



GOODIES FROM MARIEBELLE

credited with infusing the restaurant with new energy, changes the menu seasonally and focuses on ingredients such as white truffles, porcini mushrooms, baby artichokes, and succulent game dishes. Some of Nicotra's signature dishes include homemade stuffed pastas, eggplant fien with yellow and red tomato coulees, and veal saltimbocca—medallions of veal layered with prosciutto and fresh sage. On the second floor of the converted brownstone are private dining rooms, which of course require a reservation, but you don't have to book a huge party to enjoy a little extra privacy. We would be remiss if we neglected to mention that Felidia has one of the finest, most extensive Italian wine lists in the city.

#### CIVILIZED TEA

##### T Salon and T Emporium

11 E. 20th St. (Broadway & 5th Ave.)  
Flatiron District 212.358.0506

T Salon's founder, Miriam Novale, knows an awful lot about tea. Black, green, white, oolongs, and herbal tisanes...you name it, she can tell you everything there is to know. At her salon, tea retains its British air of propriety—not even the electric scooter charging in front of the counter can detract from the lush elegance of the English-themed tearoom. The patrons may feel free to dine in jeans, but they are compelled to keep their voices low, in contrast to the usual coffeehouse din. Tea and a scone will set you back \$9, just below the \$10 per person minimum. Fiddly sandwiches are \$14; high tea for one is \$35. If your budget allows, indulge, and hope for the cute waiter with the charming accent. After one visit, you will never pop a tea bag in water and toss it in the microwave again.

#### COCOA IN SoHo

##### MarieBelle

464 Broome St. (Wooster St. & W. Broadway) SoHo 212.925.6999

While you can get a cup of cocoa anywhere, MarieBelle's Aztec Hot Chocolate is the Don Perignon of its domain. If we were to pick a second-best hot chocolate in the city, it would be this place's Spicy Hot Chocolate. Made from Belgian chocolate, MarieBelle hot chocolate contains no cocoa powder, which is actually the residue from the bean and not the bean itself (aka cocoa crack).

While this world-class hot chocolate works just fine as a beverage, MarieBelle's Aztec Hot Chocolate is also recommended for chocolate pudding and their highly recommended "Spicy Hot Chocolate Nightcap Tequila." Winter certainly has its downside, but it offers a great excuse to stay indoors and drink hot chocolate. (Marshmallows and fireplaces sold separately.)

#### COLD MOUNTAIN

##### Cones Ice Cream Artisans

272 Bleecker St. (Morton & Jones Sts.)  
West Village 212.414.1795

When you first walk into Cones, the enormous backlit pictures of sundaes and ice cream cakes covering the walls give you the impression that any second a clown will pop out from behind the counter holding a bushel of balloons. While it's true that Cones bears a closer resemblance to Baskin Robbins than it does to a contemporary West Village dessert destination, don't let appearances fool you. Owned by two Argentinean brothers, the delightful flavors are made fresh daily using Italian recipes that are 100 years old. The incredibly friendly staff will let you sample two flavors, but after that you'll need to make a choice—and what a tough choice it is. The CoffeeMachaChocoChip gelato is a big crowd pleaser, as are the tiramisu, banana, and zabaglione (a custard-like dessert). The sorbet is truly amazing. The flavors are incredibly intense and the texture is creamy, yet no milk or cream is used in the recipe. Try the green apple, blueberry, orange, plum, cantaloupe, or Andean blackberry flavors. A cup with one flavor is \$3.45; with two it's \$4.37. Both gelato and sorbet are available by the pint and the quart, and you can order custom-made cakes as well.

#### COMFORT FOOD

##### Mama's

200 E. 3rd St. (@ Ave. B)  
East Village 212.777.4425

If you can't go to Mom's for a home-cooked meal, go to Mama's instead. This East Villager is lauded as a homy spot serving up some of the best and cheapest comfort food on the island. Mama's fried chicken is spiced and served perfectly hot and crisp, accompanied by generous helpings of satisfying side dishes—macaroni & cheese, mashed