

EAT AND DRINK

Wellness lattes, and why they're taking over your Instagram feed

By Meredith Deliso

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Scrolling through Instagram lately, you may have noticed a rainbow of lattes taking over your feed.

The bold, colorful drinks come in arrays of reds, yellows and greens. But instead of food dye, the photogenic cups are made with unsexy ingredients like spirulina and beetroot.

For Madeleine Murphy, co-owner of the new Williamsburg cafe The End, these wellness lattes are a way to make wellness and nutrition fun.

“We want people to enjoy being healthy,” said Murphy. “I thought it would be cool to create a space where it was very fun to be healthy, and in a very sustainable way. As a busy New Yorker, I never had time for meal planning or making your own nut milks at home, any of that admirable stuff.”



Photo Credit: Meredith Deliso

Alongside The End's cortados and juices, Murphy, who studied at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, has developed a menu of plant-based, healing lattes made with ingredients like ginger, turmeric, apple cider vinegar and algae. The latter can be found in its [bestselling unicorn latte](#) (pictured), which is dusted with edible flowers or sprinkles.

"It's presented in a playful, colorful, almost childlike way to remove that serious tone that sometimes seeps into the nutritional world," Murphy said of the healing lattes. "Maybe we're introducing some weird, funky ingredient you never heard of before, but in an innocuous and super-playful way."



Photo Credit: The End

For Murphy, that means drinks that are good for you, taste good and look good.

"We always try to make things very aesthetically pleasing, when possible," she said.

Pictured: the purple amethyst latte.



Photo Credit: Meredith Deliso

Eddy Buckingham has a similar philosophy when it comes to the signature lattes at his new vegan cafe The Good Sort in Chinatown.

"The criteria is it has to be delicious, we want to hit that vegan note, you have to leave feeling good and it has to be aesthetically pleasing -- I like it to be pretty, too," said Buckingham.

The Good Sort currently serves five lattes that, speaking to their aesthetic appeal, are noted on the menu by their color: green (matcha), pink (beetroot, pictured), gold (turmeric and pepper), blue (blue algae) and black (activated charcoal and black sesame).



Photo Credit: Meredith Deliso

"The big mover has been the colored lattes," said Buckingham, who opened the cafe last month with co-owner Jeff Lam and also sells coffee, tea and, to eat, congee and baked goods. "It's the category people are responding to."

Guests can choose from almond milk, coconut milk or a new oak milk from Sweden, Oatly.

His personal favorite is the black (pictured), with the almond milk.

"The black charcoal is one of our most compelling and interesting -- when people see it, they go, 'What's that? I want to try it,'" Buckingham said. "We want to do things people haven't seen before."

Photo Credit: Ben Hider

Caffeine-less wellness lattes have been having a bit of a moment in Buckingham's homeland of Australia. Bluestone Lane, a NYC coffee chain also founded by Australian natives, has found inspiration Down Under for its trio of wellness drinks.



"Australia being our core influence always plays a part in our research and development," said Bluestone Lane coffee director Jai Lott.

"Alternative lattes such as those featured on the wellness menu was our answer to stepping away from sugar-filled coffee drinks that some bigger players tend to focus on."

Photo Credit: Ben Hider

Bluestone launched a matcha latte (pictured) at its Upper East Side location in September 2015, and after quick success added it to all locations later that month. A golden latte, made with turmeric, followed in July 2016, followed by a beet latte in October 2016. All are made with almond milk.

"Each drink has been received with open arms," Lott said. "They are extremely 'Instagrammable,' which has obviously helped spread the word."

Photo Credit: The End

Though Instagram is helping with the lattes' appeal, one barrier may be cost: The End's unicorn latte will run you \$9; pictured is the cafe's anxiety-busting hot cocoa. Bluestone Lane's and The Good Sort's options range from \$5 to \$8. This may prevent the drinks from becoming more popular, said NYC registered dietitian Tanya Freirich.



"Including lesser-known and harder-to-find ingredients comes at a premium," said Freirich, who often makes them at home to save on costs. "While you can find a number of coffee options starting at \$1 from your corner coffee cart, spending \$5 to \$10 on a wellness latte every day is out of the budget for many."

more and more of them in 2017," Freirich said.

Still, thanks to Instagram and other social media, "while these wellness lattes may not be an everyday option for many, you may be seeing

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