

## The Countdown



WHAT'S COMING IN SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 1

### Halsted Street Deli/ Original

Rainbow Cone, two Chicago faves, together at last in the Loop

### Rustico Grill

Oaxacan-focused fare in Logan Square

SEPT. 4

### J. Wellington's

Late-night burger BYOB in Wicker Park

FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER

### Mercadito

Upscale tacos and tequila in River North, via NYC

EARLY SEPTEMBER

### Pannenkoeken Cafe

Wicker Park spinoff of Lincoln Square's tiny Dutch sensation

SEPT. 8

### XOCO

Mexican street food in River North from Rick Bayless

SEPT. 9

### Gemini Bistro

Contemporary bistro fare in Lincoln Park from chef Jason Paskewitz

SEPT. 13

### Nella Pizzeria Napoletana

Authentic Neapolitan pizza in Lincoln Park

WEEK OF SEPT. 14

### Brasa Roja

Irving Park sib to Albany Park's foremost Colombian-style roasted chicken joint

SEPT. 15

### Sprout

Organic-focused fine dining in Lincoln Park

LATE SEPTEMBER

### Ria and Balsan

Two new spots (one casual, one more sophisticated) in the Gold Coast's new Elysian Hotel

# 9 new restaurants

## August openings and more to watch for this fall

By M. Kathleen Pratt and Erin Osmon

This month's openings lean Latin, with a Mexican-influenced breakfast and lunch destination, a Colombian empanada joint and a Mexican small-plates spot leading the way.

### Nana

3267 S. Halsted St. 312-929-2486  
Brothers Omar and Christian Solis didn't just name this organic-focused Bridgeport breakfast and lunch spot for their mother, whom their nephew calls Nana. They brought her in to make dessert. Mom is Cafe 28 pastry purveyor Maria Solis, and she's responsible for everything from cookies to breakfast pastries. Apart from Solis' sweets, Nana offers breakfast and lunch (lunch debuts Thursday) with a Latin twist. Look for staples such as pancakes, omelets and chilaquiles at breakfast, and a lunch lineup that includes a half-dozen different burgers. There's a counter up front where you can grab Metropolis coffee to go, as well as seating at the small coffee bar if you'd rather settle in with a steaming cup of cafe con leche.

### Chilam Balam

3023 N. Broadway. 773-296-6901  
Chuy Valencia, a vet of Frontera Grill/Topolobampo and former chef de cuisine at Adobo Grill, is striking out on his own at this farm-to-table-inspired, small plates-focused Lakeview BYOB set to open Thursday. Though offerings will change at least monthly based on seasonality, sharable plates might include options such as halibut ceviche, empanadas stuffed with mushrooms in *pipian verde* (a tangy tomatillo-based sauce) and pasilla-glazed pork ribs. Mixers, including *aguas frescas*, sangria and limeade for margaritas, are available by the pitcher.

### New on the Scene: Dining



Nana  
BARRY BRECHEISEN  
FOR METROMIX

### Elate

111 W. Huron St. 312-202-9900  
Executive chef Randal Jacobs offers a menu heavy on small plates at this chic spot in River North's new Hotel Felix. Oysters, charcuterie, gourmet pizzas and seasonal tastes such as heirloom tomatoes with parmesan fondue are ripe for noshing; entrees, including a signature burger with creamed leeks and applewood-smoked bacon, clock in at an affordable \$12-\$18. The space is primed for an after-work scene, with a prominent, zigzagging bar and large sliding windows.

### Macondo Colombian Coffee and Empanadas

2965 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-698-6867  
Empanadas, fair-trade coffee and Colombian music are the focus of this counter-service spot from Las Tablas owner Leo Suarez. Expect a daily selection of 8-10 empanadas stuffed with fillings such as *arroz con pollo*, spicy black beans with fried sweet plantains (vegan) and shrimp with goat cheese and spinach. You'll also find Colombian baked goods, *obleas*

(dulce de leche-filled wafers) and popular Colombian candies like Mani Moto (little caramel-covered peanut balls). Suarez, an Afro-Latin percussionist, curated the music, a funky mix of tunes from Colombian artists, local Afro-Latin beats and other world music. Macondo is currently open noon-7 p.m. Friday-Sunday only, with extended hours debuting in October.

### More August openings

- » **Nick's Pit Stop**, an Albany Park location of the super-casual Bucktown fave known for chicken and Southern sides
- » **The Dog Joint**, a spot for hot dogs, loaded fries and late-night weekend eats in Lincoln Park
- » **El Souk**, a Middle Eastern quick-serve in River North
- » **Falafill**, DIY falafel sandwiches in Boystown (opening Thursday)
- » **Pelago Ristorante**, seafood-focused Italian in the Gold Coast's Raffaello Hotel (open for breakfast and lunch; dinner starts September)

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