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SHOP GIRL: 27 Layers of Buttery Bliss

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At first glance, the kringle from Pastries of Denmark looks something like a Danish. A really big Danish in the shape of a pretzel. But since it's made from a laminated dough, it's actually closer to a croissant. To make it, the chef adds dots of butter to a sheet of dough, folding it over itself, rolling it out, and repeating the process until 27 layers of tiny bits of butter rest inside, ready

to spread into rich, flaky layers during baking.

Chef/owner Kristian Vesth says that of their kringle flavors, the almond is the most traditionally Danish. Two fillings - a homemade custard that stays put, and a butter-almond-sugar mixture that seeps out into the dough - are encased in a tube of dough that's folded into the knotted pretzel shape. The dough itself is not sweet, but it's flaky and substantial, and the fillings are tucked inside, so there's some in most every bite.

The kringle takes its shape from the traditional sign for European bakeries, but in this country, it's closely associated with Christmas. Around the holidays, the shop struggles to keep up with demand, so you're advised to come by early or call ahead. In addition to the traditional almond flavor, the kringle is available in raspberry, apple-cinnamon, and cherry-chocolate. They also make an individual size if the big one is too much for you, but trust me: There is joy in sharing a kringle with family and friends.

Pastries of Denmark's Kringle: \$1.89 individual size, \$10.99 full size

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