

CONTACT: Cara Schneider
(215) 206-2034, cara@visitphilly.com

LATINX-OWNED & -HELMED RESTAURANTS IN PHILADELPHIA
Latin Restaurants Have Prominence From North To South Philly & Many Neighborhoods In Between

PHILADELPHIA, April 21, 2021 – Philadelphia’s vibrant, multiethnic and multiracial Latinx population makes the city a hub for delicious Latin food. At dozens of spots throughout the city, residents and visitors can support Latinx-owned and -helmed restaurants while sampling authentic eats, including Venezuelan arepas (**Sazon Restaurant & Cafe**), Central American street food (**El Mercurio**), Argentine empanadas (**Jezabel’s Argentine Bakery & BYO**) and much more.

These spots, compiled with help from the [Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#), are great to check out any time of year or during **Dine Latino Restaurant Week**, taking place May 5-9, 2021:

Mexican:

- **Adelita:** Taking its name from a character in a famous Mexican ballad, this family-run bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) spot in Philly’s diverse Italian Market focuses on dishes from Mexico City and Puebla. Can’t-miss offerings include tacos (nearly a dozen options) and mole poblano.
- **Alma del Mar:** During *Queer Eye*’s 2019 visit to Philadelphia, the Fab Five memorably assisted Marcos Tlacopilco, owner and monger at Marcos Fish & Crab House, with work on a new restaurant. The result: Alma del Mar, named after Tlacopilco’s wife (and complete with a mural of the Queer Eye team inside). This Italian Market spot offers up a varied menu of Mexican and American dishes, including sweet breakfast options (tres leches pain perdu) and heartier entrees (branzino, pulpo al carbon).
- **Blue Corn:** Along the gloriously gritty South 9th Street Italian Market, the Sandoval family serves spot-on preparations of huitlacoche quesadillas and Puerto Vallarta tacos at Blue Corn. Much of the fare is served in signature blue corn tortillas, made with cornmeal from San Mateo Ozolco, in Puebla, Mexico, the owners’ hometown.
- **Café y Chocolate:** Deep in South Philly, this Mexican restaurant pairs its hearty, vegetarian-friendly Mexican breakfast/brunch menu (the chilaquiles are a must) with hard-to-find coffees and hot drinks, such as a cajetuccino, a cappuccino with cajeta, Mexican goat’s milk, and caramel.
- **Casa México:** One of the most prominent figures in Philadelphia’s food scene, Cristina Martínez is both an outstanding chef and an outspoken activist. She has racked up numerous national accolades over the years with South Philly Barbacoa (see below). Opened in February 2020, Casa México, also located in the Italian Market, serves more of Martínez’s star-making Mexican food, with an ever-changing menu.

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- **Jose Pistola's, Pistolas del Sur, Sancho Pistola's:** Adan Trinidad's trio of Mexican restaurants serve patrons in three of Philadelphia's busiest neighborhoods. After working at restaurants around the city, Trinidad helped launch spots in Rittenhouse Square, Fishtown and East Passyunk. While the menu varies across each property, patrons at Sancho Pistola's, Jose Pistola's and Pistola's del Sur will find staples like shareable guacamole appetizers, a long list of tacos, and extensive tequila and mezcal offerings from the bar.
- **La Canasta:** Authentic Mexican food awaits in South Philly's Whitman neighborhood at La Canasta Restaurant Grill. The spot's titular tacos de canasta are a solid choice, as are platillos (stews), quesadillas, sopes and more.
- **La llorana Cantina:** Patrons can settle in for a modern cantina experience at West Passyunk Avenue spot from Arturo Lorenzo (Café y Chocolate, La Mula Terca) and Tim Lidiak and Adrienne Salvatore-Markey (Thirsty Soul). Pair tacos, quesadillas and more with drinks from a varied bar program that makes use of rare tequilas.
- **La Mula Terca:** This South Philly BYO sets itself apart with a modern, higher-end take on Mexican and Latin American street food. The lamb birria tacos have rightfully earned patrons' praise, but diners would do well to save space for the grilled steak, ceviche and other delicious options.
- **Laz Cazuelas:** Those hungry for authentic Mexican fare can satisfy a craving for mole, sopes and more at this BYOB. Tip: Go all-out la vida Mexico by bringing a bottle of tequila.
- **Los Cuatro Soles:** Owned by Karina and Angel Jimenez, Newbold's Los Cuatro Soles (which translates to "the four suns") has been dishing out authentic Mexican food to customers since 2016. Burritos, huaraches and quesadillas all get high marks here.
- **Mole Poblano:** Masa lovingly wrapped in cornhusks or banana leaves, tamales are a year-round favorite throughout Mexico, Central America and South America. In the 9th Street Italian Market, bright Mole Poblano does an incredible variation on tamales soaked in their titular sauce.
- **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 flank steak, fried cauliflower and other options for the choosing. A full tequila and mezcal bar add to the authenticity of this Port Richmond spot.
- **South Philly Barbacoa:** South Philly Barbacoa's lamb barbacoa, pork quesadillas and tamales from chef Cristina Martínez and husband/cooking partner Benjamin Miller (who also own Casa México, see above) have earned the pair features in *Chef's Table* and *Bon Appétit*, as well as multiple James Beard Award honors. The team also advocates for immigrants' rights.
- **Taqueria El Jarocho:** Everyone has a favorite neighborhood taco joint, and for many, Restaurant Taqueria El Jarocho 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 especially well with fresh salsas and tortilla chips.

Central American:

- **El Merkury:** Pop-up shop turned brick-and-mortar eatery El Merkury specializes in Central American street food. Corn, chocolate, chili and beans go into popular dishes such as maize-based flatbread pupusas, available con carne or vegetarian, but the show-stoppers are the elaborate churros served in multiple flavors of ice cream and cake.

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- **Tamalex:** For stellar Honduran-style tamales, fatter and heartier than their Mexican counterparts, Tamalex is way worth the trip. Sweetening the deal: the enchiladas and huaraches, which also rate highly here.

South American:

- **El Bochinche:** Colombian and Latin American food make up the absolutely massive menu at this North Philly restaurant. The spot is well-known for its crave-worthy Colombian empanadas and authentic Columbian breakfasts of refried beans with rice, pork skin, sausage and eggs, while Mexican fare like tacos, tortas and more rounds out the offerings.
- **Jezabel's Argentine Bakery & BYO:** Jezabel Careaga is known for her Argentine empanadas, but she also has a way with tortilla de patatas (potato quiches), ham-and-cheese croissants and desserts, all served at her charming West Philly cafe.
- **La Calenita:** Breakfast, lunch, fresh breads and pastries and a full-service deli — **La Calenita** does it all. This Colombian spot in North Philadelphia serves heaping plates of arepas, chicharrones and various sandwiches, but the bakery treats are the real stars. Try *almojában* (cheese bread) or *treza* (braided bread stuffed with fruit) alongside a fresh juice or Colombian coffee.
- **Puyero:** Small but mighty, this colorful Society Hill BYOB has customers head to the counter to order Venezuelan street food: arepas, patacóns and house-made lemonades.
- **Sazon Restaurant & Cafe:** At this Spring Garden cafe, Venezuelan chef Judith Suzarra-Campbell grinds the cornflour for her arepas, which she fills with shredded beef, chicken, pulled pork and scrambled eggs. Guests can wash it all down with fresh fruit juices or chicha, a creamy Venezuelan rice drink.

Puerto Rican:

- **Bar Bombon:** The aesthetic may be inspired by Old San Juan, but the all-vegan menu at Nicole Marquis' Bar Bombon is thoroughly modern. Patrons enjoy Latin American food with a twist, along with potent margaritas available by the glass or pitcher.
- **Izlas:** Puerto Rican dishes satisfy customers in the diner-like atmosphere at Izlas in Kensington. Fried pork chops, pan-seared steak, fajitas and seafood dishes top the list of signature dishes, and the restaurant also offers family packs — six servings ready to share — and appetizers like chicken wings and cheesesteak spring rolls.

Dominican:

- **Parada Maimon:** The kitchen at this Callowhill eatery dishes out soul-stirring Dominican food — and plenty of it. The beef patty, yellow rice with black beans, tostones and *pasteles* earn high marks among ex-pats.

Latinx-owned & -helmed Restaurants That Are All Over The Map:

- **Amigos:** Two locations mean twice as many opportunities to enjoy the expansive menu at Amigo's, which includes Hispanic cuisine, as well as American offerings and, of course, more than a dozen different pizzas.

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- **Charlie was a sinner.:** Hip, candlelit and craft-cocktail-laden are all perfect ways to describe Nicole Marquis' vegan restaurant in the heart of the Gayborhood. Small plates like potato croquettes and artichoke frites feel indulgent without requiring a single animal-based ingredient, and the ambitious cocktail menu is impressive enough to keep even committed carnivores content.
- **Garces Group:** Nearly a dozen restaurants comprise Chef Jose Garces' holdings in Philadelphia and nearby Atlantic City, New Jersey, and many specialize in Latin-American flavors. Garces, a James Beard Award winner and *Iron Chef* star, runs spots like tapas-heavy **Amada** in Old City, **Distrito Taqueria** in University City and Rittenhouse Square's beloved burger joint **Village Whiskey**.
- **HipCityVeg:** Organic, plant-based ingredients dominate the menu at HipCityVeg, the fast-casual favorite with locations throughout Greater Philadelphia and in Washington, DC. Founder Nicole Marquis embraces fresh ingredients and sustainable packaging for all-day eats that include sandwiches, salads, smoothies and delicious banana whips.
- **Lou & Choo Lounge:** The food at this North Philadelphia restaurant and lounge is as varied as the entertainment. Dungeness crabs, curry rice, catfish nuggets and chicken alfredo are on the menu indoors and out, where live music pumps through the indoor bar and around the spacious outdoor area patrons call The Yard.
- **Queen & Rook:** This Queen Village board game café — the creation of Edward Garcia and Jeannie Wong — is aimed at families by day and adults by night. Patrons choose from more than 1,200 games and puzzles and pair their game-playing adventures with mozzarella sticks, meatless burgers and more, plus a lengthy beer list and on-brand cocktails with names like Wolfsbane Potion, Amidala and Phoenix Feather.
- **Scarpetta:** This elegant Italian restaurant inside The Rittenhouse Hotel (as well as in many other cities across the country) serves the food Chef Jorge Espinoza is most passionate about. Instead of dishes from Espinoza's native Mexico, patrons at Scarpetta will find basil gnocchi, tagliatelle, foie gras ravioli and Mediterranean dishes.

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