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Variety Weekend

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Stop and smell the flour

There's more to life than cupcakes

By DANA HARRIS

Enough with the cupcakes.

Nothing against them, you understand. Only cupcake worship could break down this city's resistance to carbs and inspire more than a dozen bakeries to open in the last year.

But there's a life beyond cupcakes.

There's croissants, cookies and éclairs, not to mention muffins, scones and danishes.

Plotting a course up, down and around the city, we visited nine new bakeries (all of which opened in the last 12 months) over the course of a single Saturday, buying everything that (a) looked good and (b) wasn't a cupcake. And then we tried them all.

The result is what we think are the five best non-cupcakes you can find at Los Angeles' new bakeries.

Also tried: *Bluebird Bakery, Café Surf, Hotcakes Bakes, Jamaica's Cakes and Sophie's Bakery & Café.*



The best non cupcakes in Los Angeles

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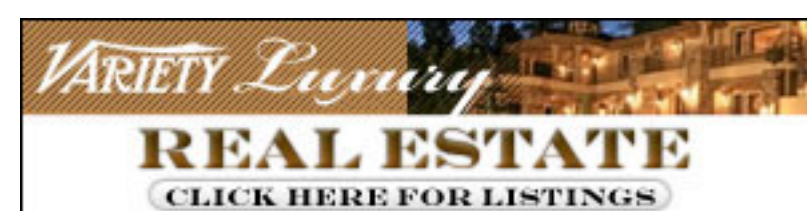
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CITY BAKERY Caramelized French toast

Order it freshly made and you'll get two thick slices of bread still warm and custardy in the middle and crunchy on the edges. Or buy it from the bakery case at room temperature. Not that it matters; like green eggs and ham, it's great any way you can get it.



Tom Sorensen/Variety Images

Contact Dana Harris at dana.harris@variety.com

SUSIECAKES Butterscotch toffee pudding

The swirl of whipped cream on top is cute, but who needs it? This has the depth of flavor you love in flan, dulce de leche or crème brulee, but in the guise of all-American, creamy goodness.



Tom Sorensen/Variety Images

BREADBAR Almond-chocolate croissants

Seemingly smushed flat (in the French tradition), they're not much to look at. But inside there's homemade almond paste and just the right amount of



Tom Sorensen/Variety Images

bittersweet chocolate. The result is indulgent and addictive, especially with a cup of coffee.

LE MAISON DU PAIN Pain aux raisin, Fruit danishes

The only spot to claim two spots on our short list, this bakery has an assured touch. Made with golden raisins, the pain aux raisin is a classic of its kind; the danishes are topped with vanilla-poached fruit and just the right amount of custard.



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