spicy shredded chicken, tripe and tongue. 77 Downey Drive, Suite 3, Warminster, (267) 282-5507, lacoritatacoshop.com
- **La Peña Mexicana** – Colorful platters at this fantastic Chester County spot include homemade salsas, radish slices, golden rice and refried beans. Of course, the main event is the tacos: Specialties here include *cecina* (dried beef), al pastor and beef tongue. 609 W. Cypress Street, Kennett Square, (610) 925-2651
- **Pipeline Tacos** – The Main Line’s go-to for fish tacos and island flavors is a favorite for fresh tacos and smoothies. The classic combo: their “Pipeline” taco (grilled or tempura-fried mahi-mahi with mango papaya salsa and cilantro lime sauce) and a 24-ounce “Green Goodness” (kale, spinach, sweet banana, mango, pineapple and coconut smoothie). 165 E. Lancaster Avenue, Wayne, (610) 225-TACO, pipelinetaco.com

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