

Dining: A world of flavors in Rahway

Rahway is a melting pot of cultures and cuisines. That makes Rahway Restaurant Week a good time to enjoy a range of American favorites while discovering how varied kitchens interpret the flavors of Cuba, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland and beyond.

During Rahway Restaurant Week, from Jan. 20 to 24, more than a dozen restaurants and eateries will offer discounts or set *prix fixe* menus to encourage sampling.

Participating are Beana's Para Siempre, Cubanu, Hugo's Restarant, Il Forno A Legna, Just Plain Dave's, La Malinche, Luciano's Ristorante, Maleo Cafe & Creamery, Meatballs & Brews, Olivia's Catering and Dining, Rahway Fried Chicken, Rahway Sushi, Sabor Peruano, The Coffee Box, The Irving Inn Social, The Waiting Room, Watt Hotel and Wheelie Good Pierogi. (Check operating hours before visiting; some restaurants close on Mondays or Tuesdays.)

Receipts from Restaurant Week participating eateries offer the bonus of discounts on shopping, services and experiences. Score a free ticket to the Feb. 28 screening of "Jurassic Park" one in a series of classic flicks shown on 35mm film at Union County Performing Arts Center's Mainstage, 1601 Irving St. Get discounted admission to Rahway Kitty Hall, where visitors can reserve time to socialize with a crew of cats available for adoption from Colonia-based Angel Paws. RahwayTaste.com lists the deals.

Restaurant Week is among events produced by Rahway Arts and Business Partnership, an organization guided by its slogan and mission to show residents and visitors that "Rahway is Happening."

"There is something going on all the time," says Amy Garcia Phillips, managing director. Initiatives include outdoor concerts, art shows, poetry slams, weekend valet parking. Story time at the train station draws parents during farmers' market season.

"It builds connections, and that keeps people in this city," Garcia Phillips says. "It keeps people wanting to be here."



Hugo's Restaurant



The Irving Inn Social



The Waiting Room



Rahway Sushi



Il Forno A Legna



Just Plain Dave's



Maleo Cafe & Creamery



Sabor Peruano



Beana's Para Siempre



Rahway Arts & Business Partnership
JANUARY 20-24 • 2020

RAHWAY RESTAURANT
Week



See prix fixe menus and specials at RahwayTaste.com

rahway arts
 + business
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RahwayIsHappening.com

Pierogi meets passion

The Wheelie Good Pierogi logo sheds light on the wordplay in the Rahway takeout's name. At the center of a tire is a hustling little van. It's the food truck that was Christina Gmyrek's original vision, the literal vehicle that would deliver her traditional and artisanal pierogi and other Polish fare into the outstretched hands of customers on the other side of an order window.

But a food shop, with an order window and a door, would come first.

Gmyrek revised her dream when, last August, she began the pierogi operation from a storefront at 1580 Irving St., across from Union County Performing Arts Center.

"I decided it would be a waste to just use it as a commissary kitchen for a food truck," she said. So she converted what had been a cigar shop into a pierogi shop. Contemplating the food truck still to come, she had a kitchen built. From there, she and her staff now turn out about 1,000 pierogi per week for take-out customers and retailers, including Prince's Farm Stand and Dreyer Farms.

"It's nice to have a home, especially in Rahway where the downtown is up and coming," Gmyrek says. She also chose Rah-

way because of the area's Polish population.

But her appeal has stretched beyond the familiar community. She brings to her process a grandmother's recipe, a solid Johnson & Wales culinary education, and numerous food industry experiences.

Pillowy soft dumplings of tender dough contain fillings that range from seasoned potato to the highly addictive Buffalo chicken whose appeal is in its rich, spicy flavor rather than tongue-terrorizing heat.

"My grandmother looked at me like I was nuts when I told her I was putting Buffalo chicken and Nutella in pierogi," she said.

But it's those exciting fillings that continue to bring new customers when fans rave about them to friends or in online reviews.

Gmyrek offers stuffed cabbage and kielbasi, but focuses on pierogi: potato and onion; mushroom, kraut and onion; and potato and farmer's cheese. There's also roasted garlic and potato; and bacon, potato and cheddar. For dessert, a sweet cheese, blueberry and cream cheese; or the Nutella.

"I found what works for me," Gmyrek said. "They are originally family recipes, but I've made them my own."



Bacon, potato and cheddar is among specialty flavors at Wheelie Good Pierogi in Rahway.



Christopher Doering prepares mocha ice cream for a customer at Melao Cafe & Creamery.

Here's a sweet spot

Rolled ice cream is about performance and presentation. At Melao Cafe & Creamery in Rahway, owner Kevin Castor, 26, has developed recipes for rolled ice cream flavors that can be customized in a number of ways. The process, which originated in Asia, is something like that of Coldstone Creamery, except it begins with a liquid ice cream base that's poured onto a chilled surface to freeze.

Customers can watch as two small spatulas are used to swiftly mix in candy, fruit, nuts or other ingredients. When ready to serve, the ice cream is spread thin and sliced into lengths that are rolled, as shown above.

Melao, in the shadow of the Rahway train station at 1425 Irving St., celebrated its first anniversary in December. It's a favorite spot among commuters and the young professionals populating Rahway's increasing number of luxury apartments. It's also attractive for longtime residents who can tuck in for coffee or tea and pastries, avocado toast or some other quick bite from the changing menu. The entire menu will be 20 percent off for Rahway Restaurant Week, Jan. 20 to 24.



Breakfast or dessert? Belgian waffles at Melao Cafe & Creamery can be topped with syrups, fruit, candy and sweet cereals. (Check Facebook for \$5 deals.) Crepes can be made with sweet or savory fillings. To drink, there's coffee, tea, frappes and smoothies.



WHEELIE GOOD PIEROGI
1580 Irving St.
Rahway, NJ 07065
(732) 535-7750

"TAKEOUT AND DELIVERY ONLY"

Call or check social media for hours:



@WHEELIE_GOOD_PIEROGI



Melao Cafe & Creamery

Hand-rolled ice cream, coffee, tea, pastries, dessert waffles & more

1425 Irving St., Rahway
732-428-4558

Sun 6:30am-9:30pm
Mon-Thurs 5:30am-9:30pm
Fri 5:30am-10pm | Sat 6:30am-10pm

20% off
entire menu for
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