

HOT PLATES

These are the 27 best things we ate in 2019

By Ann Limpert and Anna Spiegel

THE DISH:

FRIED ARTICHOKES

WHERE → **STELLINA** 399 MORSE ST., NE

Fried artichokes are one of those dishes that can go south quickly—they can easily be too tough or turn greasy. You'll have none of those worries at this Union Market-adjacent pizza shop, where the flash-fried leaves are always feathery yet stand up to the herby mayo that accompanies them.

THE DISH:

VACA FRITA

WHERE → **EL SAPO**
8455 FENTON ST., SILVER SPRING

It took chef Reynold Mendizábel years to get this Cuban staple right. The method he came up with “has nothing to do with the way it’s done,” he says. Instead of boiling and pan-frying brisket, Mendizábel packs the meat in salt for a week, then braises it so that its fat melts, turning it into something close to a confit. The meat is pan-fried; doused in lime, chilies, onions, and garlic; and shredded with a spoon at the table.

THE DISH:

FRIED CHICKEN

WHERE → **ANJU** 1805 18TH ST. NW

Alabama-style white barbecue sauce—tangy and mayo-based—has been cropping up more and more up north. Even at this Korean kitchen. Here, the sauce is made with Japanese Kewpie mayo and serves as a drizzle for the superlative double-fried chicken. The bird is glazed in fire-red, tongue-tingling *gochujang*. Even so, you’ll want more of the white stuff for dunking.



Fried artichokes with herb aioli at Stellina

THE DISH:

SNAPPER ESCOVEITCH

WHERE → **CANE** 403 H ST., NE

Chef Peter Prime says this is the simplest of all his dishes at his Trinidadian restaurant. Maybe it’s easy enough to prepare—whole snapper is marinated in soy and lime, then flash-fried till it crunches—but it’s far more exciting to eat. Prime finishes the plate with fistfuls of fresh herbs, house-made pickled chilies, and best of all, the kitchen’s wondrous, deep-green culantro sauce.

THE DISH:

DETROIT PIZZA

WHERE → **DELLA BARBA**
DELLABARBAPIZZA.COM

Haven’t been to Della Barba? Well, neither have we—attorney turned *pizzaiolo* Joey Barber’s outfit is delivery and curbside

pickup only. (He works out of Ivy City’s Union Kitchen.) Barber doesn’t specialize in any one style of pie—his New York slices are as good as his Sicilian squares—but besting them all are his thick Detroit pizzas, baked in the regional style’s requisite steel pans and topped with Wisconsin brick cheese, cheddar-like slices that bubble and caramelize.

THE DISH:

JACKFRUIT DUMPLINGS

WHERE → **PUNJAB GRILL** 427 11TH ST. NW

You may have heard about the gold-leaf-topped lamb or the flower-laden cocktails at