

BAKER'S DOZEN

Pastries, both sweet and savory, from top-tier NYC restaurants.

by Meryl Pearlstein Photographed by Evan Sung





① The NoMad Bar, 10 W. 28th St., 347.472.5660. For an inventive savory pastry, try The Humm Dog, a foodie-worthy creation of Chef Daniel Humm. The hot dog is wrapped in bacon and covered with truffle mayonnaise, Gruyère and celery relish. After eating one of these, you'll never order a "dirty water" dog again. A gourmet turn for the humble frankfurter, the NoMad Bar's version is American royalty set on a throne of Pastry Chef Mark Welker's rich brioche roll. One food critic recently raved about the dish, calling it Humm's "opulent little creation."

② Humm elevates the concept of chicken potpie as only a Michelin-starred chef might. Together with pastry genius Welker, The NoMad Bar presents a pub version of its famous chicken for two, both dishes known for including foie gras and truffles. Served tableside, the potpie seems soufflé-like with truffle cream and more foie gras infused through a hole in the pastry cover. Inside tip: The bar has an upstairs area as well, which is sometimes less crowded.



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3 Harbs, 1374 Third Ave., 646.896.1511; 198 Ninth Ave., 646.336.6888. The Japanese pastry chefs at Harbs pride themselves on crafting beautiful and whimsical cakes. Hand-made with swirls of matcha tea mousse and sponge cake enveloped in whipped cream, the Green Tea Mousse Cake is an objet d’art with red beans placed on the lower layer, adding a punch of color to the green and white canvas. Enjoy an oversize slice and a yuzu Sencha tea in the bakery’s tearoom.

4 Japanese artistry is evident again in another layered creation that’s as artistic as it is delicious. Harbs’ Mille Crepes cake is a fluffy pyramid of six crepes interspersed with cream filling and fruit. Bananas, honeydew, strawberries and whatever’s seasonal give the sense of eating a fruit-salad-laced shortcake at every bite. Snag a slice at one of Harbs’ serene, banquette-lined patisseries, both in Manhattan and the only ones in the United States.



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5 Tulsi, 211 E. 46th St., 212.888.0820. With a menu that dispels any notions of Indian food not qualifying as haute cuisine, Michelin-starred Tulsi presents desserts worthy of a top toque. Chef Eric McCarthy, himself a multiple Michelin-star recipient who has appeared on “Chopped,” uses techniques learned from his mother in the Goa province of India. Pictured here is Malai Shrikhand Guyija, a savory sweet blend of crumbled dry milk, chocolate chips and saffron-flavored yogurt in mini cones with sweet mint sauce.

6 With his Balushahi Sheera, McCarthy creates a mash-up of two popular Indian desserts. Like a glazed doughnut but with a flakier texture, the Balushahi that is turned out at Tulsi sits in artistic harmony with Sheera, a pudding-like dessert made from semolina, sugar, saffron, cardamom and water. Another of the chef’s original savory and sweet creations, Balushahi Sheera will have you celebrating that you saved room for dessert.



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7 Gabriel Kreuther, 41 W. 42nd St., 212.257.5826. If there's one dish that I dream about when it comes to savory pastries, it's Michelin-starred Chef Gabriel Kreuther's acclaimed tarte flambée. Simple and perfect, this thin-crust specialty—topped with crème fraîche, fromage blanc, smoked bacon and sweet onions—hearkens back to the Alsatian farm of Kreuther's youth. The pizza-like tarte, served only at the restaurant's bar, makes for a shareable starter or a rich dinner, especially when paired with a glass or two of Riesling.



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8 Also on the bar menu of the Alsatian restaurant, the apple strudel from Kreuther and Pastry Chef Marc Aumont is a buttery confection of four layers of phyllo dough, surrounding Golden Delicious and Granny Smith apples, raisins, candied pecans, sour cream and a dash of rum. The strudel is served with caramel sauce and prune/Armagnac ice cream and goes well with a glass of sweet white wine from Gabriel Kreuther's extensive wine list.

9 Veniero's, 342 E. 11th St., 212.674.7070. A New York icon since 1894 and the brainchild of Antonio Veniero, who came to NYC from Vico Equense, Italy, in 1885, Veniero's is the real deal when it comes to Italian bakeries. Venture beyond the familiar cookies, cheesecake and cannoli to The Camilla, a luscious yellow sponge cake soaked in raspberry liqueur and layered with raspberry jam and whipped cream infused with Godiva white chocolate liqueur, all topped with impossibly soft marzipan. It's a Veniero's original. Grab a piece to enjoy in your hotel room later on, or relax in the café under the soft lighting and beautiful stained-glass ceiling.



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10 Benoit, 60 W. 55th St., 646.943.7373. When you've found perfection, you don't mess with it. And that's exactly what Benoit's Executive Chef Philippe Bertineau espouses when he executes a complex 1892 recipe for Pâté en Croûte by Lucien Tendret (a French gastronome), a mixture of duck foie gras, ground veal shoulder, pork loin, chicken, pork fat and pistachios. The pâté is framed by a buttery crust and chilled with a Ruby Port sauce to create the traditional jellied consistency. A French bistro classic.

11 French pastry chefs are plentiful in New York City, but no one creates a mille-feuille like Paris-trained head Pastry Chef Thomas Padovani. Flaky and filled with layers of vanilla cream, Benoit's vanilla mille-feuille is a traditional dessert found at its Parisian sibling. Beautifully accompanied by a sweet white wine from Jurançon (South West France), this dessert is an artful finish to a leisurely meal, or a pre-theater or post-theater dinner.



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12 Two Little Red Hens, 1652 Second Ave., 212.452.0476. The Upper East Side's Two Little Red Hens bakery has been thrilling New Yorkers since the early 1990s with luscious cakes and cupcakes. Everything is baked in-house. Steeped in American tradition, the popular Red Velvet is a crimson-toned butter cake with a hint of cocoa, covered with smooth cream-cheese frosting. If a full slice is too much, cupcakes and mini cupcakes are available. Be prepared to stand in line for service and a café table.

13 A perennial fave at the bakery is the Brooklyn Blackout cake, a perfect marriage of three layers of rich chocolate pudding with four layers of moist chocolate cake, shrouded in chocolate fudge and dusted with chocolate cake crumbs on the side. Dating back to World War II, the recipe stays fresh as ever at this beloved American bakery. And, as any chocolate cake lover knows, pairing a slice with a glass of cold milk is de rigueur.

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