

# Prahran gets a slice of the hot sandwich action (and the 'basic bread' Cuban is queue-worthy)

Chef Charlie Carrington saw a gap in Melbourne's crowded sandwich market for something different. Say hola to Little Havana.



**Dani Valent**

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It's hard to argue that Melbourne needs another sandwich shop but chef Charlie Carrington is sure Little Havana's toasties are unique. His new Prahran venue is an homage to Cuban sandwich stores dotted throughout Miami's Little Havana neighbourhood, a drawcard destination for Latin culture.

"I went to Miami twice last year and I was gobsmacked," says Carrington. "I travel a lot and it's very rare for me to see something and think that it's needed here. But this is: I just loved it. Sandwiches are a bit of a rage in Melbourne but there's nothing like this."

After visiting Miami, Charlie Carrington thought Melburnians needed more Cubano sandwiches in their lives.

Little Havana is at the base of a new apartment building on the corner of Porter Street, near Prahran Station, and the tight offering is built around simple pressed sandwiches ranging in price from \$15.50 to \$19.50. The key item is a classic Cubano, which jams together roast pork, house-made ham, mustard, pickles and Swiss cheese.

***"Sandwiches are a bit of a rage in Melbourne but there's nothing like this."***

Charlie Carrington

"We prepare all the meat here," says Carrington. "The bread is really basic, like a hot dog bun, but the trick is that we leave the rolls in the fridge for a day to improve the crispiness, and once they're toasted, we brush them with lard or dripping."

Little Havana's signature Cuban sandwich.

The roast beef sandwich is another Miami classic, with roasted brisket, pastrami, Swiss cheese and a scattering of French fries. It's slathered with mojo rojo, a rich and piquant roast capsicum relish. Like many of the condiments and meat preparations, this drippy finger-licker was developed at Carrington's hatted [Atlas Dining](#) restaurant, which changes cuisine every three months.

"We did a Cuban menu earlier this year and it was a smash hit for us," says the chef. "It was quite surprising. I guess there is a mystique about Cuba – not many people have been able to go there or experience its cuisine."

Charlie Carrington's Prahran sandwich shop, Little Havana, can be turned into an events space.

There's also a vegetarian mushroom sandwich and three salads with classic Cuban flavours plus good espresso using a bespoke Colombian blend from Undercover Roasters. Carrington sees the Little Havana site as a spillover event site for Atlas Dining, which is a brisk five-minute walk away on Commercial Road, South Yarra. "We have a huge kitchen here and the space has been designed so we can change over the menu boards and use it for high-end functions," he says.

Sandwiches are available to take away but there's seating available in the bright, poppy space, including a funky booth for six. A wrap-around outdoor terrace will be a fun spot for sunset cocktails when the liquor licence comes through.

*Open daily 11am-3.30pm (11am-8.30pm from October 2).*

99 High Street, Prahran, [littlehavasandwiches.com.au](http://littlehavasandwiches.com.au)

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**Dani Valent** is a food writer and restaurant reviewer.

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