



Lyndell's Bakery in Boston's North End

Boston's North End Pastry Shops

Boston's North End is referred to by visitors as "Little Italy", although never called that by Bostonians. It has an Old World charm and feel that makes it a pleasure to roam the streets. And it all centers around the food – especially Italian Pastry. Locals are always arguing where to get the *best* pastry. Usually, it comes down to the two best-known competitors: *Mike's* or *Modern*? Each shop has its own supporters insisting that's it's really no contest at all. But there are other contenders as well vying for the title of "King of North End Pastry".

Mike's Pastry claims it sits 50 people comfortably, but that never seems to happen. It feels like there's always a line winding through the seating area anxious to get their share of the prize. For some folks, that just adds to *Mike's* unique charm! Inside, it's hard to tell where the line ends or begins, as it ever seems a mad crush of people. *Mike's*, by far, has the biggest variety of pastry, but the two items we most talk about are the chocolate chip Florentine Cannoli and the Lobster Tail, which is a pastry shaped version containing white crème. 300 Hanover Street. Open 8 AM to 10 PM and 8 AM to 11:30 PM on Fridays and Saturdays.

By comparison, ***Modern Pastry Shop*** seems almost orderly, even with its line snaking outside. It's considerably smaller than *Mike's* and doesn't have the quite the selection, but it sure has its loyal followers. They insist the quality is so much better. It's most well known for the cannoli, which are filled to order rather than made ahead, allowing the crust to stay crisp, dry, and quite flaky. 257 Hanover Street. Open 8 AM to 10 PM (until 11 PM Fridays and 12 on Saturdays).

Lyndell's Bakery is one of the newer competitors in the North End, although it's been open since 1887 at its other location at 720 Broadway in Somerville. Birger Lindahl, a Swedish immigrant who arrived in America in 1882, changed the spelling of his name to Lyndell and converted his fresh bread home delivery route to a bakery shop. It has numerous varieties of the classic "Half Moon", which in some areas are called "Black and Whites". Here, the frostings are not just frostings, but make up more than half the overall thickness. 227 Hanover Street. Open 11 AM to 10 PM (11 PM on Fridays and Saturdays).

Cafe Vittoria, established in 1929, was the first Italian cafe in Boston and maintains its "old world" feel. This is the place you want to go if you want a relaxing cappuccino or espresso with your pastry. We can argue all day whether the pastries here are as good as the others or if it's the ambience that makes it seem that way. Good discussion to have – tomorrow! 296 Hanover Street. Open 7 AM to Midnight (Friday and Saturday 7 AM to 12:30 AM). Note: Only Cash is accepted.

All are an easy walk from the North End's newest hotel, the Fairmount Battery Wharf.

- Alan Maltzman of BostonCityWalks.com