

## LIFESTYLE / RESTAURANTS

# **feedme** Cafe Buenos Aires

23 Wall St. Huntington, NY 631-603-3600



### **Type:**

Portuguese, Argentine

### **Price range:**

\$\$\$ (Expensive)

### **Description:**

With a spacious bar and sparse decor (punctuated by paintings of couples dancing the tango), this eatery has an upscale yet relaxed personality. Guests can come solely for drinks, but an Argentinian menu of tapas (bite-size beef, sweetbreads, gnocchi, fondue and empanadas) and entrees (steak, chicken, pork and pasta dishes) is served as well.

### **Hours:**

Mon-Thurs: noon -10 p.m.; Fri-Sat: noon -11 p.m.; Sun: 11 a.m. -10 p.m.

### **Reservations:**

Accepted

### **Credit cards:**

Accepted

### **Notable dishes:**

Tapas, prosciutto-wrapped monkfish, strip steak, mixed grill

## Critic review



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Cafe Buenos Aires tangos into town with soulful style and spirit. There's nothing like it on Long Island.

Hugo Garcia, maitre d'Huntington, has overseen Italian, French, American and continental dining rooms on Long Island, including Bistro Cassis, Mac's and, years ago, his very good namesake restaurant.

But Cafe Buenos Aires, with its vibrant tapas bar and evocative cuisine of Argentina, clearly is the establishment the Mendoza-born restaurateur has long-wanted to open.

The cafe overflows on weekends and attracts regulars weekdays for a more relaxed experience. Service excels and so does most of the food, anytime. Redesigned since taking over Collage's spot, the eatery is divided between the handsome bar and the airier main dining area. On a recent Friday, professional tango dancers stepped up the mood.

But the real attraction here is the food. From the tapas menu, try delectable salt-cod croquettes; silvery grilled sardines atop tomatoes and onions, sauteed sweetbreads sparked with olives and capers; garlicky shrimp; and lush Serrano ham. A quartet of oysters opens the appetite, whether it's with leeks and mascarpone, smoked bacon and peppers, tangy vinaigrette or seasoned breadcrumbs.

Empanadas of beef, chicken and creamy corn are a husky beginning. But the tuna pie, packed with spinach, onions, cheese and hard-boiled eggs, is a bit dry.

The kitchen of Argentina is full of European influences. The cafe's Italian side shows with satisfying cannelloni in pink sauce and gnocchi Bolognese. From Spain, there's paella, here better for the shellfish and chorizo than the slightly overcooked pork and chicken.

Garcia's best seafood dish: monkfish wrapped with prosciutto, finished in a sherry-wine sauce. The competition is from pan-seared striped bass, with risotto, caramelized fennel and shiitake mushrooms, in a mustard-dill sauce.

Argentina is a leading beef producer. And carnivores will find the mixed grill for two, with enough protein for four, irresistible. The grill is set tableside, full of skirt steak, short ribs, chicken, sweet and black sausages, and sweetbreads. Mashed potatoes and vegetables accompany it.

The grilled strip steak is outstanding, accented with chimichurri, the thick and sharp herb sauce. You'll also be tempted by roasted pork tenderloin with bacon-caramelized bananas and fruit chutney.

Sample a cheese course, including manchego and Argentine reggianito, and triangles of guava paste and sweet-potato jam. The cafe has a well-chosen selection of wines from Argentina.

Or go directly to dessert, led by a creamy flan, crisp churros with ice cream, and the boozy, flambeed apple pancake.

You'll feel like dancing.