



## The rise of the bakery-café hybrid in New York City

*The bakery-café trend takes over NYC, from Deutsch joints specializing in Brot and Brezeln, to French-inflected spots where you can linger like a true Parisian.*

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Pastry and coffee to go no longer cut it: The city has seen a wave of bakery-café hybrids—any-hour affairs where you can pop in for a sugar-dusted croissant on your way to work, sammies on fresh-baked bread during your lunch break and house-made pastas for dinner. From baguette-wielding French *boulangeries* to Italian-accented wine bars churning out serious ciabatta, these straight-from-the-oven spots offer more than a loaf for dinner.



### Maison Kayser

**The baker:** French bakers tend to fall into two camps: patissiers and bread makers. But cult Parisian baker Eric Kayser has managed to master the range of flour and butter incarnations. With more than 80 locations, including his hometown and as far-flung as Taiwan, Kayser's *boulangerie*-café chain has sparked a fanatical following worldwide, a sugar-fueled fervor he brought stateside this past August with an Upper East Side offshoot.

**The space:** Kayser offers up an idyllic, postcard picture of Paris: Staff sport boatneck striped shirts; bicycles with baguettes perched in the front baskets are parked outside; and brass-trimmed tables are primed for hours spent nibbling croissants. French-accented, newsboy-capped cashiers bag up glossy ganache tarts (\$5.50) and moist pistachio *financiers* (\$4.50), while servers deliver Gallic standards like quiche lorraine (\$13) and croque-monsieur (\$13) in the 104-seat eatery next door, handsomely outfitted in dark woods and pale marble. The working bakery is visible behind glass in back, with employees busy churning out close to a whopping 1,200 loaves a day.

**The goods:** The key to Kayser's success—and his blockbuster baked goods—is his faithfulness to French tradition, as evidenced by imported butter and natural liquid starter, as well as bakers sent to Paris to master kneading techniques. That's why even in the middle of Manhattan, you can get a baguette (\$2.75) that tastes like it's fresh from the Rue Monge. The beautiful Epi East Side (\$3), a classic wheat-stalk-shaped variety, branches off into crackly-on-the-outside, chewy-on-the-inside segments made for splitting.

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