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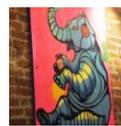
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By Lauren Shockey Tue., Jan. 10 2012 at 3:45 PM

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The classic banh mi from Xe May

Lauren Shockey

It was only a matter of time that the Korean taco trend evolved into the banh mi taco trend, right? Well that's what Alan Woo and Davis Ngo are banking on. They've just opened [Xe May](#) on St. Marks Place, which specializes in both modern takes on Vietnamese sandwiches and corn tacos filled with banh-mi-esque ingredients. Always one to welcome a banh mi to the block, we stopped in for a quick lunch.

Sandwiches go for either \$6 or \$6.50 and are filled with a choice of classic cold cuts (BBQ pork, headcheese, pork roll, and pâté); lemongrass chicken; grilled pork with fried shallots; beefsteak with pineapple chutney; coconut curry lamb; meatballs with provolone and tomato sauce; or soy-glazed portobello and tofu, along with the standard garnishes of pickled carrots and daikon, cucumbers, and cilantro. We opted for the classic and the lamb, available for \$8 each as part of a lunch special that included any drink (we got a basil-limeade soda that was delicious and refreshing and iced Vietnamese coffee that didn't taste as strong as we would have liked) and a small bag of potato chips. A pretty good deal considering most drinks go for \$2.50 and chips \$1. (There's also a separate deal for a sandwich and taco for \$8.)

The space, while modern and clean, is really small, with only four stools at a tiny L-shaped counter. If you can handle eating at your desk, it's most comfortable to place your order to go, but we were able to snag two seats so we opted to stay.



Curried lamb offers a new twist on the banh mi.

Lauren Shockey

The classic sandwich had a nice meaty flavor and a good underscoring of liver pâté along with spiced mayo. The veggies were mostly carrots and daikon, and we might have wanted a touch more cucumber and cilantro, but the bread was really what made this sandwich tasty. Lightly warm, perfectly crusty, and with just enough chew, it held the fillings well and made for a good bread-to-filling ratio. Same for the lamb sandwich, which featured thinly shaved meat and a hint of red curry. The coconut flavor wasn't quite as pronounced as we were expecting, but still a yummy lunch, for sure.



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¡Hola, los Cocktails!



Family Recipe



Don't miss the basil limeade!

Lauren Shockey

Alas, after we'd finished our sandwiches (which were large, but manageable), we didn't really have any room left for banh mi tacos, which go for \$2.50 and are filled with the same chicken, beef, meatball, lamb, or mushroom fillings as the sandwiches. But given our satisfaction with the sandwiches, we might just have to go back next week. Taco Tuesday, anyone?



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