

12 Excellent Things to Eat, Drink, and Do in New York City This January

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Tamà's sisig fried rice. *Photo: Melissa Hom*

Every month in New York, there's a bewildering number of new dishes to eat, drinks to imbibe, and food-themed events to attend. Often, the hardest part is just figuring out what's really worth your limited time. So Grub kicks off each month with a curated collection of dishes, drinks, and events that should absolutely be on your agenda. Make your plans now.

1. Eat fried rice at one of the city's best Filipino restaurants.

Located on an inconspicuous block in a squat building, Tamà doesn't exactly stand out. But its food does. A Cheap Eats honoree, the Filipino takeout spot keeps it affordable, while serving food that can be unexpected without being needlessly reworked. The latest addition to the menu is the sisig fried rice (\$8.50), which takes its cue from the heavily seasoned pork dish that's one of Filipino cuisine's international ambassadors. They're keeping it old-school, using whole pig heads, liver, kidney, ribs, *and* belly scraps, then topping the dish with greens, pickled jalapeños, and slow-cooked egg.

2. Go snack on noodle soups in Queens.

With temperatures dipping, Khao Nom (the snack-and-sweets-focused offshoot of the great Khao Kang) has added two new noodle soups (both \$10) to its menu. One is a khao soi, the northern Thai dish of crispy egg noodles, sour mustard greens, and more in a spicy,

invigorating yellow curry. The other is a less fiery but no less warming bowl of pak-moo noodle soup, with its chunks of tender pork neck, soft rice noodle with softer mushrooms, and a clear broth that's gently porky.

3. Try cheesy dumplings made by Alinea's chef.

Mike Bagale is Grant Achatz's right-hand man at Chicago's acclaimed [Alinea](#), where he's played a big role in shaping the restaurant's prankster-minded, scientific style. Now, he's collaborated with the team at [Mimi Cheng's](#), with dumplings (\$13.95 for six) inspired by Alinea's famous "black-truffle explosion": The dumpling is stuffed with cold-smoked pork cheek and a sauce made with aged sherry vinegar, and served with a manchego cheese broth and smoked paprika chili oil.



Tableside shawarma at Au Za'atar. *Photo: Noah Fecks*

4. Have some shawarma cooked tableside.

Over in the East Village, [Au Za'atar](#) has been serving standout Lebanese food for the last three years. In late December, the owners introduced a new dish that will doubtless attract some Instagramming, but is actually a practical and clever version of the trophy dish. It's a tableside shawarma (chicken is \$58, beef is \$68), served on miniature spits that the owners say are custom-made. The meat gets cooked next to your seat for roughly 40 minutes, so you'll take in wafts of lamb while you eat your meze. When it's ready, it comes with pita, garlic totum, tahini sauce, homemade hot sauce, sumac French fries, and other necessary accoutrements.

5. Celebrate the New Year with new noodles.

[Little Tong Noodle Shop](#) takes a few cues from Yunnan, but its chef Simone Tong plays liberally with the cuisine. Through at least the first week of this month, Little Tong will serve a

spin on Yunnan's most famous dish: Crossing Bridge Noodles. For good fortune, it's made with 18 ingredients (including arctic char, surf clam, duck, prosciutto, goji bears, chili oil, and more), and priced at \$20.18. Here's the catch: Only 20 bowls will be available each night.

6. Eat a burger for a good cause ...

Emmy Squared and its sister restaurant Emily are pizzerias also known for their deliciously sloppy trophy burgers. For a few weeks, Emmy Squared will add another burger to its menu, the Momma Carl (\$23), and for each sold, the restaurant will donate a portion of proceeds to Cosa Nuestra's Relief Fund for Puerto Rico. As for the burger, it's topped with bacon, American cheese, basil, and basil aioli.

7. ... Then drink cocktails for some more.

Over in Carroll Gardens, the bar Leyenda will support women's charities with a different cocktail (all \$10) each week. A new drink will be introduced weekly, with 50 percent of sales going to METAvivor via Speed Rack, which supports metastatic-cancer awareness, the first week; Bottomless Closet, which helps disadvantaged women with job readiness and needs, the second week; Power Play NYC, an after-school program for girls, the third week; and OutSmartNYC, which fights sexual violence in the restaurant and nightlife industry, the last week. All month long, they'll also serve a nonalcoholic lemonade with 100 percent of proceeds going to Women for Women International, which offers support to women from war-torn regions.

8. Drop by a new sandwich shop in Clinton Hill.

Clinton Hill's the Good Batch specializes in nostalgic, uncomplicated desserts like stroopwafels, ice-cream sandwiches, and peanut-butter-pretzel layer cake. Now, the owners have also opened Gordon Savory. It's both a market with beer, cheeses, and pantry goods, as well as a sandwich shop with food from a former Charlie Bird sous-chef. The cooking doesn't deviate from the Good Batch's accessible, nostalgic inclinations, and there's a PB&J on seeded polenta bread (\$4 for half, \$6 for full), a roasted-chicken Caesar sandwich (\$10), and sides (\$5) like sweet-and-sour Brussels sprouts.

9. Head to Her Name is Han for chicken hot pot.

Tang Hotpot is one hot new hot-pot place, but you can't just have *one* hot pot in your winter rotation. K-town's Her Name is Han has a new winter menu that includes a chicken hot pot (\$35) packed with poultry, potatoes, turnip, lotus roots, shimeji mushrooms, gnocchi, and noodles in a chicken broth.

10. Then eat a new chicken ramen at Ivan Ramen Slurp Shop.

Speaking of chicken that'll warm you up: One of Ivan Ramen's more popular noodles is his triple-garlic mazemen. Up at Ivan Ramen Slurp Shop in the Gotham West Market, he's using the technique (\$16) for a variation made with chicken instead of pork.

11. Eat a bunch of pork at this year's Cochon555.

It's a pig-out: Cochon555 is back in New York on January 21 (from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; tickets are \$130 for general admission or \$200 for VIP), with Matt Abdo (Pig Beach, Pig Bleecker), Bryan

Hunt ([Temple Court](#)), Ginger Pierce and Preston Matson ([Jams](#)), Fabian Gallardo ([La Esquina](#)), and Marc Murphy ([Landmarc](#)) all cooking whole hog. To go with the 1,500 pounds of pig, there's a cheese bar, cured meats, and pie shop. Wash the pig down at the rum cart, tiki bar, or bourbon-punch competition for VIP ticket holders.

12. Hang out with pastrami experts at a classic New York deli.

The [Workmen's Circle](#) puts on great Jewish-food events, like the Taste of Jewish Cuisine festival and event series. On January 11 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., it'll put on "NYC Delis: Talk and Taste the History" ([tickets](#) are \$25 for members, \$35 for nonmembers) at [Ben's Kosher Delicatessen Restaurant](#). Members of the Ben's team will be present, and the event will explore important questions such as the difference between delis and appetizing, and why on earth New Yorkers drink celery soda.