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A Restaurant Named Hippie: Welcome to Bogota's Newest Hot Spot

by Karen Catchpole | Sep 29, 2015

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When Colombian chef and restaurant consultant Paula Silva decided to open a new restaurant (her second) she wanted it to reflect her personal passions. The chef, who is a certified yoga instructor, has a meditation and yoga room at home, and sometimes wears a bindi, ultimately chose the name Hippie. I might have added the word “modern” to the name.

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Located, by pure chance, near *Parque de los Hippies* in the up-and-coming Chapinero neighborhood of Bogota, Silva says her restaurant strives to create “pure” food using organic ingredients whenever possible. Dishes are made without processed salt (only sea salt) or processed sugar (only honey or panela). Fresh and house-dried herbs are used liberally. But Hippie is not a temple to sprouts and coconut oil. It's not even vegetarian.

One of the most amazing dishes on the overwhelmingly well-executed menu is the beef *lomo* which is cured with fennel and sage, then sliced into 1/4-inch thick morsels of rich, tender goodness and served on a slate slab with a goat cheese sauce on the side. You may never order boring tartare again.

Silva's *salcado de pulpo* is a dish that has it all with melt-in-your-mouth octopus, rich, fresh grilled artichoke hearts, tiny tomatoes that explode with sweetness and creamy *criollo* potatoes all served on a slice of wood.

Looking for something vegetarian? Silva has re-invented the lowly veggie burger by constructing a patty made from sprouted lentils and corn which is served on a *remolacha* bun with roasted and herbed tomatoes, and a ginger mayonnaise that brightens the whole dish. The most stereotypically "hippie" thing on the menu is the bottled water which is said to take on various positive attributes through the words printed on the glass (relaxation, happiness, etc).

At Botica Hippie, Silva's shop next door, you can buy house baked bread (including Silva's vibrant and tasty *remolacha* bread), chocolate, honey, house-dried herbs, and more good-for-you goodies to go. Stock up.