

Restaurant listings for the BT Dining Guide are written by Geoffrey Anderson and Dianne Rubin of Miami Food Pug (MFP), Andrew McLees (AM), Mandy Baca (MB), and the late Pamela Robin Brandt (PRB) (restaurants@biscaynetimes.com). Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but restaurants frequently change menus, chefs, and operating hours, so please call ahead to confirm information. Icons (\$\$\$) represent estimates for a typical meal without wine, tax, or tip. Hyphenated icons (\$-\$\$\$) indicate a significant range in prices between lunch and dinner.

\$ = \$10 and under
\$\$ = \$20
\$\$\$ = \$30
\$\$\$\$ = \$40
\$\$\$\$\$ = \$50 and over

3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant

1800 Biscayne Blvd. #105
305-373-2688

Until this eatery opened in late 2010, the solid Chinese restaurants in this neighborhood could be counted on the fingers of no hands. So it's not surprising that most people concentrate on Chinese and Chinese/American fare. The real surprise is the remarkably tasty, budget-priced, Vietnamese fare. Try pho, 12 varieties of full-flavored beef/rice noodle soup (including our favorite, with well-done flank steak and flash-cooked eye round). All can be customized with sprouts and fresh herbs. Also impressive: Noodle combination plates with sautéed meats, salad, and spring rolls. \$\$ (PRB)

Alter

223 NW 23rd St.
305-573-5996

Award-winning chef Brad Kilgore offers some of the most exciting food in town, with menu items

like soft egg with sea scallop espuma, chive, truffle pearls, and Gruyere: and grouper cheeks with black rice, shoyu hollandaise, and sea lettuce. Novices don't fret -- the staff will guide you through your eating journey. The warehouse vibe speaks to the neighborhood's appeal while letting the food speak for itself. Grab a spot at the chef's counter, the best seat in the house. Reservations a must. \$\$\$\$\$ (MB)

Amara at Paraiso

3101 NE 7th Ave.

305-702-5528

Edgewater isn't usually a neighborhood that comes up in discussions of Miami's food scene. Amara at Paraiso could change that soon, however. This Latin America-inspired concept from chef Michael Schwartz overlooks Biscayne Bay, providing guests with a beautiful backdrop for an equally alluring menu. The stars of the show are the restaurant's wood grill and Josper oven that turn out an array of items like grilled lamb ribs, beef short rib, and hefty meat and seafood platters. The view alone is worth a visit. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Baccano

97 NW 25th St. #103

305-857-5722

Somewhat secreted on a side street from Wynwood's action-central arts and eats drag, this pizza-plus-wine/beer bar is hardly the area's only source of beautifully burn-blistered wood oven-fired pies. But several features make it a perfect fit for the neighborhood's working-class/arts vibe, like exuberantly eccentric retro-Italian décor -- no derivative designer pretensions. Equally suited to starving artist sensibilities: pizzas topped with more-than-usual generosity (even basic Margheritas have, for once, enough mozzarella!); pizza prices several bucks less than usual. Other superb bread-based items include truly crusty crostini, panini, more. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Basani's

3221 NE 2nd Ave.

786-925-0911

Despite this tiny place's modern décor, the family-run ambiance and Italian-American comfort food evoke the neighborhood red-sauce joints that were our favored hangouts growing up in NJ's Sopranos territory. And low prices make it possible to hang out here frequently. Pizzas with hand-tossed crusts, not wood-oven but resembling honest bread, for less than fast food pizzeria prices? It's an offer you don't refuse. Don't refuse garlic rolls, either, or sinful zeppole (fried dough) for dessert. There's more complex fare, like chicken à la Francese, too. And they

deliver. \$\$ (PRB)

Beaker & Gray

2637 N. Miami Ave.

305-699-2637

Named after essential tools in the kitchen, you can't miss the restaurant, with its rooftop orange neon sign. Inside industrial meets rustic chic, as is the standard in Wynwood. All menus are expertly labeled and separated into fun, yet useful categories like Bites, Colds, Strange, and Shaken. The sandwichito with pork belly and watermelon rind on plantain brioche, and adult-friendly chicken nuggets with avocado and sweet 'n' sour have become quite iconic. The wine list includes lesser-known vineyards. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Blackbrick

3451 NE 1st Ave. #103

305-573-8886

Inspiration for the Chinese food at this hotspot came from authentic flavors Richard Hales (from Sakaya Kitchen) encountered during travels in China, but the chef's considerable imagination figures in mightily. Example: Don't expect General Tso's chicken on the changing menu. The General's Florida Gator, though, is a distinct possibility. Dishes less wild but still thrilling, due to strong spicing: bing (chewy Chinese flatbread) with char sui, garlic, and scallions; two fried tofu/veggie dishes (one hot, one not) savory enough to bring bean curd maligners (and confirmed carnivores) to their knees. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Boia De

5205 NE 2nd Ave.

305-967-8866

The owners of the now-defunct La Pollita food truck have traded tacos for more upscale fare with Boia De, their intimate Buena Vista concept. New American cuisine with Italian influences graces the menu here, where guests will find flavorful, shareable plates like baked clams, ricotta gnocchi, rabbit pappardelle, and potato skins with caviar and stracciatella. The place is a bit on the pricier side -- particularly for the neighborhood -- but the food and hard-to-find wine selections justify the premium. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Boulud Sud

255 Biscayne Blvd. Way
305-421-8800

Those mourning the loss of db Bistro Moderne in downtown Miami now have reason to smile. Renowned chef Daniel Boulud hasn't given up on South Florida. He's brought down his popular Mediterranean concept Boulud Sud to fill the space. Items like lamb flatbread, grilled octopus, and Baharat chicken have replaced the French-focused fare of Sud's predecessor. Although much of the restaurant has changed, one thing hasn't: It's still home to one of the best happy hours in the city. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Buena Vista Deli

3252 NE 1st Ave., #107
305-576-3945

If there's one word to describe your experience at Buena Vista Deli, it's relaxing. There's something so pleasant about the charming French café and its satisfying selections, of which there are many. BVD serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily, so expect to see everything from fluffy croissants and hearty sandwiches to sizeable steaks and homemade lasagnas. Because there's so much to try, you'll have to keep coming back. And you certainly will -- especially for the weekend dinner offerings. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

The Butcher Shop Beer Garden & Grill

165 NW 23rd St.
305-846-9120

Unbelievable but true: At the heart of this festive, budget-friendly beer-garden restaurant is an old-school gourmet butcher shop, where sausages from classic (brats, chorizo) to creative (lamb and feta) are house-made, and all beef is certified USDA prime -- rarely found at even fancy steakhouses. Take your selections home to cook, or better yet, eat them here, accompanied by intriguing Old/New World sauces, garnishes (like bleu cheese fritters), sides, and starters. Desserts include a bacon sundae. Beer? Try an organic brew, custom-crafted for the eatery. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Carrot Express Midtown

3252 Buena Vista Blvd. #108
786-312-1424

In the past few years, healthy fast-casual concepts have become a dime a dozen in Miami. Predating many of them is Carrot Express, a Miami Beach staple that's been serving up lean and green offerings for roughly half a decade. The latest Carrot Express outpost in Midtown finally brings favorites like poke bowls and stuffed sweet potatoes to the mainland. Herbivores,

in particular, have reason to rejoice: Vegan burgers and sausages are just a few of the plentiful meatless options available. \$\$ (MFP)

Cerveceria 100 Montaditos

3252 NE 1st Ave. #104, Shops at Midtown Miami
305-921-4373

Student budget prices, indeed. A first-grader's allowance would cover a meal at this first U.S. branch of a popular Spanish chain. The 100 mini sandwiches (on crusty, olive oil-drizzled baguettes) vary from \$1 to \$2.50, depending not on ingredient quality but complexity. A buck scores genuine Serrano ham, while top-ticket fillings add imported Iberico cheese, pulled pork, and tomato to the cured-ham slivers. Other options revolve around pâtés, smoked salmon, shrimp, and similar elegant stuff. There's cheap draft beer, too, plus nonsandwich snacks. \$\$ (PRB)

Charly's Vegan Tacos

172 NW 24th St.
305-456-8202

For plant-based eaters, Charly's Vegan Tacos is an easy sell. For carnivores, the name might be an instant turn-off. Give it a chance: Charly's makes some tasty tacos, many of which resemble their meat counterparts to the T. For example, there's the "carne asada" taco that uses grilled seitan steak; and the "chicharron prensado," which uses "porkles" cracklings for that recognizable crunch. Get a few of either plus a bowl of pozole (Mexican stew), and you've got yourself quite the meal. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Coyo Taco

2300 NW 2nd Ave.
305-573-8228

If you go to this affordable Mexican street-food-themed joint expecting one of today's many fast-casual, healthy-type Mexican taco/burrito chains, where the attraction is mainly just that fillings are fresh, you'll be pleasantly surprised. Here tortillas are handmade and fillings are either genuinely traditional (like cochinita pibil) or delightfully original -- and sometimes satisfyingly sinful, like duck confit with enough skin and fat to scandalize all the health-obsessed places. There are first-rate vegetarian fillings, too, like mushroom/huitlacoche with cotija cheese; tasty churros for dessert; and beer and margaritas. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Crazy Poke

312 NW 24th St.

786-401-7542

Crazy Poke, Wynwood's latest poke spot, is joining a crowded landscape; the neighborhood is already full of places that serve the Hawaiian specialty. Fortunately, the restaurant has one big advantage: flexibility. Guests who make their own bowl have a laundry list of ingredients available, including over one dozen mix-ins and an array of sauces like creamy miso and wasabi aioli. Signature selections like the Citrus Shrimp take the guesswork out of ordering, but we suggest you let your creativity run wild. \$\$ (MFP)

The Daily Creative Food Co.

2001 Biscayne Blvd.

305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar – sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks – a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$ (PRB)

Dr. Smood

2230 NW 2nd Ave.

Its large windows and corner location will draw you in, but the comfortable and expansive minimalist interior with Carrera marble, walnut wood, and hotel-like seating will keep you. While their motto is “smart food for a good mood” in the form of mylks, smoodys, and organic live juices, the menu also includes coffee, soups, salads, sandwiches, spreads like cacao mushroom tahini and seasonal berry jam, and non-traditional desserts with flax, almond meal, and coconut butter. Most of the items can be grabbed to-go, but expect to wait in line. \$-\$\$ (MB)

El Bajareque

278 NW 36th St.

305-576-5170

Dozens of little Latin American eateries, all looking almost identically iffy, line 36th Street. But this family-owned “bajareque” (shack) is one where you definitely want to stop for some of Miami's most tasty, and inexpensive, Puerto Rican home cooking, from mondongo (an allegedly hangover-curing soup) to mofongo, a plantain/chicharron mash with varied toppings plus garlicky mojo. Housemade snacks are irresistible, too, and great take-out party fare:

pork-studded pasteles, similar to Cuban tamals but with a tuber rather than corn masa dough, or empanadas with savory shrimp stuffing. \$ (PRB)

Ella

140 NE 39th St.

786-534-8177

Located off of the Design District's upscale Palm Court, this sun-filled, airy café with pops of sea foam and blonde maple, is Michael Schwartz's newest eatery, inspired by his daughter, Ella. A breakfast and lunch spot, it focuses on simplicity with perfectly honed sandwiches, salads, and pastries. Offering only eight seats indoors, the majority of the seating is outdoors under large café umbrellas providing an excellent view of the courtyard. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Ember

151 NE 41st St., Unit 117

786-334-6494

Celebrated chef Brad Kilgore continues his hot streak with his latest concept, Ember. The most affordable of his restaurants, Ember focuses on classic American bistro fare with a twist. You'll find comfort food like poutine, pimento cheese beignets, and smoked fried chicken on the menu -- very different items than those at the more upscale Alter. Get the full experience by ordering off the Over the Embers section, which features lasagna, roasted cornbread custard, and other items "not traditionally grilled or cooked over fire." \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Enriqueta's Sandwich Shop

186 NE 29th St.

305-573-4681

This Cuban breakfast/lunch old-timer actually serves more than sandwiches (including mammoth daily specials)-- and since reopening after a fire, does so in a cleanly renovated interior. But many hardcore fans never get past the parking lot's ordering window, and outdoors really is the best place to manage Enriqueta's mojo-marinated messy masterpiece: pan con bistec, dripping with sautéed onions, melted cheese, and potato sticks; tomatoes make the fats and calories negligible. Accompany with fresh orange juice or café con leche, and you'll never want anything else, except maybe a bib. \$ (PRB)

Fireman Derek's Bake Shop & Café

2818 N. Miami Ave.

786-449-2517

As a genuine City of Miami firefighter, Derek Kaplan puts fires out, but since age 15 he's also been lighting fires -- in his oven. The decades of baking experience shows in both his locally award-winning signature pies, especially Key lime and salted caramel "crack," and in changing produce-based seasonal selections. For full, balanced (i.e., all-pie) breakfasts and lunches, there are also savory options like mac 'n' cheese pie, or satisfyingly rich, totally non-sissy quiches. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Five Guys Famous Burger and Fries

3256 Buena Vista Blvd.

305-571-8341

www.fiveguys.com

No green-leaf faux health food here. You get what the name says, period, with three adds: kosher dogs, veggie burgers, and free peanuts while you wait. Which you will, just a bit, since burgers are made fresh upon order. Available in double or one-patty sizes, they're well-done but spurtingly juicy, and after loading with your choice of free garnishes, even a "little" burger makes a major meal. Fries (regular or Cajun-spiced) are also superior, hand-cut in-house from sourced potatoes. \$ (PRB)

Freshii

2300 NW 2nd Ave.

786-534-9656

Sure, some fast-food chains let you "Have It Your Way" -- unless your way means healthy. But Canadian-based Freshii, arguably the world's fastest-growing franchise, is attempting to make high cholesterol obsolete several hundred locations at a time. All four entrée categories (wraps/burritos, salads, soups, bowls) start vegetarian, and chef-conceived dishes like quinoa-centered "Baja burritos" remain so; a build-your-own option enables customizing with numerous proteins, toppings, and sauces. But sadly for grease monkeys, choices are only semi-sinful (cheeses, Asian peanut sauce) at best. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Ghee Indian Kitchen

3620 NE 2nd Ave.

786-636-6122

Chef Niven Patel, the talent behind the wildly successful Ghee Indian Kitchen in Dadeland, is giving Design District foodies a reason to salivate. Cypress Tavern's former space is now home

to his restaurant's second outpost, where patrons can enjoy mouthwatering bites like smoked chicken samosa, turmeric marinated grouper, and turkey kofta. Although you can order à la carte, the three-course, family-style tasting menu for \$55 is a steal and deserves your consideration; it's one of the most affordable tastings in the area. \$\$ (MFP)

GLAM Vegan

3301 NE 1st Ave. #103-1
786-864-0590

Whether you're a full-fledged vegan or just experimenting with plant-based fare, GLAM Vegan serves up enough unique culinary twists to keep you coming back. The Midtown Miami establishment takes what you know about "green eating" and turns it on its head with dishes like jackfruit tacos and spaghetti and meatless balls, both of which look, taste, and feel like they contain meat. Thirsty? Choose from a selection of vegan-friendly wines and beers or treat yourself to the Palm Springs Date Shake. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

GoBistro

315 NW 25th St.
786-332-3597

Reasonably priced Asian cuisine is rare in Wynwood -- or rather, it was. Broward's GoBistro has brought its sushi and ramen to the 305, and we're oh-so-grateful. The second you look at the menu, you can't help but notice the variety. Feeling just a little peckish? Opt for appetizers like avocado fries and chicken wings. Hungrier patrons can scarf down miso pork ramen, dragon rolls, and soft shell crab buns. Picky eaters, take note: There truly is something here for everyone. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Harry's Pizzeria

3918 N. Miami Ave.
786-275-4963

In this humble space (formerly Pizza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east -- local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful -- fruity, not funky -- Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zeppoles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$ (PRB)

Hurricane Grill & Wings

3201 N. Miami Ave. #103
305-576-7133

Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-7133 This Florida fast/casual chain became an instant hit in Midtown Miami owing to a winning concept: more than 35 heat-coded sauces and dry rubs meant for custom-tossing with wings and other things (including white-meat "boneless wings," really wing-shaped chicken breast pieces), accompanied by ranch or classic blue-cheese dip and celery. It would be silly to not pair your main with garlic/herb-butter parmesan fries. There are many other items, too, including salads. But hey, celery is salad, right? \$\$ (PRB)

iSushi Café

3301 NE 1st Ave. #107
305-548-8751

Ever get tempted by supermarket sushi rolls, just because they're there? Don't be. This quick-casual café has a menu similar to that at sushi/Japanese small-plates, fast-food take-out joints (individual nigiri, makis, and party platters, plus small plates like edamame, seaweed, etc.) and comparable preparation speed, too, but with ingredient quality and freshness that's more upscale. Prices are actually considerably cheaper than those of market makis that might have been sitting around for days. Additionally, ambiance, though casual, is stylish enough for a date or dinner with friends. \$\$ (PRB)

Joey's Italian Café

2506 NW 2nd Ave.
305-438-0488

The first new restaurant in the Wynwood Café District, this stylish indoor/outdoor Italian hangout is as casually cool as one would hope -- and as affordable. There's a five-buck half-serving of spaghetti al pomodoro and respectable vino for under \$30. And few can resist delicately thin, crunchy-crustured pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Kaido

151 NE 41 St., Unit 217

786-409-5591

James Beard-nominated chef Brad Kilgore has another hit on his hands with Kaido, his beautiful Design District cocktail lounge. While Kaido is touted as a drinking den, its cocktails and food get an equal share of the limelight. The Alter chef's offerings include small plates such as blue crab rangoon, a curry cobia summer roll, and lemongrass duck sausage. Feel like splurging? An A5 wagyu katsu sandwich can be yours for \$125. Pair it with a sakura-infused negroni, and you're golden. \$\$-\$\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

Kush

2003 N. Miami Ave.

305-576-4500

From the folks behind the popular Coral Gables artisanal beer pub LoKal -- voted a "Most Green Restaurant in Florida" by the Nature Conservancy -- Kush pushes the concept farther: that farm-to-table dishes (some from LoKal, others created new) and craft beers aren't mere craft; they're art. Which you'll find on the walls. On tables you'll find, among other things, the Kush & Hash burger: Florida-raised beef, ground in-house, served with hash (the edible, not smokable, kind), bacon, fried egg, and housemade ketchup on a waffle bun, with a side of maple syrup. Edgy enough for ya? \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

KYU

251 NW 25th St.

786-577-0150

The Asian-inspired restaurant wholly encompasses the creative vibe of the neighborhood with a raw space outfitted in murals by 2Alas, micro green centerpieces, and lots of concrete features as well as a balanced menu of wood-fired items and refreshing ingredients. Roasted cauliflower comes with goat cheese salad and shishito-herb vinaigrette; tuna tataki takes a spicy turn with fire-roasted peppers, fermented chili, and citrus; and white ponzu, green chili, and herbs accompany sliced Hamachi. There's also sweet soy and garlic short ribs, Korean fried chicken, and Thai fried rice in a stone pot. Open for brunch on Sundays. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

La Palapa Hondureña (formerly Adelita's Café)

2699 Biscayne Blvd.

305-576-1262

From the street (which is actually NE 26th, not Biscayne) this Honduran restaurant seems unpromising, but inside it's bigger, better, and busier than it looks. Unlike many Latin American

eateries, this one sticks close to the source and proves a crowd-pleaser. On weekends especially, the dining rooms are packed with families enjoying authentic fare like baleadas (thick corn tacos), tajadas (Honduras's take on tostones), rich meal-in-a-bowl soups packed with seafood or meat and veggies, and more. \$ (PRB)

La Provence

2200 Biscayne Blvd.

305-576-8002

www.laprovincemiami.com

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Lagniappe

3425 NE 2nd. Ave.

305-576-0108

In New Orleans, "lagniappe" means "a little extra," like the 13th doughnut in a baker's dozen. And that's what you get at this combination wine and cheese bar/backyard BBQ/entertainment venue. Choose artisan cheeses and charcuterie from the fridges, hand them over when you pay (very little), and they'll be plated with extras: olives, bread, changing luscious condiments. Or grab fish, chicken, veggies, or steak (with salad or cornbread) from the hidden yard's grill. Relax in the comfie mismatched furniture, over extensive wine/beer choices and laidback live music. No cover, no attitude. \$\$ (PRB)

Laid Fresh

250 NW 24th St.

305-699-0601

Wynwood has a laundry list of restaurants, but very few of them cater to the morning crowd. Thanks to Laid Fresh, early risers (and all-day breakfast lovers) have a wide selection of egg sandwiches and other treats to start the day. The soft scrambled sandwich with brie and avocado is heaven on a plate, while the egg whites and avocado is less rich and more cardiologist-friendly. Ready for the weekend? Enjoy a mimosa (or two) in the restaurant's signature mug. \$ (MFP)

Latteria Italiana

33103 NE 1st Ave. #101

786-577-4362

Retro, charming décor meets authentic Italian food from the foodie region of Emilia-Romagna. The small menu of piadine (Italian flatbreads) and classic entrées like lasagna sticks to its roots. But homemade gelato, in flavors like Straciatella, Ferrero Rocher, and Salt & Pepper Pistachio, which includes whole pieces of pistachio, will make you want to skip straight to dessert. Niceties include a rotating inventory of imported Italian treats like cheese, pasta, and cookies. \$-\$\$ (MB)

Leal Bistro + Art

2700 N. Miami Ave.

786-542-5246

When you're craving a quick, budget-friendly bite, Leal Bistro + Art delivers in spades. The charming family-owned café fits right into the artsy Wynwood neighborhood with its cute aesthetic. Begin your meal with the hearty beef ribs soup and then move onto Leal's slow roasted pork sandwich. If you're just in the mood for a snack, you can't go wrong with a fresh cheese arepa. For something even more substantial, nosh on the smoked duck breast with black tea and red wine sauce during dinner. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Le Chick

310 NW 24th St.

305-771-2767

Out of the ashes of Dizengoff and Federal Donuts rises Le Chick, a rotisserie-chicken spot that should hopefully avoid its neighbors' fate. While chicken is the restaurant's signature protein, it's not the only standout. A delicious Royale With Cheese is sure to please burger fanatics (and <l>Pulp Fiction</l>) fans with two hefty patties, cheddar, pickles, and secret sauce. The best value, though, is the Why Not platter that comes with all the hits: rotisserie chicken, fried chicken, pork ribs, and onion rings. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Lemoni Café

4600 NE 2nd Ave.

305-571-5080

The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a

veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Limón y Sabor

3045 Biscayne Blvd.

786-431-5739

In this dramatically renovated space, the room is now light and open, and the food is authentic Peruvian, with seafood a specialty. Portions are huge, prices low, quality high. Especially good are their versions of pescado a lo macho (fish fillet topped with mixed seafood in a creamy, zesty sauce); jalea (breaded and deep-fried fish, mixed seafood, and yuca, topped with onion/pepper/lime salsa), and yuca in hot yet fruity rocoto chili cream sauce. \$ (PRB)

Love N' Gyros

2814 N. Miami Ave.

Wynwood is full of elevated dining spots like Alter, KYU, and Hiden. But what if you just want something casual? Enter Love N' Gyros, a cool Greek joint that's easy on the wallet. The concise street-food menu should look familiar to fans of Mediterranean cuisine: Pitas are plentiful and first-timers should start with the OG, a delectable mix of pork and tzatziki. Other filling proteins are available, too -- just make sure to save room for the Fortomenes loaded fries -- aka cheese heaven. \$ (MFP)

Mad Lab Creamery

140 NE 39th St.

Pastry chef Soraya Kilgore, known for her desserts at Alter, now has her own place dedicated to sweets: MadLab Creamery. Located in the Design District's Palm Court, the ice cream store features a wealth of Instagram-worthy creations, many of which can be adorned with your choice of over two dozen toppings. Among those toppings: sprinkles, chocolate honeycomb, and cotton candy (a must). Here, no order is complete without a Japanese cheesecake or chocolate slab. Prepare to kiss your diet goodbye. \$ (MFP)

Mandolin Aegean Bistro

4312 NE 2nd Ave.

305-576-6066

www.mandolinmiami.com

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room -- or even more

atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden -- diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezes: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Mercato

4141 NE 2nd Ave.

786-332-3772

Adjacent to Dena Marino's hot hangout MC Kitchen, the contemporary Italian chef's artisanal market and breakfast/lunch café is for diners wanting a quicker (but not fast-food) sit-down meal, or inventive take-out. Pressed for time? Try a pressed sandwich like Marino's Italian Cubano (porchetta, prosciutto cotto, Swiss, pickles, and Dijon mustard dressing, on ciabatta). Along with hot or cold sandwiches, there's a wide variety of homemade breakfast pastries, breads, cookies, and fresh-baked quiches, plus salads and a daily-changing soup. Market items include exotic jams, craft beers, and Marino's private label EVOO. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Michael's Genuine Food and Drink

130 NE 40th St.

305-573-5550

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Mignonette

210 NE 18th St.

305-374-4635

From Day One this Old Florida/New Orleans fusion oyster bar, from Blue Collar's chef/owner Danny Serfer and food blogger Ryan Roman, received myriad raves for its cuisine and informed service. All manner of oysters (roughly six superb selections available raw daily, and cooked choices including subtly brandy-sauced oysters Bienville), plus other superb seafood and Blue Collar's famous veggie creations -- even a dynamite prime rib -- is of a caliber that catalyzes its own neighborhood gentrification, rapidly. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Mike's at Venetia

555 NE 15th St., 9th Floor

305-374-5731

www.mikesvenetia.com

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Mister-O1

2315 N. Miami Ave.

786-991-9343

With pizza this good, it's hard to remain hidden. Mister-O1, the once-secret pizzeria in a Miami Beach office building, is embracing its mainstream success with a third location -- this time in Wynwood. The restaurant knows not to mess with a good thing, so expect to see all its beloved classics on the menu. The burrata and Barbara salad are still must-eats, as is the literal star of the show: the Star Luca, a star-shaped pie with spicy salami, ricotta and mozzarella. \$\$ (MFP)

Morgans Restaurant

28 NE 29th St.

305-573-9678

www.themorgansrestaurant.com

Housed in a beautifully refurbished 1930s private home, Morgans serves eclectic, sometimes internationally influenced contemporary American cuisine compelling enough to attract hordes. Dishes are basically comfort food, but *ultimate* comfort food: the most custardy, fluffy French toast imaginable; shoestring frites that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crisply panko-crusted and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" -- definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

NOA Café

2711 NE 2nd Ave.

305-573-2557

Originally just a catering company, tiny NOA (initials of Israeli-born chef/owner Adi Kafri's three daughters) gradually became a "best-kept secret" lunch spot for its budget-friendly fresh focaccia sandwiches, plus perfectly dressed full-meal MediterAsian salads. The cute Edgewater oasis now serves dinner, too. Highly recommended: the big, beautiful Middle Eastern mezze platter (with falafel balls, silky hummus, tahini, grape leaves, heaps of grilled veggies, more), or lavishly veg-studded pad Thai (with an unusual lemongrass/orange peel-spiked sauce), either enough for two to share over wine. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Ono Poké Shop

2320 N. Miami Ave.

786-955-6894

A casual, clean, and vibrant little eatery, Ono Poké Shop is the latest eatery to catch the trending "poké fever" that's hit some of Miami's most up-and-coming neighborhoods. Greatly influenced by traditional Japanese cuisine, the menu consists of tried and true combinations, such as spicy ahi tuna tossed in a spicy soy dressing, as well as flexible options to customize your own poké bowl to taste. Quality ingredients and fresh fish make for a satisfying, healthy meal when lunch o'clock rolls around. \$\$ (AM)

OTL

160 NE 40th St.

786-953-7620

Coffee, breakfast, sandwiches, and yoga, anyone? Yes, there's now such a place, and it's naturally in the Design District. OTL is an ambitious concept pushing light bites and strong coffee, courtesy of an auspiciously motley troika of influencers, including the team behind The Smile NYC, LIV impresario David Grutman, and Miami Design District braintrust Craig Robins. Coffee shops are oftentimes the beating hearts of creative hubs, and OTL is no different; expect to see plenty of over-caffeinated designers, artists, developers, and retail employees on their lunch breaks. The place is bright and clean, and could double as a white cube gallery with its pastel chairs, light wood accents, blue chip artwork, and upstairs multipurpose space reserved for performance and pop-ups. The food, while flavorful, is mildly overpriced, but it's an afterthought when you realize that good coffee has finally arrived in the Miami Design District. \$-\$\$ (AM)

Palat Miami

4702 NE 2nd Ave.

786-953-7577

When you're craving Italian food, where do you go? Palat Miami should be on your shortlist. The neighborhood Italian-fusion restaurant is serving flavorful food that hits the spot no matter the occasion. Small bites like piquillo peppers are perfect for splitting with friends over a bottle of wine, whose budget-friendly pricing may tempt you to order a second. Larger appetites are welcome, too, and they can indulge in braised rabbit tagliatelle and other hearty items. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Palatino

3004 NW 2nd Ave.

786-360-5200

When longtime favorite Jamaican joint Clive's fell victim to gentrification, few expected to find similarly skilled old-school Caribbean-American soul food in Wynwood again, especially not at old-school prices. But that's what this small, super-friendly mom-and-pop spot serves up: breakfasts like ackee and salt fish, fried dumpling and callaloo, or an egg/maple sausage/cheese grits combo; plates (with sides) of oxtails, curry goat, jerk chicken; richly crusted piquant chicken or meat patties that contend with Miami's best. Surprises include homemade pastries, and \$1 ice cream cones in tropical flavors like soursop. \$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Palermo Restaurant & Wine Bar

4582 NE 2nd Ave.

786-502-4460

When it comes to cooking up delicious Argentine cuisine, Palermo Restaurant & Wine Bar succeeds on all fronts. At Palermo, you can expect quality *and* value; prepare for big portions and flavors across the board. Since this is an Argentinean restaurant, your order should include one of their many cuts of meat. We suggest the oh-so-tender skirt steak plus a few empanadas for good measure. If you're not big on steak, the restaurant also serves up a variety of Italian dishes. \$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Pizza Pazza

275 NE 18th St. #109

786-762-2238

Close your eyes while eating Naples-born Sal Matuozzo's wood-oven pies and you'll be in Naples. Crusts: Thin rather than Roman super-thin; there's just enough chewy thickness to emphasize you're eating honest bread, not a cracker. Toppings: High-quality (fresh fior di latte, not commercial mozzarella ; intensely flavorful sauce featuring imported San Marzano tomatoes; garnishes including fresh black truffles) and applied judiciously enough that each bite tastes slightly different -- neither ungenerously Spartan nor crassly overloaded. Prices: higher

than typical neighborhood pizzerias, lower than a plane ticket to Italy. \$\$ (PRB)

Primo's

1717 N Bayshore Dr.

305-371-9055

The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hangout vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$ (PRB)

Prohibition

3404 N. Miami Ave.

305-438-9191

Frankly, we don't get why this expansive, high-ceilinged space with enormous front windows and open kitchen is so often described as evocative of a Prohibition-era speakeasy; ambiance here is artfully and amusingly sinful, not secretive. Fare is a fun, familiar mix of modern comfort foods (truffled lobster mac 'n' cheese, NY strip steak with truffled parmesan fries, many other items featuring truffle oil) and retro favorites like meatballs. It's simple, solid stuff served in generous portions to match the menu items that best truly evoke Prohibition times: hefty, old-fashioned, two-fisted cocktails. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Pummarola Pizzeria Napoletana

3328 N. Miami Ave.

786-535-4988

Proof in Midtown Miami may be long gone, but good pizza is not. Pummarola -- a Coral Gables favorite -- has taken over Proof's former location, pumping out pies and pastas that are far more affordable than its predecessor. Don't let the low prices fool you: This is high-quality cuisine. Just a taste of their margherita pizza, gnocchi pasta, or meatballs is evidence enough. Best of all, you won't be waiting long; most items take just a few minutes to come out. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

R House

2727 NW 2nd Ave.

305-576-0240

A strikingly stylish restaurant that's part art gallery could be pretentious, in a still largely ungentrified area of cutting-edge artsy yet still working-class Wynwood. But modular movable walls to accommodate changing installations, and its own name make it clear the art component is a serious working gallery. Hardworking chef/owner Rocco Carulli demonstrates a locals orientation with a menu highlighted by skillfully crafted, hearty entrées (Brazilian seafood moqueta stew, coffee/chili-rubbed short ribs, sweet pea falafel) available in affordable half-portions: small plates of big food for starving artists. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Rice Mediterranean Kitchen

2500 Biscayne Blvd.

305-705-6090

Feeling creative? Channel that energy at Rice Mediterranean Kitchen, where you have an assortment of tasty options to build the ultimate meal. Pick your base from delicious greens or grains and then select your dips, proteins, and toppings to bring everything full circle. Basmati rice, hummus, spicy baba ganoush, honey nut feta, braised beef, and falafel are just a few of the items you can pick from. With so many options available, repeat visits are in order. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Sabor a Peru

2923 Biscayne Blvd.

305-573-6736

Opened many years before ceviches became a staple on every Miami hipster-bar menu, this formerly tiny family-run Peruvian place serves food that's traditional, not trendy. That includes ceviches, simple and servicable. But Sabor's strong suit -- and why it has not only survived but thrived (as a recent expansion attests) -- is its cooked dishes, always fresh, flavorful, and served in prodigious portions. Our personal fave: jalea (a delicately breaded, crisp-fried mix of tender marinated fish and shellfish, with yucca and criolla onion sauce); one order feeds at least three diners. Note: Open for big breakfasts, as well as lunch/dinner. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Sakaya Kitchen

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue

305-576-8096

www.sakayakitchen.com

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to

wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$ (PRB)

Sake Room

275 NE 18th St.

305-755-0122

www.sakeroom.com

Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restolounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotica or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour mayo and a salad. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Salumeria 104

3451 NE 1st Ave. #104

305-424-9588

In Italy, salumerias started, like American delicatessens, as shops selling salumi (cured meats), but evolved into the equivalent of eat-in deli/restaurants that also serve cold and hot prepared foods. At this modern Midtown salumeria, the soups-to-salads-to-sweets range of fare is the same. Custom-sliced imported cold cuts are a main focus, especially for those who enjoy taste-testing a plate pairing Italy's two most famous prosciuttos: Parma and San Daniele. But homemade pastas are also impressive, as are hard-to-find regional entrées like fegato alla Veneziana, which will turn liver-haters into lovers. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sette Osteria

2103 NW 2nd Ave.

305-576-8282

Eagle-eyed visitors will find an unassuming Italian restaurant at the southern end of Wynwood: Sette Osteria. The Washington, D.C., transplant is located away from the hustle and bustle of the neighborhood, but it's only a matter of time before word gets out about this culinary gem. Earthy tones and an open kitchen welcome diners, who will fall in love with signature dishes like seafood linguine and veal scallopini. A bevy of Italian wines await to quench your thirst as well. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Shokudo World Resource Café

4740 NE 2nd Ave.

305-758-7782

At its former Lincoln Road location, World Resource's café was better known for people-watching than for its standard sushi/Thai menu. But as the new name signals, this relocation is a reinvention. The indoor/outdoor space is charming, but creative takes on popular pan-Asian street foods are the real draw. Travel from Japan and Thailand through Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, and beyond via light housemade momo, curried potato-stuffed Tibetan/Nepalese steamed dumplings; savory pulled pork buns with kimchi and crisped onions. Noodle dishes, hot or chilled, are especially appealing. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

St. Roch Market

140 NE 39th St.

Food halls are all the rage, and the Design District isn't missing out on the fun. St. Roch Market, the popular New Orleans multi-vendor establishment, has opened a Palm Court outpost that features something for everyone. Sushi (Itamae), fried chicken (Coop), and banh mis (Tran An) are just a few of the market's standouts, all of which pair nicely with a sazerac or another signature cocktail from St. Roch's Mayhaw bar. With so many options available, you'll quickly become a regular. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

3250 NE 1st Ave.

786-369-0353

www.sugarcanerawbargrill.com

This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens -- normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill -- make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-rich short ribs. At the daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

SuViche

2751 N. Miami Ave.

305-960-7097

As its fusion name suggests, this artsy indoor/outdoor eatery doesn't merely serve a mix of Japanese sushi and Latin ceviches but a true fusion of both, largely owing to signature sauces (many based on Peru's citrusy/creamy acevichado emulsion with Japanese spicing) that are applied to sushi rolls and ceviche bowls alike. Additionally there are some popular Peruvian-fusion cooked dishes like Chifa (Peruvian-Chinese) lomo saltado, served traditionally, as an entrée, or creatively in springs rolls). To add to the fun, accompany your meal with a cocktail from Miami's only pisco bar. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

The Taco Stand

313 NW 25th St.
786-580-4948

We know what you're thinking: "Oh great, another taco shop in Wynwood." The neighborhood is certainly not lacking in options, but this San Diego transplant is sure to give its neighbors some healthy competition. Those familiar with the brand know that the seafood offerings like the Baja taco (battered fish) and spicy shrimp taco are winners; just one bite is all the proof you need. Another must: a mountain of carne asada and fries, which can feed a group of four. \$ (MFP)

Tap 42

3252 NE 1st Ave. #101
786-864-0194

With all the growth that Midtown Miami has seen, there's been one type of restaurant sorely missing in the neighborhood: a decent sports bar. Tap 42, which recently took over the short-lived Apeiro location, runs with this idea and complements it with a flavor-forward mentality. The eatery started as a Fort Lauderdale watering hole and has since expanded to Coral Gables -- and now Midtown Miami. Staples like the Prohibition burger and Drunken Goat burger make an appearance, but so do location-specific items like the grilled salmon Zen bowl that serves as a lighter alternative for guests. \$\$ (MFP)

Vintage Liquor & Wine Bar

3301 NE 1st Ave. #105
305-514-0307

Gentrified atmosphere, a remarkably knowledgeable staff, and a hip stock (including liquor and global beers as well as wine, plus gourmet packaged foods to accompany them), and a self-service wine dispenser for sampling make this an enjoyable retail shop. And a wine/cocktail/tapas bar (open from 4:00 p.m. daily) makes it an enjoyable neighborhood hangout, too. The simple but tasty tapas include spinach or hummus dips, shrimp cocktails, a traditional Spanish tortilla, and lavishly garnished imported cheese and charcuterie platters.

\$-\$\$ (PRB)

Vista

5020 NE 2nd Ave.

305-405-7547

The husband-and-wife team behind Italian restaurant Fratelli Milano has struck gold again. Vista, the latest venture from Roberto Bearzi and Fiorella Blanco, builds on the best parts of the downtown Miami favorite and infuses them with a Latin flair. There's a bigger emphasis on seafood at Vista, so expect to find a variety of crudos, fresh fish, and other selections that will perk up your palate. Pastas haven't gone anywhere: gnocchi, rigatoni, risotto, and more are available to scratch that itch. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Wine Vault Miami

Shops at Midtown Miami

Fountain Circle #105

786-691-2000

From a Wine Vault press release: "Over 1300 square feet of pure decadence." In fact, the soaring, two-story space, complete with glass elevator, has a look that lives up to the hype. But the most decadent thing inside is a nibble from its tapas list: chocolate-covered bacon. Go ahead and make a meal of it. We grown-ups can eat what we want. More substantial plates to accompany the roughly four dozen wines, artisan beers, or cocktails include chorizo with new potatoes, and sweetly piquant piquillo peppers stuffed with shredded tuna. Happy-hour wine prices are so low we'd better not mention them. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Wynwood Kitchen & Bar

2550 NW 2nd Ave.

305-722-8959

The exterior is eye-popping enough, with murals from world-famous outdoor artists, but it's the interior that grabs you. Colorful and exotic work by Shepard Fairey, Christian Awe, and other acclaimed artists makes it one of the most striking restaurant spaces anywhere. As for food, the original menu has been replaced with Spanish/Latin/Mediterranean-inspired favorites from chef Miguel Aguilar (formerly of Alma de Cuba): gazpacho or black bean soups; shredded chicken ropa vieja empanadas with cilantro crema; grilled octopus skewers with tapenade; plus fingerling potato-chorizo hash and other seasonal farm-to-table veg dishes. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Zak the Baker

405 NW 26th St.

786-280-0327

This part-rustic/part industrial-chic breakfast and lunch spot, located in Zak Stern's bakery, is one certified-Kosher café where neither religious dietary laws nor culinary standards are compromised. Reason: The menu of open-face sandwich "toasts," soups, salads, and small plates doesn't overreach, but stays centered on Zak's substantial and superbly crusty organic sourdough loaves, arguably the best bread in Miami. Varieties range from classic Jewish deli rye to exotic olive & za'atar or All American cranberry/walnut. Toast toppings, sweet or savory, are mainly local vegetable and dairy combos, so non-carnivores, as well as diners keeping Kosher, luck out. \$\$ (PRB)