

# At Bella Flan, the Cuban Cheeseburgers Steal the Show

Bella Flan takes its inspiration from the frita cubana, a Cuban street food burger which is not related to the more famous Cuban sandwich.

By Brian Reinhart | August 18, 2022|2:20 pm



I thought I wanted Bella Flan’s Cuban street-style burger, the Bella Frita, because of the stack of crispy fries on top. It’s the star of any photograph of the burger, as you can see above. The golden, ultra-thin fries, with their dusting of salt, immediately tell you that this is a burger with crunch. They also tell you that this is a burger for people who do not mess around with healthy vegetables like lettuce.

When I first saw a picture of Bella Flan’s burger—probably on Instagram, while foodscrolling—I thought, “Aha! Here is a real belly buster. Maybe I can go for a long walk, work up an appetite, and take down a burger loaded with crispy, tiny fries.”

As it turned out, I did not earn my burger through exercise. More surprisingly, those potatoes are not the stars of the dish. The main attraction of the Bella Frita is the patty itself. It’s a mixture of beef and pork, with enough spices that the whole thing looks pink even after it is cooked. Think of it like a part-chorizo burger. The rest of the players are complementary flavors: fries for crunch, a soft blanket of Swiss cheese to hold everything together, and garlic cilantro aioli which underlines and accentuates the punch of the patty itself.

The frita cubana is a whole genre of burger in cities with large Cuban food scenes, like Miami. With origins in Havana’s street food carts, the burger has become a favorite of ex-pats; I found a Miami-based food blog with historical information (and reviews of their local offerings). There is debate, it appears, about whether the frita cubana should have ketchup or other tomato-based sauces. Bella Flan, agreeably, avoids the condiment. (Sorry. I’m anti-ketchup on burgers. Raise or reduce your trust in me accordingly.)

Caribbean-style burgers are just beginning to make their mark in the Dallas area. Picadera, the pop-up event series, has gained acclaim for its chimi burger, made with pickled red onions, slaw, peppers, and oregano imported from the Dominican Republic. Modest Rogers serves a burger with a tomatillo aioli, nodding toward the Venezuelan heritage and West Texas upbringing of chef Modesto Rodriguez. Bella Flan marks another important addition to the Dallas burger canon. We can only hope that this burger genre expands across our region.

Bella Flan has more options, too. There’s a vegetarian version of the burger, with a black bean-based patty. Cuban sandwiches, both meaty and vegetarian, are available.

And then, if you’ve saved room, you can have flan.