



## Cook's Tour

### A dining blog with Alison Cook

February 22, 2007

#### An estimable cookie; a mighty muffin

Cookies rarely register on my personal food radar. I find many of the breed too one-note sweet, and just generally lacking sufficient interest in the flavor and texture departments.

Not so the lovely, almond-dotted cardamom cookies sold by the dozen at Himalaya, chef Kaiser Lashkari's inimitable Pakistani dinette on the Southwest Freeway near Hillcroft. I've been nursing a container full of these sandy-textured gems for a couple of weeks, unwilling to see the last of them, and have discovered they have a remarkable shelf life. They also have the gentle complexity of a good cup of chai, which makes even a single cookie an event worth savoring slowly.

Chef Lashkari has a couple of other good desserts--a creamy version of mango ice cream and a unique, porridgery take on rosewater-scented rice pudding--but it's those cookies I dream about and want to have on hand at home.



LOOK  
HERE!

In the same vein, ordinarily I am not a fan of "boughten" muffins, as my grandmother might have termed them. Most of the ones I come across in bakeries or coffee houses are just too sweet and cakelike for me. When I want a muffin, I bake my own.

So I was startled a couple of days ago to encounter a muffin I found spectacular at **Cafe Flores**, a new coffee shop and cafe at Wayside and Lawndale in my East End neighborhood. This worthy specimen was laced with exhilaratingly tart cranberries and walnuts, so it wasn't all about sugar. And its texture had that slightly coarse, muffin-y quick-bread consistency that I prefer to a finer cake-like crumb.

I couldn't believe that muffin existed a half mile from my house. Indeed, I still can scarcely believe that Cafe Flores, with its homey chicken salad sandwiches on wheat-walnut bread and its stout cappuccinos and lattes, is a half-mile away. With wi-fi and occasional live music, no less, plus a couple of outdoor tables for nice weather.

My gosh, there's even a Starbucks at the booming Gulfgate mall these days. What's next, a decent loaf of bread in the East End?

Once I would have said I will never live to see the day. Lately, I'm not so sure.

(Cafe Flores, 6606 Lawndale @, Wayside, 713-928-5244)

(Himalaya, 6652 SW Fwy @ Hillcroft, 713-532- 2837)