

Quietly Inviting Amid Midtown Flash

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It's probably for the best that El Parador Café, which has inhabited its quiet corner of east Midtown since 1959, seems to remain a secret as flashier competitors rise and fall around it. At what other restaurants can one find both the best in regional cuisine and a table at any hour of the day?

The café is instantly inviting, with its arched red décor and cozy booths. More inviting though, are the famous margaritas, not least for the vast selection of tequilas used to propel them.



Amy Sussman for The Wall Street Journal

The bar at El Parador Café

Once you pull yourself away from the addictive, cinnamon-infused salsa that comes standard at the table, start with the corn-on-the-cob (\$6), which is coated in cotija cheese, mayonnaise and chile powder. From there, adventurous diners can skip the traditional burritos and quesadillas in favor of specialty dishes such as the grilled double-cut baby lamb chops (\$18), served on a bed of white charro beans, and the beloved chiles rellenos (\$11), stuffed with anejo cheese and jitomate salsa.

El Parador Café, at 325 E. 34th St., is open Monday through Saturday from noon to midnight. (212) 679-6812.

— Matthew Oshinsky



El Parador Café has inhabited a quiet corner of East Midtown since 1959.



The restaurant has red-accented decor and cozy booths. Cinnamon-infused salsa comes standard at every table.



Corn on the cob is coated in cojita cheese, mayonnaise and chili powder



A specialty dish of grilled double-cut baby lamb chops served on a bed of white beans with salsa.



This creamy custard dessert is made with chocolate, whipped cream and fresh berries.



The restaurant is known for its margaritas and the vast selection of tequilas used to propel them.