

Delightful Polish pastries on the NW Side

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[Steve Dolinsky](#)

CHICAGO (WLS) -- With the holiday season upon us, bakeries are busy, but our Hungry Hound realizes there's much more than just cakes and cookies around town.

Over the next four Wednesdays, the Hungry Hound is taking a unique look at some of the best ethnic bakeries in Chicago. Whether you're nibbling on *cucidati* or savoring *marzipan*, Chicago has dozens of wonderfully authentic ethnic bakeries. We're going to be visiting a few of them over the next four Wednesdays, beginning with a European bakery that, at its core, is really making delicious polish treats.

You wouldn't have to guess too hard to figure out what kind of bakery Delightful Pastries is. Located on the Western edge of Jefferson Park, most of the customers are Polish. But that doesn't mean everything on the shelves is from Poland.

"The bakery is truly a European bakery, because we have products from France, we make products that are German, we make products that are Austrian, Polish and Czech, and of course American," said Dobra Bielinski, Delightful Pastries.

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There's pound cake - both plain and marble - as well as an assortment of hearty, European breads, including one stuffed with sunflower seeds. Homemade cookies are carefully arranged into Christmas trees, while a combination of passion fruit curd and whipped cream form the basis for a passionfruit mousse cake.

Even *kolachkys* - a cookie many associate with the Poles - is actually Czech in origin. But Bielinski's heritage is hard to avoid: there's *Mackovietz*: a poppyseed pastry that begins with homemade dough stuffed with a poppyseeds, honey, candied orange peels, almonds and raisins... baked then coated in frosting. Individual slices make for dramatic presentation. Another Polish highlight, featuring plenty of liquor, is her walnut torte.

"That's called *tort orzechowy*, which means a walnut torte, and it has a lot of chocolate and lots and lots of alcohol; it's fabulous, and it will keep forever and you can have a little bit of slice everyday, just to make you happy," said Bielinski.

Even gingerbread is not what you'd expect: the Polish version calls for slicing it into layers, adding a plum butter in between the layers, then coating it in melted chocolate that will eventually harden, topped with candied fruits or nuts.

"That's called *piernik krolewski*, and the translation of that would be 'royal gingerbread,' and that's a gingerbread that has raisins, candied orange peels, almonds, nuts."

It's not all sweets, mind you. She also bakes tempting savory items like potato and cheese pierogies or immensely thick spinach quiches. But for every savory item, there are a dozen sweets, including homemade paczki, which will be featured in the weeks leading up to Fat Tuesday. Like everything else here, they are rich, but not too sweet.

"I believe that I make my products much less sweeter than is the norm because Polish pastries are not very sweet, they're very rich, but the sugar level has been really toned down," said Bielinski.

And for some reason, the area of west Jefferson Park where Delightful Pastries is really attracts flour and yeast, because down the street there's a Serbian bakery, and right next door, an Italian one.

Delightful Pastries

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