



Contributors:

Zachary Feldman,
Tom Finkel,
Caryn Ganeles,
Jessica Lee,
Scarlett Lindeman,
Billy Lyons,
Hannah Palmer Egan,
Nicole Schnitzler,
Alanna Schubach,
Laura Shunk

Maharlika

Maharlika may be Filipino in name, but its origins embody a now-familiar New York tale: The concept debuted on the pop-up scene in 2011, when it did turns at the now-defunct DeKalb Market and in culinary incubator Kinfolk Studios. Filipino-Americans Nicole Ponseca, Noel Cruz, and Enzo Lim were anxious to introduce more New Yorkers to the magic of their Southeast Asian

heritage, and so they partnered with chef Miguel Trinidad, a Dominican who grew up on the Lower East Side and spent several months perfecting his technique in the Philippines. Maharlika's permanent East Village location opened later that same year; Jesus hangs from the wall and a chalkboard is scrawled with the Tagalog word of the day (Maharlika, by the way, means "royalty"). Trinidad

turns out a playful menu of interpretive fare, with dishes like Spam fries, arroz caldo, the wildly popular flip'd fried chicken and ube waffle, and balut, the fertilized duck egg common at Asian street food stands. This is no makeshift booth in a market, but the operation hasn't forgotten its humble roots.

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