

NEW YORK

EATING

dled flat breads studded with add-ins like minced goat or daikon radish, are neatly folded, wrapped, and packed with containers of raita with chickpea-flour balls. The house drink, yogurt lassis in sublimely refreshing flavors like cardamom and coffee, are packed to travel, too—but they never seem to make it the whole way home.

Picnic Provisions

BLUE RIBBON BAKERY MARKET

14 Bedford St. (212-647-0408)

Best known for its open-faced gourmet sandwiches, this city-

slicker version of the country store is actually the de facto pantry of the Blue Ribbon empire. But the market's more than a place to stock up on Blue Ribbon Sushi's carrot-ginger dressing and Blue Ribbon's matzo-ball soup. It's a compact, tastefully curated one-stop-shopping destination for a picnic in the park or a weekend holed up at home. Brick-oven-baked breads (from Blue Ribbon Bakery up the street) are only the beginning. There's cave-aged Gruyère, sheep's-milk Camembert,

duck confit, rillettes, cornichons, pickled peppers, and tubs of hummus. Apples from the country. Yogurt corn bread or oatmeal cookies, depending. Everything you need to stuff a basket—and oh, yeah, baskets too.

Oddball Dessert

MORIMOTO

88 Tenth Ave. (212-989-8883)

During his storied television career as an Iron Chef, Masaharu



They Take the Cake

THE SWEETEST OF THE SWEET TREATS.



ICE-CREAM CAKE

IL LABORATORIO DEL GELATO

95 Orchard St. (212-343-9922)

If you make the lushest, creamiest, out-and-out lip-smacking gelato in town, as does this Lower East Side shop, you've already got a leg up in this category. The Lab comes through with a little-known customized ice-cream-cake service. A multilayered concoction of, say, vanilla, dark chocolate, hazelnut, pistachio, and maple-walnut gelati about the size of an extra-large gold brick could make even the awkward embarrassment of a surprise office birthday party worth it.

CHEESECAKE

LADY M CAKE BOUTIQUE

41 E. 78th St. (212-452-2222)

Just as we'd begun to fear that the classic New York cheesecake had gone the sad, super-size way of the classic New York bagel, along comes Lady M. Her "New York-style" version with a chocolate-cookie crust is miles ahead of Junior's for freshness and sweet-tangy flavor, but the smooth gîteau nuage (that's "cloud cake" to freedom fryers) is even better—a lighter, smoother take with a sour-cream glaze and graham-crust crust that, like the name implies, practically floats down the gullet.



TEA CAKE

202 CAFÉ

75 Ninth Ave. (646-638-1173)

As you might expect from a proper British operation, Nicole Farhi's in-store café excels at teatime treats like scones and Chelsea buns, all available to go from the tantalizing takeout counter. The tea cake—a subtly spiced confection that could potentially usurp the dominant position of coffee cake hereabouts—is what hooks us: moist and tender, enriched with almond flour, and garnished with caramelized apples and slivered almonds. Whole cake available by special order.

CUPCAKES

BABYCAKES

246 Broome St. (212-677-5047)

In a city overrun by copycat cupcakes, we despaired of finding a great one. Moist, crumbly cake. Good, natural flavor. Frosting that wasn't teeth-achingly sweet.

Satisfaction came in an admittedly unconventional package: the vegan version at BabyCakes. Are we actually suggesting that the exclusion of eggs, dairy, sugar, and wheat doesn't spell doom for a cupcake? That cold-pressed coconut oil, agave nectar, garbanzo flour, and spelt aren't just substitutes, but superior? Yes, indeed. And you've gotta love a place that sells frosting shots for a buck.



LAYER CAKE

ELI'S MANHATTAN

1411 Third Ave. (212-717-8100)

Not to be confused with the pie, Eli's lemon-meringue cake is one of the wonders of the pastry world. It's a towering quintuple-layered extravaganza of lemon curd and classic yellow cake, topped off with about a foot of meringue that's been worked over with a blowtorch. Available by special order.



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