

A Tour of Spain

IN THE CRADLE OF LIBERTY

Philly's top two attractions in my book are its art and its food. Today I enjoyed both with a Spanish flair. First, Vincent, our friends, and I visited the Barnes Foundation to view the exhibit "Picasso: The Great War, Experimentation and Change" and then brunch at Jose Garces Trading Company.

As the Picasso exhibit runs through May 9th, you still have time to take a "tour of Spain" on a Saturday or Sunday this spring. The exhibition contains about fifty works, including paintings, drawings and costumes designed for the Ballets Russes. One of my favorite pieces was the velvety cubist horse costume for two dancers designed by Picasso for the ballet *Parade*. The show effectively highlights Picasso's shifts between cubism and classicism during the years surrounding World War I and examines the causes, including changes in his personal life and the negative political connotations of cubism.

After "Picasso," I suggest you spend some time in the permanent galleries brimming with Modiglianis, Renoirs (there are over 180 – the largest collection in the world) and Matisses. One can never tire of the Barnes as it is impossible to absorb every component of every wall ensemble during one visit. The compositions of metalworks, paintings and textiles arranged in floor to ceiling patterns offer an experience unlike any other museum.

To celebrate Picasso and the Barnes, we headed across town to Jose Garces Trading Company, which describes itself as a European-style café and bar focusing on Italian, Spanish, and French cuisine. We were happily seated at a bar-height table toward the back, away from the bustle at the center of the restaurant. Our group began with two starters. The house-made mozzarella with olive oil, Maldon salt, and cracked pepper was our favorite as the cheese was served warm – ideal for spreading atop the crusty, airy bread. We also enjoyed the country pâté with roman mustard, cornichons and baguette points. While the crunch of the pistachios was pleasant, the pâté was not as firm as I like.

For our mains courses, two of us ordered Croque Madames with prosciutto cotto, Emmentaler, Mornay sauce and a fried egg. We agreed that this dish was indeed a rich comfort food, but a bit too bready. The mixed green salad with a mustard vinaigrette was a refreshing counterbalance to the sandwich. The GTC Burger with mushroom duxelle, Tomme de Savoie cheese and dijon aioli received positive ratings for the creative toppings. And, although the baked eggs in a spicy tomato stew over polenta alongside guanciale, Manchego, and black olive toasts had some of the Spanish elements we were seeking, the dish would have benefitted from more of a "kick."

We passed on dessert as we were full from the rather heavy brunch dishes; however, we decided to purchase some of the house-made olive oils and a bottle of the tangy lemongrass mint vinegar to cook with at home. All in all, while the food was flavorful, we were hoping for more Spanish ingredients to celebrate Picasso and his work.

In fact, as I am writing, I wish I had made a flan before we left for Philly this morning. This rich yet light "postre" would hit the spot.



Flan

Ingredients:

- 5 eggs
- 14 ounce can of sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1 cup of sugar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs then mix in the condensed milk, milk, and vanilla (this is the flan mixture). Heat a saucepan over medium-low heat and add the sugar. Using a wooden spoon, stir the sugar until it melts and turns a light brown color (this is the caramel). Remove the saucepan from the heat and pour the caramel into a greased 9 inch round pie plate. Let the caramel cool for a few minutes. Pour the flan mixture into the mold and cover tightly with aluminum foil. Place the mold in a larger pan and add hot water so that it comes half way up the side of the mold. Bake for about 1 hour. To test, insert the tip of a knife in the flan. If the knife comes out clean, then the flan is finished. Chill the flan before serving. To serve, place fresh berries on the side of the flan.

Flan is delicious, but: "Love is the greatest refreshment in life." - Picasso 🍷

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