

A Tiny Slice of Mexican Haute Cuisine

La Barra Cevicheria is small, low-cost and near perfect

by C. von Arte

You feel a lot of love when you walk in the door of this former sandwich joint on Broome Street, repurposed as La Barra Cevicheria. Open since December 2008, it has just been approved for a liquor license, and should be serving drinks soon. Until then, it's BYOB – we brought our own beer.

A long, thin space with one wall clad in subway tile and the opposite in exposed brick. Behind the 10 seat counter stands classically trained chef and co-owner Allan Feldman. Feldman has cooked in several upscale French restaurants in Manhattan, and is talented at using his upscale skills to showcase his food, in an on-going show of skill in his exposed micro-kitchen behind the counter.

While we were settling in to peruse the simple but elegant menu, we were served black bean mole and fresh tortilla chips – subtle and delicious.

We ordered the Chef's Special, Ceviche: A large bowl of bass, scallop and shrimp, combined with fresh, perfectly seasoned tomatoes and onions. The seafood was perfectly cured, the onion crisp and the tomato cool and soft. Great on a mild February night, wonderfully refreshing in the heat of summer. The mushroom ceviche was earthy and meaty, just as subtle and refreshing.

We ordered an Empanada of chorizo, potato and cheese, wrapped in a magical light, airy and flaky crust. Our mushroom tostada was a light, the crisp tostada topped with the mushroom ceviche. An interesting contrast to our earlier taste of the mushroom ceviche.

The Chicken Pozele is my new favorite chicken soup: A light broth, with tiny nix tamal (hominy) dumplings, and shreds of roasted chicken. Extra seasoning are offered as side items, to spice the soup to your taste: Crisp radishes and onions, powdered red pepper, and Mexican oregano.

We had the cheese tamale with tomatillo sauce, and the chicken tamale with mole sauce. They were small but perfectly distinct, served open faced, on a smooth, green leaf.

We finished with a dessert of cookies and a chocolate torte. This is not a dessert restaurant, but, honestly, I would have eaten anything wrapped in that empanada dough. Dessert was good and would have been even better if we had thought to order coffee. All in all, this amazing, flavorful meal in a happy atmosphere was \$60.58 for two plus tip. What a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.

250 Broome Street (bet. Ludlow & Orchard), 212.260.1607, www.labarranyc.com



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