

Chicago Tribune

## FOOD &amp; HEALTH



**Far left:** The original sweet egg sandwich at Egg Tuck, located at 326 N. Michigan Avenue, in Chicago. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

**Left:** Server/bartender Anna Blankenship prepares an El Viejo San Juan cocktail at Marina's Bistro and Rum Bar, Jan. 4. **JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



Taylor Mason, founder of Taylor's Tacos, in Little Italy restaurant on Dec. 21. After a 10-year journey through pop-ups and catering, Mason opened Taylor's Tacos with her wife Maya Mason. **TRENT SPRAGUE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

**MINI REVIEWS** EGG TUCK, MARINA'S BISTRO AND TAYLOR'S TACOS

# What we missed in 2023

By **Louisa Kung Liu Chu, Lauryn Azu and Rebecca Johnson**  
Chicago Tribune

**A**s we say farewell to 2023 and jump into 2024, the Tribune Food team took a look back at the new restaurants that, for one reason or another, we weren't able to cover last year.

So here are three mini restaurant reviews, listed alphabetically, in our annual catch-up. We visited each of these establishments just once, instead of our usual two visits for larger reviews, and as such we did not award stars.

— *Kayla Samoy, food editor*

## Egg Tuck

If there's one activity I tend to spend too much time on, it's scrolling through TikTok. But when a gooey, cheesy breakfast sandwich popped up on my feed, I was egg-cited to give it a try.

The Korean-inspired street food at Egg Tuck — touted as some of the best

in Los Angeles before making the jump to Chicago — lived up to the social media hype.

Co-owner Nicole Kim opened the Michigan Avenue location last month with the help of the chain's founder Ryan Son. While visiting L.A., Kim said she tried the food and thought it could become a popular brunch spot in

Chicago, as an in-between of sit-down and fast food restaurants.

"It's in the middle," Kim said. "It's something you can grab and go and it's freshly made." She also said she was excited to bring a trendy Asian eatery to the city.

While almost every dish contains eggs, the centerpiece of the menu are the egg sandwiches, and for good reason. Each one comes with a sizable, crispy brioche bun, nearly overflowing with soft scrambled eggs, spicy aioli and egg sauce. There's protein add-ons, including bacon, ham or tteok-galbi, a beef short-rib patty. They're all also \$10 or less.

I ordered the basic egg sandwich, and while the taste wasn't quite what I expected — it leans much more sweet than savory — it was delicious. Kim said the bacon and cheese is their best-

seller by far.

But the star of the show was the \$6 "famous egg tots." The tater tots were topped with two over-medium eggs and chives, along with the spicy aioli and egg sauce combo. They had the slight spiciness that I love in breakfast food. Kim had an apt description, calling them a spin on loaded fries. It also paired nicely with the \$6 iced vanilla chai latte, a sweet drink with the right amount of vanilla that I'll definitely go back for.

"It's a simple idea," she said. "We have these so fluffy eggs, why not put them on top of the tater tots so you can have the soft and crunch taste at the same time?"

Unlike in L.A., Kim said some of their other bestsellers — especially

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## Colorful ingredients, transparent pricing and 'girl dinner dates'

Chicago chefs' 2024 food and drink trend predictions

By **Rebecca Johnson**  
Chicago Tribune

Trends come and go, and that extends to our stomachs. We sampled pickles in a blanket and sipped on purple milkshakes in 2023, and Chicagoans found

new restaurants they loved, or frequented old haunts.

While it's impossible to know for sure what funky flavors or dining experiences will pop up in the new year, the Tribune asked chefs and restaurant owners in Chicago, many of whom are considered the best and most innovative in the business, about how they expect the city's food scene to evolve in 2024.

"Each and every little city has

their own thing going and we don't need bigger cities like (New York and Los Angeles) to tell us what to do and what we like to eat and what we are into specific to our region," said Won Kim, head chef at Korean Polish restaurant Kimski in Bridgeport.

From a focus on transparent pricing and social equity to an emphasis on fun, photogenic

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**Left:** Server Be'Anna Clark delivers wine flights to diners at Bronzeville Winery in Chicago on May 17. Cecilia Cuff, the co-owner of Bronzeville Winery, proposes that 2024 could bring a slightly elevated twist on the fad of women flocking to restaurants to enjoy their favorite comfort foods on "girl dates." Maybe that food is fried shrimp, wine flights or Champagne, she said. **JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



