Review: Besito Means Mexican in Huntington

New York Avenue establishment provides authentic Mexican food, margaritas, and an upscale ambiance.


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Overview: Opened in 2006 by John Tunney III, Besito (meaning "Little Kiss") has garnered high acclaim from critics and the public alike, including a rating of "excellent" by the New York Times. In preparation for launching Besito, Tunney spent months in Mexico researching all aspects of Mexican dining – from cuisine and cocktails to design and decor – all with the goal of creating a culturally authentic Mexican restaurant.

Decor: The softly lit dining room manages to evoke a feeling of Mexico without resorting to sombreros. In the nice weather, tables are set up outdoors as well, offering an al fresco dining experience.
The Drinks: The restaurant is well-known for its excellent margaritas, which range in price from $8 for a classic or house margarita, to $15 for the Carlitos Way 'Tall' – a double classic margarita on the rocks. Highly recommended is the Besito Patron margarita ($11), containing Patron Reposado tequila, Cointreau, pomegranate-tangerine juice and fresh squeezed lime. It manages to be simultaneously fruity yet not overly sweet. Besito also serves wine and Mexican beers including Pacifico, Sol, Tecate, and Negra Modelo.

Appetizers: Not to be missed in the appetizer department is Besito's famous table-side guacamole ($12), made to order, mild, medium or spicy. We ordered it spicy, and it was. If you can't take the heat, try mild or medium. Other appetizers include standard Mexican fare such as salads, soups, quesadillas, and taquitos made extraordinary with the addition of authentic and unusual ingredients such as squash blossoms, Chihuahua cheese, and toasted pasilla chile.

Entrees: At lunch, the Ensalada Con Frutas – a tropical fruit and berry salad, served over baby mixed greens with chile pecans and Jamaica vinaigrette ($12) – is a good choice. The salad is loaded with chopped mango and ripe strawberries, blending harmoniously with the crunchy spiced pecans. Another lunch choice is Tacos de Camarones ($14) – shrimp tacos served with lettuce, pico de gallo, and chipotle cream salsa. The portion was ample, and the cream sauce melded nicely with the numerous shrimp stuffed into each taco. The dish was served with black beans and an unusual version of rice, buttery and studded with roasted pumpkin seeds. Dinner choices range from $18 to $23 and include various tacos, enchiladas, and platters of seafood, chicken, pork and beef. Vegetarians will be pleased with the Chile Rellenos al Hongos ($18) – Poblano peppers filled with wild mushrooms, baby spinach, goat cheese and pine nuts with salsa ranchera.

Sides: The side dishes are all $5, and include interesting choices such as fried sweet plantains with crema, fresh corn tamale in chipotle chile cream, and roasted corn with queso fresco and chile molido.

Desserts: Coffee, Mexican hot chocolate, and other desserts are available, but the restaurant also provides patrons with complimentary Churros – deep-fried dough sticks dusted with sugar and cinnamon. Can't decide between coffee and hot chocolate? Try the Café y Chocolate ($4) – hot coffee, Mexican chocolate and whipped cream.

Service: Diners wanting to go for dinner should make reservations as the popular restaurant is generally packed at night. Reservations are not necessary at lunch. Servers are efficient and knowledgeable.

Signature Dish: Guacamole en Molcajete, and the Besito Patron Margarita.
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