Fuel Up

There are two locations of Cheeni Chai + Coffee + Tiffin—both in YMCA. The one that opened first is downtown and they've always had a space for a coffee shop, which is part of why it is here. They're one of the few places that I've been to that has filter coffee, which is a Madras way of drinking coffee.

Don't Pass on the Punjabi

I discovered Valmoo Bhog by accident because I was strolling at the Indian grocery store and I'm always looking for places that have Indian street food. They have very traditional Punjabi items and it's homestyle. I always get the dhal bhatta, which is a soft, fermented fritter that gets all the water squeezed out and then it's smothered in yogurt, chutneys, and tamarind and has potatoes.

Classic Creole Fare

I have gotten Jucks Seafood's fried trout before, and the fried chicken is so good. It's just an odd, catty-corner building on a very busy boulevard, but it's excellent.

Time for Tumis

Centro is a Mexican restaurant and they have a very authentic touch. The chicken tortilla soup is perfect, and then a few years ago, upstairs, they opened a mezcaleria where they feature excellent cocktails and an awesome snack menu.

Soul of the City

The actual location of Poole's Diner has been a restaurant for more than fifty years, maybe even longer. Ashley Christensen's version of Poole's is a celebration of Southern, local ingredients. It was the first restaurant in this area in Raleigh that was like a chef's voice and it gave me and a lot of other people permission to express themselves through food without having a traditional culinary background.

Souvenir Spot

Nice Price Books & Records always has fresh, used records, and then new vinyl. It's just a rock solid, reliable, good, old-fashioned used bookstore with great records.

Sweets with a View

Aniseet Sweet Shop is in a little building with a courtyard in the back and an awesome view of downtown. It's run by a couple, and they've developed it into a place that is serious about coffee. They feature a lot of vegan confections, too, which are not very easy to find.

Local Artisans

As the name implies, Pocket Gallery is very small, and they feature local artists only. They also have works by local jewelers and metal workers.

Modern Muse

The Contemporary Art Museum (CAM Raleigh) is kind of like our Guggenheim. They have very thought-provoking installations and shows, with artists from all over the world, with everything from fabric and fashion to mixed media that is talking about Indigenous culture.