



Los Gallos Taqueria's *pollo asada* burrito is served with marinated chicken breast, and is big enough for two.
PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

Real deal

If you like authentic Mexican “street food,” Los Gallos Taqueria has what you’re looking for. Vegan-friendly it’s not. Other than a menu that’s all about the meats, the decor and name of this hole-in-the-wall eatery is a celebration of “The Roosters;” i.e., cockfighting. So there’s that. Parking was a little dicey due to downtown construction and other obstacles, but I didn’t have to hike too far. The building has seen a few decades, and wandering down a long, narrow hall in search of lavatories at the back of the building belies its vintage heritage.

Ordering is counter service, and if you’re dining in, you’re given a number so your food will find your table. During my visit, it appeared that at least twice as many customers were getting take-out. Complimentary thin, crispy chips are kept warm under a heat lamp, accompanied by a decent salsa bar. The chips are really good, though you won’t have too much time to spend on them; food heads out of the kitchen with high efficiency.

I’ve sampled a lot of *ceviche* tostadas, but this pair (\$4.50) were among the best. Two crispy tortillas were topped with cold, lime-cured fish mixed with pico de gallo—topped by plenty of avocado. They were a meal unto themselves. I usually like this item as an appetizer, but they had so much going on it was difficult to find room for other tastes. I soldiered on.

Tacos (\$2.20 each) are my favorite way to sample a variety of carnivorous delights, and a selection of *lengua*, *carnitas*, *al pastor* and housemade chorizo were loaded with plenty of meat, onion, cilantro and salsa. The *lengua* and chorizo were both a little salty, though the rest of the sausage flavorings were pretty enjoyable,

with a good balance of heat and other flavors. The *carnitas* were a bit bland, but the *al pastor* pork was really, really good. They all suffered slightly from being reheated, not surprising as I’d stopped in at the end of the day. Lunch rush is probably the best time to get “the good stuff.”

An enormous *pollo asada* super burrito (\$9) was loaded with grilled, marinated chicken, rice, beans, cheese, guacamole and sour cream. I’m pretty sure this could feed a small family. Even the regular version my friend ordered with just rice, beans and meat (\$8) was an ample meal. The grilled chicken was exceptionally good, definitely a step up from the shredded variety. Not that there’s anything wrong with that.

A *carne asada* plate (\$15.50) of marinated and grilled beef skirt steak with grilled onion, lettuce, salsa, guacamole, sour cream, rice, beans and tortillas was pretty great. They don’t skimp on anything. The guac was fresh, and the meat was tender and full of flavor. The rice and beans were basic but satisfying. This sort of thing is in my top-five comfort food dishes, and Los Gallos’ iteration really hit the spot.

There are plenty of other options, including more seafood, tortas, tamales and *chiles relleno*. *Menudo*, *pozole* and other classics are available on the weekends. Given how much I enjoyed what I sampled, I definitely want to go back for *birria*, *tripitas* and *buche*. Being too full to order flan or *arroz con leche* for dessert, I’ll definitely have to head back soon for a more comprehensive experience. □

Los Gallos Taqueria

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Los Gallos Taqueria is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.



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