



NORTH BETHESDA, MARYLAND

Sunday Morning Bakehouse

Start any day of the week at this lovely cafe known for its beautiful croissants

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL STINT at the area's farmers' market, Sunday Morning Bakehouse opened a permanent location in North Bethesda's trendy Pike & Rose, a mixed-use development with dining, entertainment, and shopping. The sleek and modern spot has famous croissants that tempt customers with combinations such as banana and caramel or sausage, scallion, and white Cheddar. Although its name implies that it's a weekends-only establishment, Sunday Morning is open seven days a week, selling artisan delights like brioche doughnuts, cheese-and-jalapeño biscuits, and cinnamon coffee cake. If you're in the mood for a more-filling meal, there are a few breakfast and lunch entrées, too, like quiche and toast with toppings ranging from avocado and sprouts to peanut butter and raspberry jam. One special item that's saved for weekends is the kouign-amann, a dense and sugary version of a croissant. Look for flavors to change throughout the year.

when served fresh and hot, they are sublime. Guas prepares these plus other baked goods and lunch bites at his restaurant. Honoring his love for Crescent City culture and his Cuban heritage, he makes croissants, coffee cake, scones, and pralines along with pastelito—a sweet pastry filled with guava and cream cheese that's offered as a special on Wednesdays. Don't miss the buttermilk biscuits, which "fly off the menu" according to Guas, as well as the popular cornbread made with cornmeal ground specially for his restaurant at George Washington's Gristmill at nearby Mount Vernon.

Washington, D.C.

NOMA

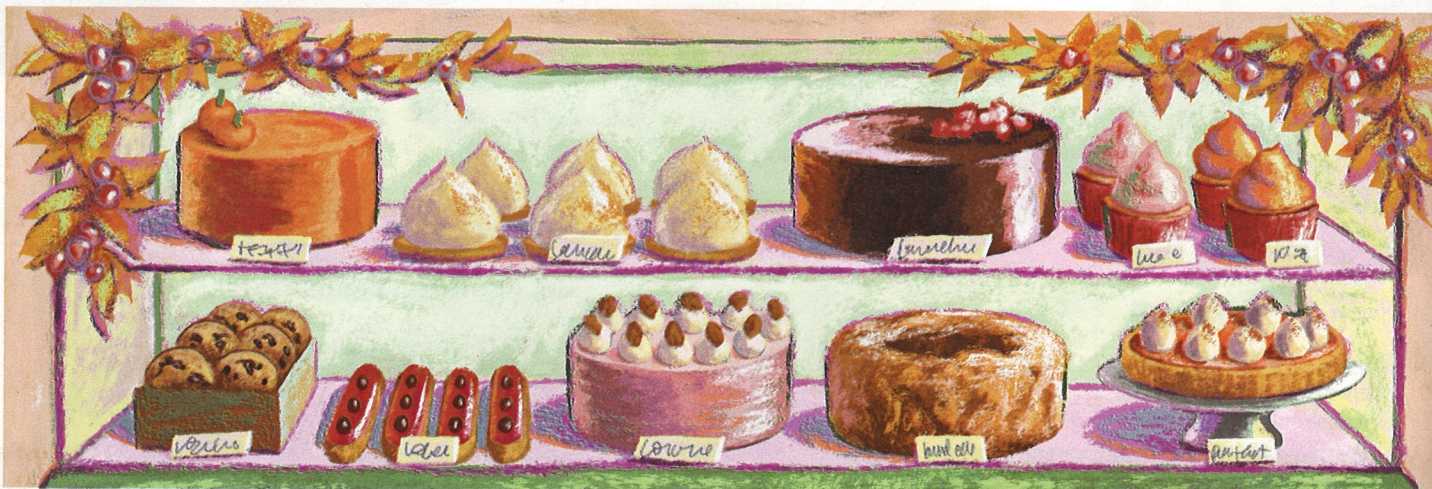
Pluma by Bluebird Bakery

For years, Camila Arango and Tom Wellings provided Washington, D.C., restaurants with Bluebird Bakery's artisan breads and exquisite pastries. Inspired by retail demand, the duo opened Pluma, the offshoot of their wholesale business. The cafe is in the Union Market District, a hip area with a concentration of shopping, entertainment, and dining options. Customers claim that their croissants are a

national treasure, particularly the pistachio and chocolate ones. Another year-round go-to is their traditional Basque cheesecake. In fall, it gets a twist—a creamy spiced filling made with roasted butternut squash. There are many more tasty creations behind the counter—like muffins, scones, morning buns, and monkey bread—that all pair well with tea and espresso drinks. Don't forget to check out the chalkboard for extra breakfast and lunch options like mushroom or ricotta toast. Take your treats with you, or snag a seat at the long communal table to share space with a new friend.

Local's Guide

MID-ATLANTIC



Rising Stars

Offering light and flaky croissants, rustic loaves of sourdough, or elegant layer cakes, these bakeries are a cut above the rest

BY JULIA RUTLAND ILLUSTRATION BY KENDYLL HILLEGAS

Delaware

NEWARK

Desserts by Dana

Fans of *Cake Boss: Next Great Baker* may remember contestants on this reality show vying for the title over a series of baking-and-decorating challenges. Delaware chef Dana Herbert succeeded in wowing the judges—and viewers—and became the first season's winner. Known for his creative touch, Herbert dreams up elaborate custom layer cakes for weddings, birthdays, and other celebrations. Color and design are key components of these showstoppers along with pulled and blown sugar work (the technique allows it to be shaped like molten glass into intricate designs). You don't have to wait for a party invite to get a taste. His ready-to-order retail goodies include vanilla and chocolate cupcakes, macarons, Key lime tarts, and tiramisu.

North Carolina

CARY

La Farm Bakery

Master Baker Lionel Vatinet wrote the book on artisan loaves—literally. A *Passion For Bread* provides novices with the ingredients and techniques needed to make excellent versions at home. With three locations in Cary (in the heart of the Triangle region of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill), Vatinet and his skilled crew supply the area with more than a dozen types such as boules, baguettes, whole wheat, rye, multigrain, sourdough, and up to 20 additional seasonal selections. They keep relationships with wheat growers so they can make their products entirely from cold-stone-milled, organic, heirloom flours from North Carolina. Vatinet's expertise also extends to sweets, including almond croissants, cinnamon buns, and fruit

tarts. Impress your office mates by bringing a Breakfast and Pastry Platter to work. The wide array features hearth-baked rolls, scones, croissants, and pain au chocolat along with a selection of spreads and butter.

Virginia

ARLINGTON

Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar & Eatery

Residents of Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., don't have to go far to get a taste of the Big Easy's famously irresistible beignets, thanks to New Orleans native chef David Guas. At Bayou Bakery, these yeast-based doughnuts are cut into squares, fried, and sprinkled liberally with fluffy powdered sugar. Fans may debate whether these iconic treats are a breakfast or a snack food, but everyone agrees that