
February 24, 2008

QUICK BITE | HOBOKEN

A Little Taste of France

By **KELLY FEENEY**

The Little Grocery is a tiny, tucked-away cafe in Hoboken serving French-inspired food par excellence. Buttery brioche French toast, quiche and cassoulet are among the comforting dishes that the owner, Neamet Elsayed, prepares for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Although the shop is mainly for take-out, there are four tables inside (artfully covered in découpage) where you can sit and sip a café au lait (\$1.50), nibble on a croissant from Balthazar Bakery (\$2) and read the paper. For a more substantial breakfast, try the berry buttermilk pancakes (\$4.25). The fluffy egg sandwich on a hearty sourdough roll is perhaps the most satisfying choice (\$2.75).

At lunch, you can build your own sandwich, choosing a main ingredient like Serrano ham, roasted turkey or beef loin cooked to pink perfection (choices change daily); topping it with cheese, like Brie or Asiago; and adding capers or roasted peppers (\$5.25 to \$7). The croque monsieur sandwich with ham, Swiss cheese and Dijon béchamel is a classic (\$5.50).

For dinner, the \$9.95 special, which includes a main course, side dish and dessert, is the best bet. The rotating menu includes, for example, chicken roulade stuffed with artichokes and sundried tomatoes, which pairs nicely with cabbage sautéed with honey and apples or with savory lentil salad with peppers, carrots and celery.

The coconut bread budding is a sweet, dense dessert.

Whatever you order is bound to be good, because Mr. Elsayed — who owned Baladi Restaurant in Montclair before opening here in 2005 and who was named one of the state's best new chefs by [Zagat](#) in 2000 — is sure to make it so. He cooks and chooses everything with care.

The Little Grocery, 214 Jefferson Street, Hoboken; (201) 610-9220. Open Monday to Saturday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. www.littlegrocery.com.

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