

Todd A. Price
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Review: Tacos San Miguel

EATS



Tacos San Miguel

Tacos San Miguel barely qualifies as a restaurant. The miniature space in a shiny new strip mall is almost equally split between the kitchen and the cramped dining room. The décor is nothing but a few photos and prints of Mexican *Lotería* cards. The furniture is merely card tables and folding chairs.

The small kitchen in back, however, cooks with the kind of attention more often found at high-end restaurants. I've seen the staff sorting through heaps of dried peppers to make salsa. Bunches of bright cilantro waited on a cutting board to be chopped and sprinkled over tacos. That extra care makes Tacos San Miguel stand out among the tacos trucks and taquerías that have sprung up since the storm.

The menu offers a few main options. Soft tacos that are topped with nothing more than cilantro and chopped onions. Quesadillas that are simply tacos with a few slices of mild, white cheese melted onto the tortilla. And a platter of two meats with rice and refried beans.

The many different meats and fillings that go inside the tacos and quesadillas, though, have so much flavor that even a squirt of salsa is superfluous. The eggs with bacon would make an excellent breakfast with its onions and thick pieces of bacon bound together with moist eggs. The tender *lengua*, or tongue, is stewed in a tomato broth with an acidic zing and a pop of heat. The pork "al pastor" is rubbed with crimson spices and coated in just enough oil to spread the spicy flavor. In English, the menu lists plain sounding "ground beef," but it's a true, tasty *picadillo* with bits of tomatoes and hot peppers amid the meat. Even the refried beans, which are normally a gluey distraction to a good Mexican meal, are creamy and almost sweet at Tacos San Miguel.

This taquería cooks up a lot of flavor in its little kitchen.

2120 Claiborne Ave., 940-1883,
Mon-Sat 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Sun 7:30
a.m.-6 p.m.

—Todd A. Price