



Guide

EAT & DRINK HISTORIC CENTER LIMA



EL TRINCHE

Words Paola Miglio

For several years, we've explored downtown Lima, trying new places and returning to our favorites. This time, we've brought them all together (or almost all of them), from iconic taverns to street food and new openings, and compiled them into a PDF you can easily download from our website. Downtown has a lot to offer—not just today, but always. Its story is shaped by its mestizaje and told through its churches, bars, neighborhoods, museums, and historic mansions. It is a living culture, constantly evolving, awakening with traditional brewed coffee or specialty coffee, and nourished by huariques. We've witnessed life like that since we were young. Making it trendy helps encourage visits, but let's also remember that beyond the latest restaurant opening a new location, we can take the time to see those that have endured for over a hundred years. Because that's what downtown is. Resistance.

Guide by Paola Miglio | @paola.miglio

EL TÍO CANDELA

The story began more than 60 years ago on the street, and 27 years ago in a small venue. Today, there are three spaces, one next to the other, and Rosana Saravia, daughter of the founder Candelario, opens at noon and fires up the pots from five. Charcoal-fried fish, the best of the best (I even ate the crunchy bones of my charela). Charela, chita, pintadilla—whatever the sea provides. Championship-level roe, plus homemade ceviche and causa to get things going.

Jr. Angaraes 468

Every day from 12:00 p.m.

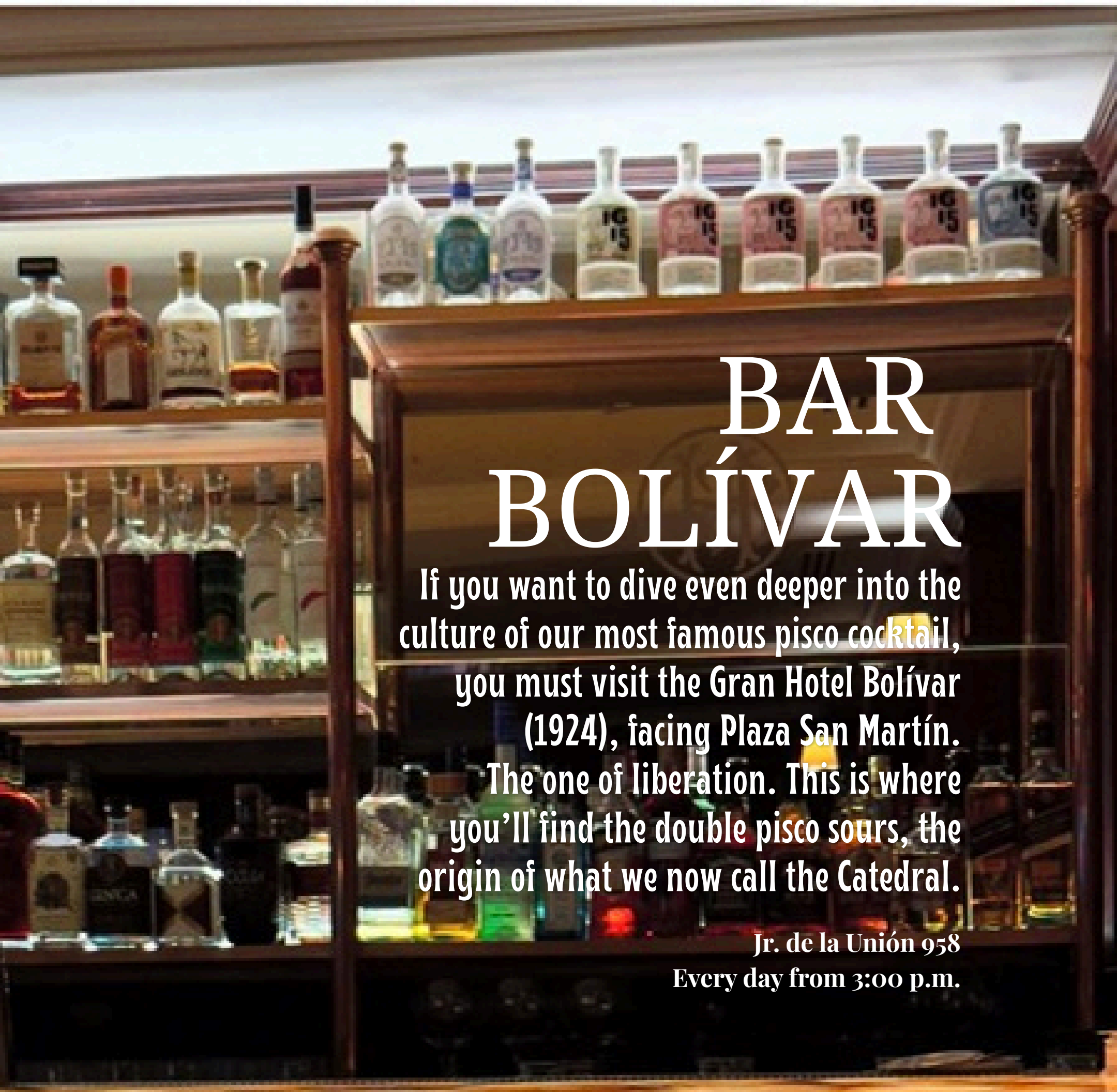


CARBONE

The former Bodega Sanguchería Antonio Carbone was inaugurated in 1923 and still operates at the same location. You have to arrive early at Carbone, order one ham sandwich and one pejerrey (or charela, if it's in season), the onion pickled on the side, criolla with lima beans to accompany, and drip coffee. There is "sarza" pork trotters and chickpeas. Only cash. Closed from January 16 to February 10 for holidays.

Jr. Cailloma 394
Closed on Sundays





BAR BOLÍVAR

If you want to dive even deeper into the culture of our most famous pisco cocktail, you must visit the Gran Hotel Bolívar (1924), facing Plaza San Martín. The one of liberation. This is where you'll find the double pisco sours, the origin of what we now call the Catedral.

Jr. de la Unión 958
Every day from 3:00 p.m.



PAN DE LA CHOLA

Next to Casa O'Higgins, a Pan de la Chola location opened, respecting the aesthetic and structure of old Limeño bodegas while adding a more contemporary, minimalist touch. It's small: big sandwiches, breads, and pastries. And, above all, good coffee, of the kind that's necessary for everyday life and weekend morning walks. Very Limeño.

Jr. de la Unión 554
Every day from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.





DULCES DE OLLA

On San Judas days (every 28th and especially the one in November), around the Basilica of San Francisco, in October, on Jirón Huancavelica, every day on the Chabuca Granda promenade behind the Palace. There are stewed peaches, frejol colado (candied bean puree), arroz zambito and rice pudding, humitas, tetas de monja, and more.



EL CHINITO

The original on Jirón Chancay or the one at Plaza de Armas. Our favorite is the first, out of affection and tradition. But both serve one of the best depp friend pork (chicharrón) sandwiches, formidable tamales, ribs, and the chaufarroncito of my heart: chicharrón and chaufa, because life simply cannot get any better than that.

Jr. Carabaya 318 and Jr. Chancay 894
Every day from 8:00 a.m.



MELCOCHAS

Sweet, sticky, with caramelized peanuts and sesame seeds. The same ones sold in stadiums in white paper with a red ribbon. Brittle and addictive. You'll find them in Chinatown, at the end of the boulevard, or near Nazarenas, on Jirón Huancavelica. A must in October.



CORN, CHEESE & POTATO

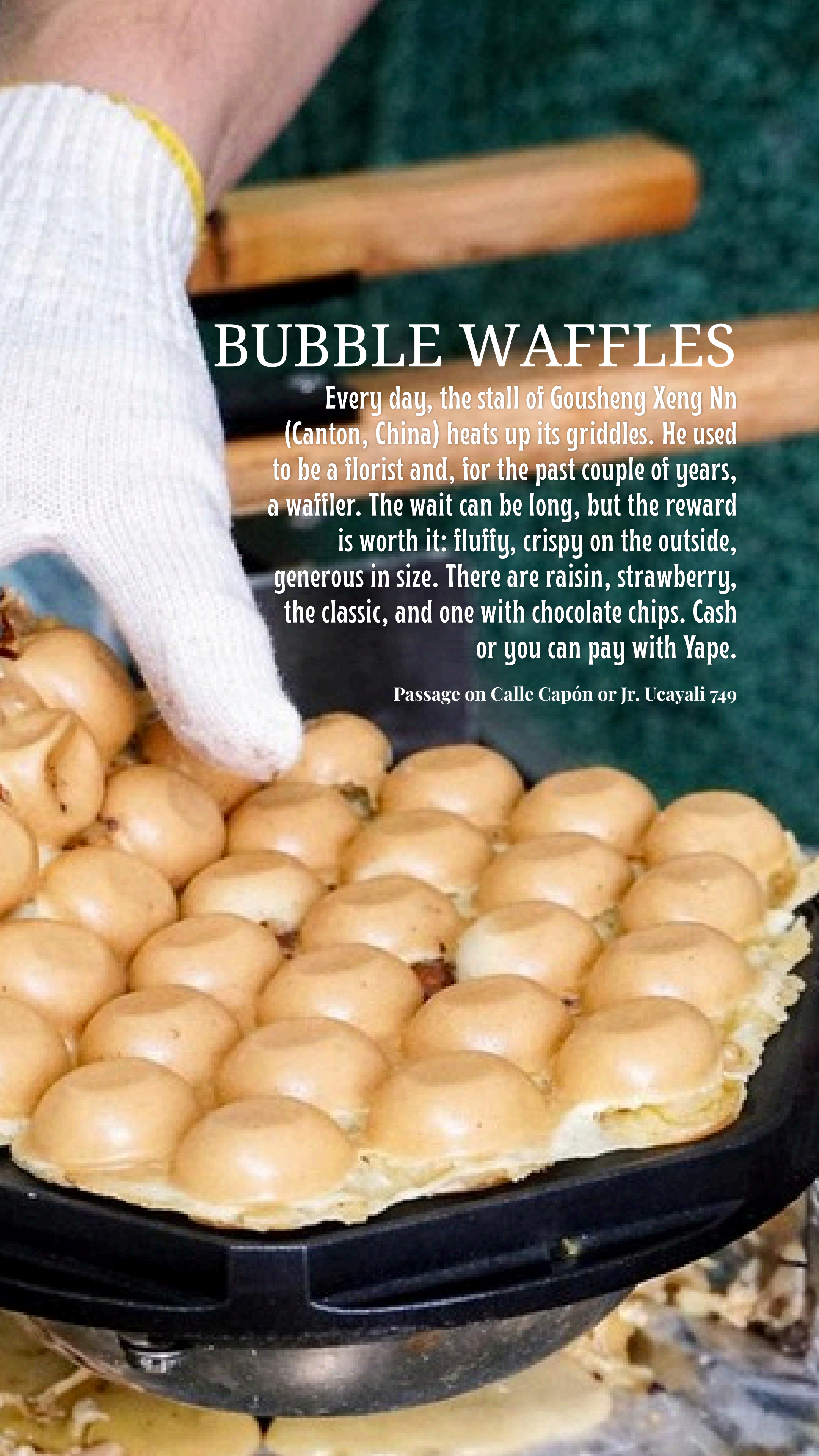
Boiled in a pot, huge and meaty. Served with fresh cheese, egg, and sauces. Also boiled potatoes, which, depending on the season, can be sandy huayro or tender Huamantanga. There's chili sauce too. The ones I always buy are sold on the corner of jirones Huancavelica and Rufino Torrico.



CORDANO

Italian heritage and more than 100 years old. Breakfasts with drip coffee, famous for its country ham sandwiches, butifarras, and lomititos; charcuterie boards with local hams and cheeses; and a lunch menu. The walls remind us of the presidents who passed through and poets who wrote verses on napkins. Here, pisco is served as sol y sombra, cherry chilcano, and algarrobina. There is also the devastating Machu Picchu and mint frappé. There's good cau cau to start the day right.

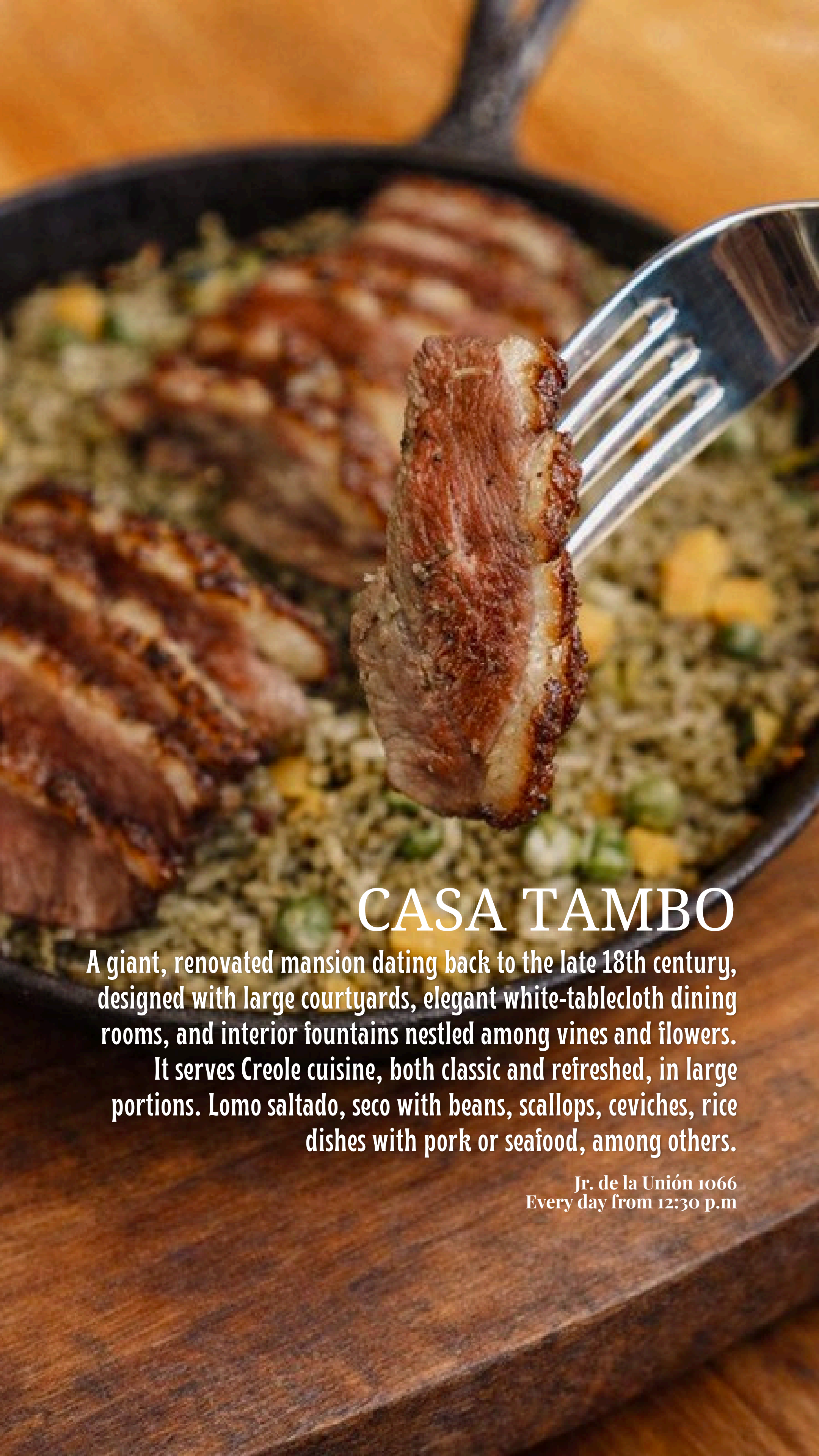
Jr. Áncash 202
Tuesday to Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



BUBBLE WAFFLES

Every day, the stall of Gousheng Xeng Nn (Canton, China) heats up its griddles. He used to be a florist and, for the past couple of years, a waffler. The wait can be long, but the reward is worth it: fluffy, crispy on the outside, generous in size. There are raisin, strawberry, the classic, and one with chocolate chips. Cash or you can pay with Yape.

Passage on Calle Capón or Jr. Ucayali 749



CASA TAMBO

A giant, renovated mansion dating back to the late 18th century, designed with large courtyards, elegant white-tablecloth dining rooms, and interior fountains nestled among vines and flowers.

It serves Creole cuisine, both classic and refreshed, in large portions. Lomo saltado, seco with beans, scallops, ceviches, rice dishes with pork or seafood, among others.

Jr. de la Unión 1066
Every day from 12:30 p.m

PONCHE

Made with malt, egg, and sprinkles. A sweet drink beaten by hand, sold outside San Francisco church on Sundays or on jirón Áncash on lucky mornings.





NAZARENAS

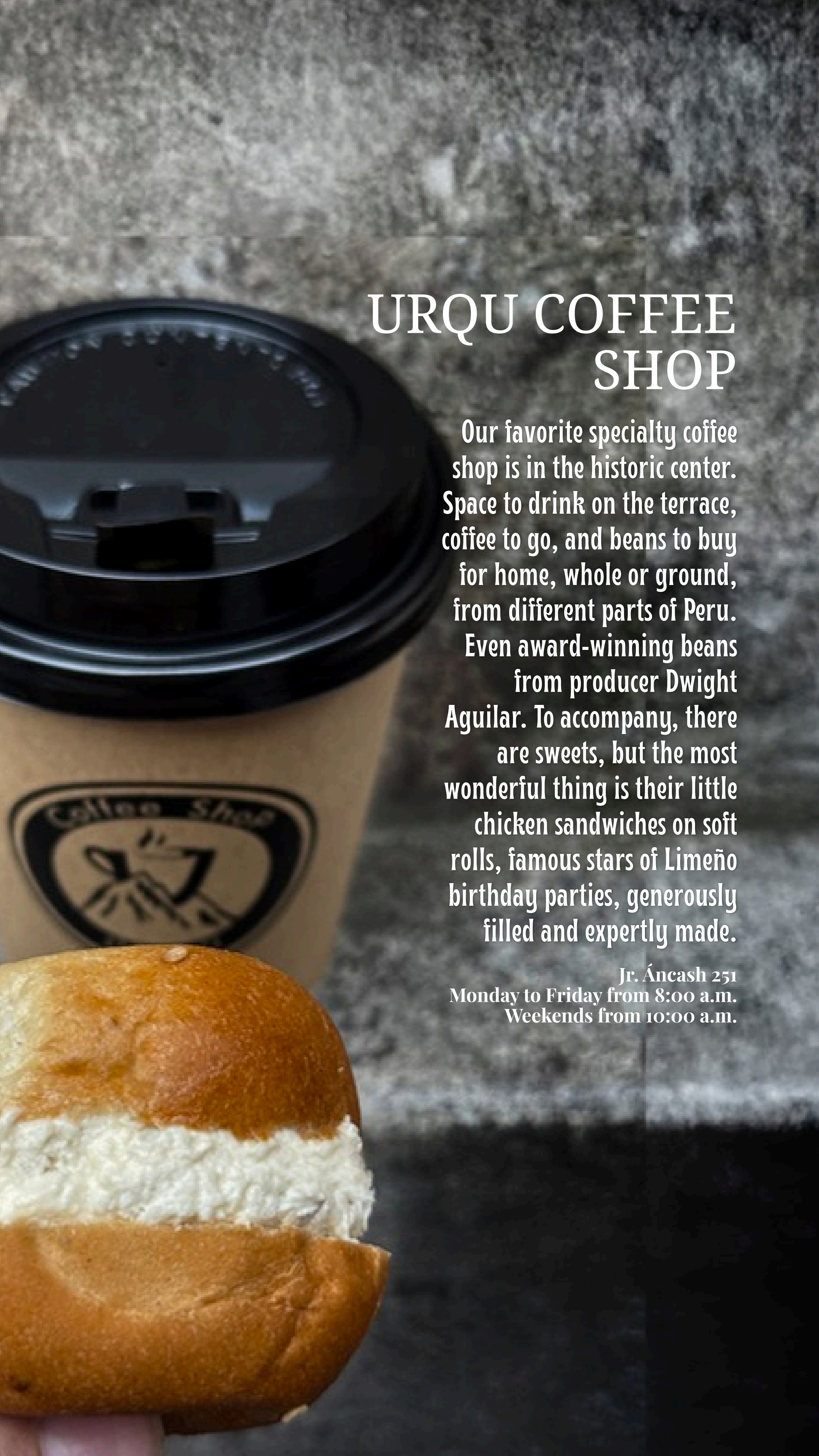
Yes, Nazarenas bakery is the one with the iconic Doña Pepa turrón, with dense honey and salty sticks, but also with crunchy, warm lard cookies and generous empanadas, savory with a dusting of powdered sugar, plump and filled—the best, chicken or beef. One seems enough, but temptation will make you buy more to take home. Delivery available.

Jr. Huancavelica 429–431
Closed on Sundays



CHURROS CRIOLLOS

They're called Spanish, but they're Creole. Thick fried dough filled with dulce de leche, pastry cream, or chocolate. There are those from San Francisco (my favorites for their overall balance: crunchy, sweet, soft inside) and those from Virgen del Carmen. The original shops are on Jirón Lampa, block 2.

A black coffee cup with a lid and a chicken sandwich on a roll. The cup is on the left side of the image, and the sandwich is at the bottom. The background is a textured, grey surface.

URQU COFFEE SHOP

Our favorite specialty coffee shop is in the historic center. Space to drink on the terrace, coffee to go, and beans to buy for home, whole or ground, from different parts of Peru. Even award-winning beans from producer Dwight Aguilar. To accompany, there are sweets, but the most wonderful thing is their little chicken sandwiches on soft rolls, famous stars of Limeño birthday parties, generously filled and expertly made.

Jr. Áncash 251
Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m.
Weekends from 10:00 a.m.



TON KIN SEN

Here, Cantonese techniques have met Peruvian ingredients since 1990. It is one of our favorites. Its chaufas, stir-fries, noodles, and an extensive menu full of authentic mysteries. There are small bites on the first floor. No reservations are taken, and payment is cash only. You won't regret it.

Jr. Ucayali (a.k.a. Calle Capón) 797
Every day from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

JIMMY'S

Revered by many and considered by several to be the best empanadas, we stick with their generous filling, soft dough, and freshness, as the turnover at Jimmy's is so high that they come out of the oven constantly. There's always a line to pay and pick up.

Av. Abancay 298
Every day from 8:00 a.m.



LA CASA DE SHA XIAN

The sign is inside, and this tasty chifa flies under the radar because of its unflashy exterior. You sit on the second floor, and the menu arrives with the classics, the ones Peruvians can't stop ordering, and those you must try: pan mian with meat, sour and spicy, or with ribs. Noodles cooked just right, indulgent peanut sauce, and stir-fried meat to mix in. And then, the magic. Pair with wonton soup or steamed Chinese snacks. Yuri, the cook, is a star.

Jr. Paruro 729
Every day from 11:00 a.m.



BODEGA SANTA ISABEL

Castilla cheeses from Arequipa, parias from Puno, cachipas from Ayacucho, hams from Cajamarca and Áncash, coffee and olives from Tacna, chocolates or custards... at Santa Isabel, part of Peru's flavors are brought together. Their life-saving sandwiches and the buttery cheese one—perfect and warm. You can take several goodies home. There's another, more renovated location on the same block.

Jr. Carabaya 520
Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m.





CENTRAL MARKET

You can find everything in a clean, modern building. Although construction began in 1852 as Mercado de la Concepción, there were fires, changes of presidents, and remodelings. From nuts and spices—such as cinnamon sticks—to loche squash and more than 10 varieties of potatoes, butters and cheeses from Cajamarca, tripe and honeycomb tripe for a good cau cau, and, of course, baked custards and milk gelatin prepared with a good hand.

Jr. Ucayali 615



PALAIS ROOFTOP

A gastronomic concept that includes a restaurant (ground floor) and a rooftop connecting the second and third floors. The name refers to the central Palais Concert, the elegant Parisian-style Limeño café from the early 20th century that for years was the center of intellectual gatherings and debates. From the mythical venue, the rooftop only takes the name, because here the cocktail program of sours, chilcanos, and some creative cocktails is paired with DJ music and rock bands.

Av. España 225

Monday to Saturday from 5:30 p.m.



HUÉRFANOS

You don't go to Huérfanos only for its turrón, but also for its addictive butter horns, sweet breads, celebration cookies, and fresh pastas—long, stuffed, or short to cook at home. Explore the display case at the back. Guaranteed pleasure.

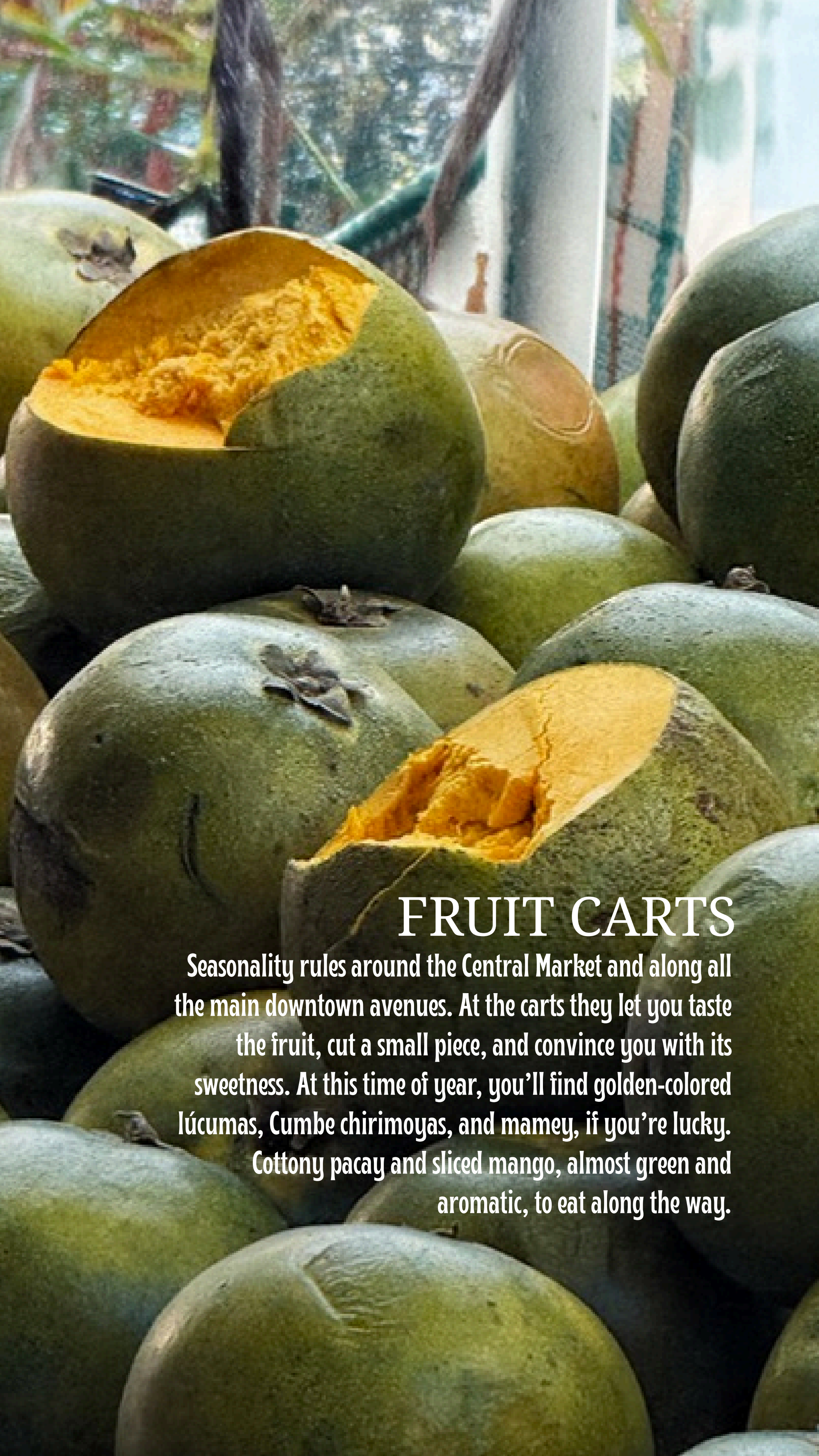
Jr. Azángaro 700
Every day from 7:00 a.m.



PRODUCCIONES AVÍCOLAS

Avícola is the name that appears on the receipt when you pay for Chinese sweets: egg-custard and coconut pastries, fluffy cakes, almond-filled treats, and bow-tie cookies. There are also roasted meats to take away and eat on the go. Championship-level min pao and long lines. Just be patient.

Jr. Andahuaylas 693–697
Opens from 11:00 a.m.; Saturdays 24 hours; closed Sundays



FRUIT CARTS

Seasonality rules around the Central Market and along all the main downtown avenues. At the carts they let you taste the fruit, cut a small piece, and convince you with its sweetness. At this time of year, you'll find golden-colored lúcumas, Cumbe chirimoyas, and mamey, if you're lucky. Cottony pacay and sliced mango, almost green and aromatic, to eat along the way.



HOTEL MAURY BAR

It's here because it's historic and tells a story of origin. You have to cross Plaza de Armas and walk a few blocks along Jirón de la Unión to find the mythical Hotel Maury. Some say the Pisco Sour was born here; others that it was invented by an American named Victor Morris at Morris' Bar. It doesn't matter—we drink it the same way, animated by the memories this bar evokes, with its curved counter, paneled walls, and dark wooden tables. Refinement, elegance, and cordiality from the mid-20th century.

Jr. Ucayali 201
Monday to Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

FUNG YEN

One of our favorites when it comes to roasted meats and Chinese pastries. There are the classics (baked custard, bow-ties, coconut-almond, and empanadas), roasted duck, char siu, and pachikay to eat there or take away; as well as salt-toasted prawns and steamed ribs with black beans.

Jr. Ucayali 744

Monday to Saturday from 9:00 a.m.; Sundays from 11:30 a.m.





PASTELERÍA SAN MARTÍN

Facing Plaza San Martín, this bakery places its turrón on a huge tray by the window and cuts it with each purchase. It's fresh and better than in previous years. It's our favorite from the shop, always.

Av. Nicolás de Piérola 987–991
Monday to Saturday from 9:00 a.m.



NANCY'S ASIAN FRUITS

Doña Nancy sells fruit in the Chinatown passage, on block 7 of jirón Ucayali. She has everything fresh for the day, from heavy, plump passion fruits to juicy cherries and an Asian selection that includes Chinese pear, white melon, lychee, rambutan, and mangosteen in season (summer). They sell out quickly and early.

CREAM & CO.

A new ice-cream shop that opened just a few weeks ago behind City Hall. There are lactose-free options, almond-milk ice creams, sorbets, and creamy ice creams made with seasonal Peruvian ingredients, such as origin cacao or northern vanilla. Also, desserts and good specialty coffee. You'll find ma'amoul and harissa.

Pasaje Nicolás de Ribera 121
Thursday to Tuesday from 10:00 a.m.





SAN JOY LAO

One of the classic and most historic chifas in Chinatown, which has maintained its consistency and quality over the years. The classics are always well executed, as are the small bites. There's chafarroncito, chaufa rice with crunchy pieces of chicharrón, and chi jau kuy with guinea pig. And, of course, good arroz chaufa.

Jr. Ucayali 779
Every day from 12:00 p.m.

LA TAPADA

Traditional Peruvian sweets, coffee, and dancing on weekends. Here, they took the iconic image of the tapada limeña and turned her into the protagonist of a charming space with pleasant terraces. Keep an eye on their fluffy pionono, crispy ponderaciones, and freshly made guar güeros. There's also good ranfañote and other signature pastries.

Pasaje Nicolás de Ribera 148–142
Every day from 9:00 a.m.



VILLA CHICKEN

We had to include “pollo a la brasa”, and Villa Chicken’s is one of our favorites. Crispy on the outside, tender on the inside. Original flavor and well accompanied. In addition, the location that houses this restaurant is a good example of reconstruction of a colonial house and integration into its surroundings. There are also meats on the menu.

Jr. Ica 157
Every day from 12:00 p.m.





PASTIPAN

This counter has everything needed to eat well. Favorites: birthday-party sandwiches and soft, well-filled triples. There are roast beef with caramelized onions, olives, or spinach, with cheese and bacon. Also, slightly larger party-style chicken sandwiches. The caramel and chirimoya roll is a little sin.

Jirón de la Unión 446
Every day from 8:00 a.m.



CAFÉ SAN OXAPAMPINO

We close this edition of the Guide with coffee, and here family is the key, because everything comes from Oxapampa, and the family members themselves run the place. The coffee comes from their San Alberto farm; they sell it, grind it for take-home, and prepare it traditionally using different methods. The honey comes from there as well. Then there are desserts and sandwiches with Oxapampa cheese. And, of course, strudel. What more could you ask for? Oh—and the service is very pleasant.

Jr. Ica 281, interior 108
Monday to Saturday from 7:55 a.m.



BAZAR LA PALOMITA

Don Lucio León Pineda and Doña Laura Esther Moscoso run Bazar La Palomita. What was once a grocery store later invented a sandwich bar during the crisis of the nineties. The place is more than 100 years old, Doña Laura says, as she patiently and skillfully prepares a roast beef for the sandwich and another of oriental-style pork with a touch of Chinese cinnamon and oyster sauce. There is also lomito al jugo. Tremendous. Go early because it runs out quickly and they don't always make two batches.

Jr. Rufino Torrico 199

Open everyday, but the sandwich bar only on workdays.



ESBARI

Esbari is heartiness and generosity, especially at menu time, where the daily special rules, but there are also immovable classics. Lomo saltado or milanesa, tender and juicy, like homemade. Set on top of fries and salad. Everything is abundant, because with the order comes apple water and also a starter for S/ 25, the complete lunch. Keep an eye on the Club Sandwich, powerful. Now, the dessert, which is extra, you choose it. From multicolored gelatins to ice creams.

Jr. de la Unión 501 y 574
Monday to sunday from 09:00 a.m.



TSUKAYAMA

This restaurant has the most unusual combo: it sells mochis and rachi soup and soba. Also yuquitas. The first are not very sweet (which we always appreciate), filled with frejol colado and the closest to the originals. Elastic, thick, street-style dough. The rachi soup is hearty and the soba too. Another one that has a line.

Jr. Ucayali 628
Everyday from 09:30 a.m.

The image shows the interior of Cafe Amanqae, a space with a warm, rustic atmosphere. On the left, there are wooden shelves displaying various items, including a framed picture of a church facade and some small cards. In the center, a long, narrow counter made of stone and wood runs across the room. Behind the counter, a person is visible, likely a staff member. To the right, there are several tables and chairs where customers are seated. The walls are painted in a light green color, and there are framed pictures on the wall. The floor is made of large, square tiles. The overall lighting is warm and inviting.

CAFE AMANQAE

A space inside the courtyard of the old cloister of San Agustín, which began to house cafés some years ago. Amanqae becomes part of these places that explore Peruvian beans with dedication, but that also give time and room to the literary, to reading, to culture.

Warm atmosphere, kind service and a variety of pieces that make us know more, want to learn more.

Jr. Ica 281

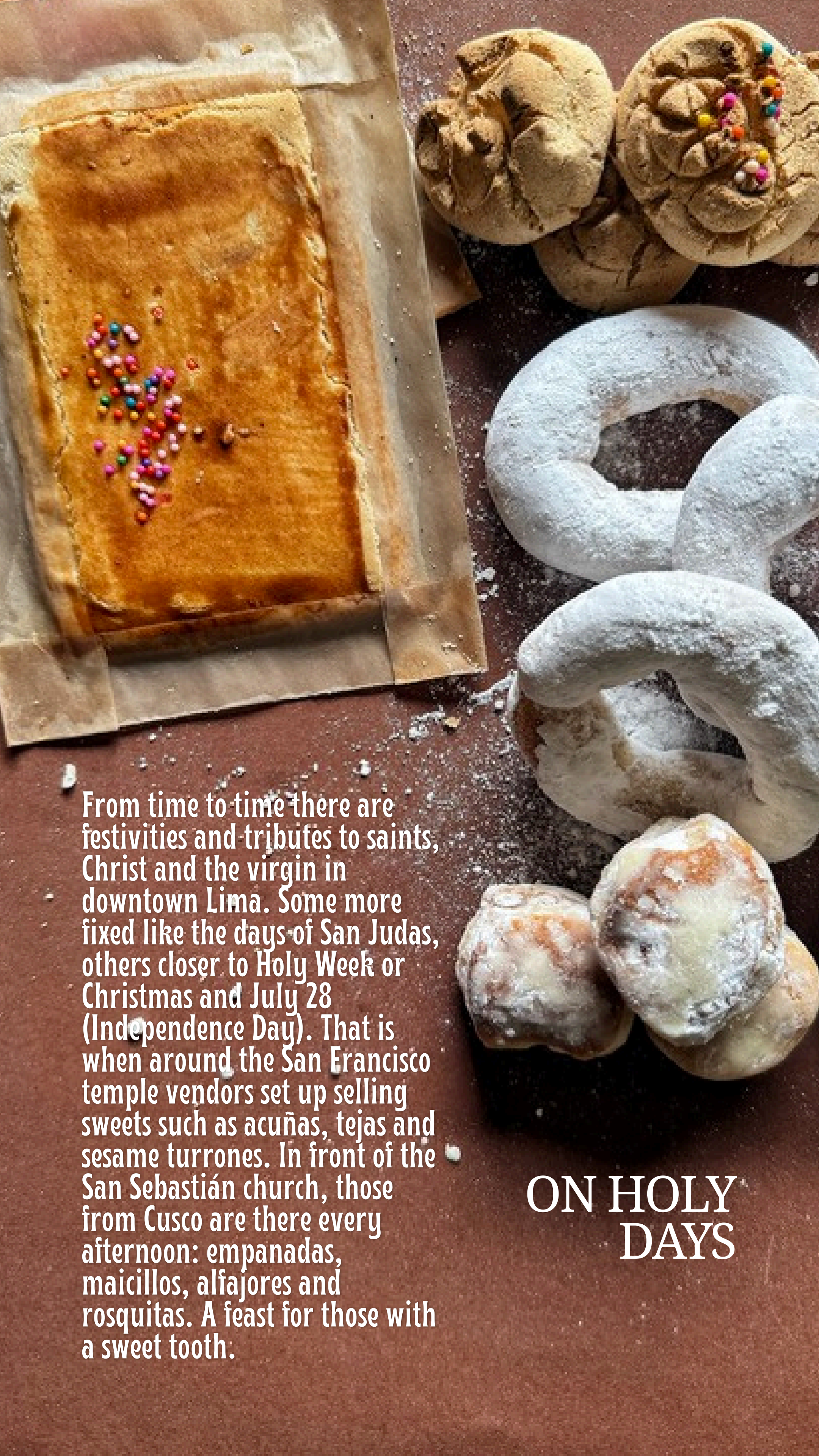
Everyday from 10:00 a.m.



BAR DE LIMA

Colonial-inspired, with an extensive drink menu: there are signature cocktails based on national and foreign spirits, baptized with names like Damero de Pizarro or Tapada Limeña, the classic pisco-based drinks and the international ones; varieties of gin with tonic or shots of spirits and a wine list. There are snacks offered to accompany. An additional note: in the Patio del Mercado, at the back of the mansion, there is another large bar, but with a more family-friendly atmosphere.

Jr. de la Unión 1066
Montay to Saturdays from 5:00 p.m.



From time to time there are festivities and tributes to saints, Christ and the virgin in downtown Lima. Some more fixed like the days of San Judas, others closer to Holy Week or Christmas and July 28 (Independence Day). That is when around the San Francisco temple vendors set up selling sweets such as acuñas, tejas and sesame turrónes. In front of the San Sebastián church, those from Cusco are there every afternoon: empanadas, maicillos, alfajores and rosquitas. A feast for those with a sweet tooth.

ON HOLY
DAYS

MARÍA ALMENARA

It opened a shop a few meters from Jirón de la Unión, and the space is large and well set, to isolate from the noise and immerse in a coffee on the go. Our favorite, and the one we recommend because it is a treat, is the bruselina with cream, manjar and strawberry.

Jr. Ica 101

Todos los días desde las 08:00 horas





ARAKAKI

At Restaurante Arakaki, since 1940, there is rachi soup, dense, delicate, white and rice-based, comforting and healing, with little beans and scallions. With ají to add if you want to sharpen the senses. To take away and to eat there, with crunchy yuquitas that make you fall in love, to dip in the mixture or open the appetite. Or, maybe, to keep eating on the way.

Jr. Ucayali 620

Lunes a viernes desde las 08:30 horas y cierra domingo

A large, succulent roasted chicken is the centerpiece, resting on a rustic wooden platter. It is surrounded by a generous portion of golden, crispy french fries and several small, round, fried dumplings. A small black bowl containing a dark, spicy-looking sauce with green herbs is placed near the chicken. In the background, other dishes are visible: a black bowl with a salad of green beans, tomatoes, and onions, and a white bowl with a dark, chunky stew. The entire scene is set on a wooden table, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

LA LEÑA

La Leña is chicken with a guarantee, deep and smoky flavors, crispy fries and tasty sauces. But it is also bold combinations, smoked ribs, chifa-style banquets that bring together the East and criollo savoriness. The tender and juicy chicken is always the protagonist, but imagination lets them explore well. On the list of our favorites forever.

Jr. de la Unión 763 and Av. Nicolás de Piérola 1117 (corner with Jr. Lampa)
Everyday from 12:00 p.m.

MUSEO DEL PISCO

The historic Casa del Oidor, a colonial building, is the home of the third location of Museo del Pisco (the first opened in Cusco and the second in Arequipa). This bar promotes pisco culture by sharing all the details about the grape varieties, the producing regions, the production process and pisco-based cocktails, from the chilcano, passing through the capitán and the pisco punch, to the pisco sour and other creations of the house.

Jr. Junín 201
Everyday from 11:30 a.m.



CAFÉ ANCESTRAL

It is an old Lima mansion that invites pause, far from the noise of daily life, even on weekends. Restored and well set, it has a café menu and main dishes in elegant rooms, others more dynamic and fresh terraces. We had several coffees from Quillabamba and found a place to escape the heat at ease.

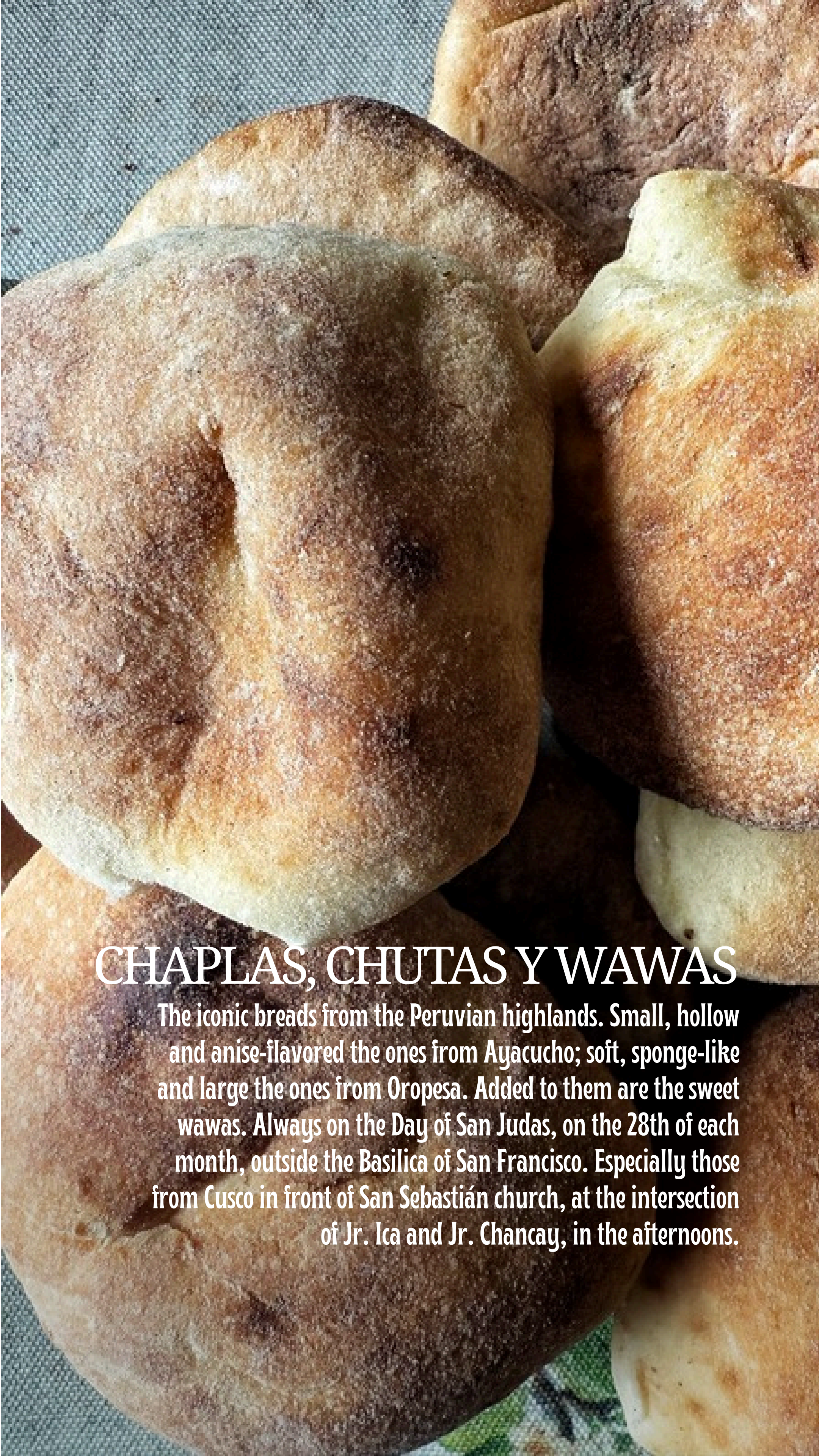
Jr. Azángaro 260
Everyday from 9:00 a.m.

A-MINI DE ZARA ALANYA

A small version of the well-known Alanya inside the Bodega y Quadra Museum, with terraces in museum-like settings and a historic site. The entrance is through the colorful Jr. Áncash and, besides good coffee, there are sweets, but also their well-known croissants, like the pistachio cream—filled one. Ah, there are big sandwiches too, of roast meat, butifarras, among others.

Jr. Áncash 217
Everyday from 8:00 a.m.





CHAPLAS, CHUTAS Y WAWAS

The iconic breads from the Peruvian highlands. Small, hollow and anise-flavored the ones from Ayacucho; soft, sponge-like and large the ones from Oropesa. Added to them are the sweet wawas. Always on the Day of San Judas, on the 28th of each month, outside the Basilica of San Francisco. Especially those from Cusco in front of San Sebastián church, at the intersection of Jr. Ica and Jr. Chancay, in the afternoons.

HELADOS FREH

Freh has managed to enter the world of gelatos in a big way. We tried fior di latte with chocolate chip and Belgian chocolate. The first, balanced, creamy with crunchy chocochip pieces that add a sweetness that is not cloying.

The Belgian chocolate was at its point, creamy and firm consistency, with an intense flavor that opens the door to adding a scoop of another flavor that gives a pinch of freshness. This time there is a special edition with Sienna Bakery. They also have their Galo brand, sugar-free, lactose-free, to go. El chocolate belga estuvo en su punto, consistencia cremosa y firme, de sabor intenso como para dar pie a incluir una bola de otro sabor que le dé una pizca de frescura. Esta vez hay edición especial con Sienna Bakery. Tienen también de su marca Galo, sin azúcar, sin lactosa, para llevar.

Jr. de la Unión 676
Everyday since 10:00 a.m.





LA ABUELITA ISABEL

The legacy of Doña Isabel Gutiérrez fell to her children Gloria and César Chiuyare. La Abuelita Isabel is the sweet shop run by Don César on Jr. Huancavelica, with a very fruity turrón, soft dough and abundant honey with even coconut-like tones. Gloria, César's sister, founded Isabel, which operates on Jr. Chancay, half a block away. She makes her own version of the mother recipe: soft, fresh, with just the right amount of honey, well distributed. A delight of spices that turn into melcocha with the honey in the mouth.

RESTAURANTE CHIFA SALON DE LA FELICIDAD

福滿樓

SALÓN DE LA FELICIDAD

Already a classic in Chinatown, where whoever doesn't fall, slips. One of the most beloved chifas in downtown Lima where you eat sopa chup, even in summer, white and comforting, with little balls of meat, fish or pork. The extensive menu also includes chi chon fan, saho fan and hakao. There is a menu in Chinese and in Spanish, so the range of options abounds for connoisseurs, not just the 10 we always order. It's worth exploring.

Jr. Paruro 795
Everyday from 9:30 a.m.



COQUITOS

The carts that sell fresh coconut are in many Lima markets. But in the center there are more. They peel the coconut for you to eat it naturally, but also to drink the chilled water. In addition, a diversity of sweets ranging from the hard cocadas, the smaller, softer ones and the roasted coquitos that break teeth and that we love.

A collage of Peruvian sweets. At the top is a large, rectangular King Kong bar, a layered cake with dry dough, pineapple, and manjar. Below it is a dark bowl with a silver spoon. To the right are several white, cone-shaped natillas. At the bottom right is a small package of Lambayecano membrillo, a fruit-based sweet.

KING KONG AND NATILLA

Love and hate surround the king kong, that iconic northern sweet of dry but airy dough, filled with pineapple and manjar. I am one of those who love it and eat it in small pieces, with hot coffee, on cold afternoons. In the center you find them on Av. Tacna, near Nazarenas, along with more northern sweets like suspiros, membrillo, chirimoya and lúcuma bars and natillas.

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