

Find great light foods and tasty iced drinks at Kyiv's coffee shops

BY DAVID PELUCHETTE

There is nothing more refreshing on a hot summer's day than to duck into a cool cafe and slurp down a cold drink, because it's just too hot for regular coffee. But where to go, with the plethora of coffee shops opening around Kyiv in the last few years? When I first moved to Kyiv seven years ago the choice was just as difficult not because of the wide variety that we have now, but quite the contrary, finding a good cup of quality espresso was a challenge in itself. So I decided to make it easy on myself and simply pick the places that are quite central – I just love nothing better than to spend time off walking around Kyiv, a great city to see on foot especially on weekends where there are no games of car dodging on the city's sidewalks and pedestrians can roam at leisure.

Coffee in da house

With Nescafe Cafes, the concept and coffee all originally came from the original Swiss brand and they have set up many locations now in Kyiv, but I chose the one on Velyka Zhytomyrska, a nice spot between Sofia Cathedral and the Uzviz. The cafe itself has two floors, the second, a little secluded has a modern interior with plants and a couple of TV's adorning the walls, high ceilings and upbeat pop music playing in the background. I was pleased to see the *Kyiv Post* available there as well. The menu, of course, is much more varied with small dishes of light fare along with salads and a selection of cocktails to suit all tastes. I had been in there many times before and had tried the various flavored cold coffee concoctions, this time I ordered the Bulgarian Frappe (Hr 18 for 350ml) – vanilla coffee with ice cream, chocolate syrup and chocolate sprinkles poured over ice. A nice tasty way to get the body temperature down.

My second stop on my coffee shop expedition was Coffee House, which is practically dotting the city with ever more locations. I picked the shop on Porizna – a convenient place to pop into on your way from Kreshchatyk to Zoloti Vorota. The interior has high ceilings which is common at the buildings of the area and an interesting decor with Da Vinci postered wallpaper of Mona Lisa, the statue David and other legendary images surrounding you. The service was pleasantly fast but not intrusive. Again, I

opted not for the coffee, but for a frosty, cold Chocolate Shake (Hr 17) and I was not disappointed – it was wonderful, made with Baskin Robbins ice cream and milk accompanied with a thick huge head of whipped cream. I needed a spoon just to get the head down to a drinkable size, delectable. They also now offer a light breakfast special of an espresso, orange juice and a croissant (Hr 19), great if you're on the go. The menu also has a variety of cocktails and desserts. Coffee House will make a nice little place for a date – just make sure you ask for a Shake with two straws in it.

NESCAFE CAFE

8A Velyka Zhytomyrska, 270-5809

COFFEE HOUSE

1-3/5 Porizna, 279-8509

Making it double

Now with every stop I couldn't get over the variety on the menus of these places. Why not have a bite? The light fare offered at coffee shops would be perfect and not too filling on such hot summer days.

Double Coffee, one of the new kids on the coffee shop block, has a few locations downtown. I picked their fairly new location on Khreshchatyk, in front of the Passage. The decor has a modern hip, Starbuckish feel to it. The place has obviously taken advantage of its prime location to arrange a raised patio area outside, complete with all the necessary amenities for lounging and people watching.

The glossy newspaper designed menu offers an impressive looking array of Sandwiches, Lavash wraps, Omelets, Pancakes, Waffles and Ice Cream Concoctions. The selection of drinks on hand seemed quite inclusive as well. I had met some friends there for a casual bite and we started off with a round of beers.

Stella Artois was on tap (Hr 16 for 0.5 liter). we ordered appetizers, salads, some sandwiches and a delicious looking omelette. However, after 15 minutes our waitress informed us that none of what we had ordered was available. In fact, she said the only food they had at that time were potatoes and salmon. And this was 5.30 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon! So we got our bill and bailed. Wanting to give Double Coffee another chance, we decided to try their other location near Maydan.



Kyiv's Nescafe Cafes serve snacks, desserts and great coffee all year long, while the variety of delicious iced coffee drinks is always increased in summer. (Post file photo)

We arrived and were pleasantly greeted by the staff. In this one the decor is dominated by coffee bean designs, a lively student atmosphere and dance music permeated the place. The dishes arrived within 10 minutes and when I'm talking about dishes, I mean all of them at the same time! The appetizers, salads and the main courses! So we started munching on the deep fried cheese balls (Hr 24). They were tasty and went well with the beer. The fresh vegetable salads with pesto (Hr 19) were a fresh mix of vegetables, with sunflower seeds which, when eaten slowly add an interesting touch, but where was this Pesto? The only dressing seemed to be some kind of oil.

Time for the main courses, my companion's English Potato Pancakes with Salmon (Hr 32) were nicely presented but seemed a bit on the dry side. My "Gigant" Chicken Sandwich (Hr 33) was so small I could actually place it perfectly in the palm of my hand. It must be noted that no quantities were listed on the menu. The Sandwich was however tasty, the chicken prepared just right with

melted cheese and red peppers, served with mustard, on a soft sesame seed bun. I asked for some ketchup to go with the fries and was given 50g for Hr 3. Wow! It seems like the old custom of charging for condiments is alive and well. For dessert, the Yogurt Cake Charlotte (Hr 24), a deliciously light, fruity yogurt base with a hint of raspberry and the Tiramisu, (Hr 22). The desserts were served with cups of Cappuccino accompanied by powdered chocolate and cinnamon shakers, a sweet touch.

DOUBLE COFFEE

7 Khreshchatyk

6 Mykhaylivska, 206-6913

Sweet treat

My last and final stop was Repriza – a confectionary cafe, which has a few locations in Kyiv. I checked out the one on Bohdana Khmelnytskoho. The menu has a wonderfully selected, but not an overwhelming choice of dishes and especially desserts. I started with the Cream of Broccoli soup for (Hr 23.90). A creamy

puree' with nutmeg and chunks of broccoli accompanied by a soft white bun served on the side. Next, I had the Tortilla with Chicken Roll for Hr (14.90) – a warm tortilla wrap filled with chicken, fresh vegetables and garlic cheese, which just melts in your mouth. My question is twofold, does Repriza actually make these tortillas? If so, please start selling them to the public. If not, where can we get them? Because they are awesome! I splurged and had the Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice (Hr 18.95). For dessert, I could not resist those Nougat Croissants (Hr 4.35) and worth every gram! In a city where good croissants are still hard to come by, this is the place. Of course, nothing beats a Cappuccino for (Hr 11.45), with its thick milky froth to enhance the taste of croissants. The service was good and quick, making Repriza just the spot for a delicious snack.

RERPRIZA

40/25 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho,

288-1690

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