

Chicken in Global Attire

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HERE'S a conversation you might hear (or have) on Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn:



Michael Nagle for The New York Times

FRIED IN BROOKLYN At Schnitzi on Coney Island Avenue, patrons order chicken on a baguette.

“Hey, let’s get some schnitzel.”

“Schnitzi or Schnitzel King?”

“Schnitzi. Those guys know how to sauce a schnitzel.”

No matter what you think of schnitzel, it’s fun to say. And you’ll be saying more of it: Schnitzel is on the rise in New York. Schnitzi plans to open in the diamond district in a few months, joining the new Pita Joe and other Manhattan vendors.

But Coney Island Avenue is still the city’s schnitziest strip, with several shops in Midwood serving the sandwiches of fried chicken cutlet on baguette that Israelis, and many Jewish New Yorkers, call schnitzel. (European Jews brought a love of pounding, breading and frying veal to Israel, and replaced it with the more available chicken.)

SCHNITZI

1299 Coney Island Avenue (Avenue J), (718) 338-4015; schnitzi.com. Sunday to Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.; Thursday to 2 a.m. Generally open Friday until two hours before sunset, Saturday one hour after sunset to 2 a.m.

A savvy Orthodox Jewish crowd has been packing Schnitzi since it opened a little over a year ago. And it's clear why: Schnitzi deep-fries right, removing the cutlets when crisp and fairly greaseless but not dry, and placing a generous portion onto a waiting baguette already stuffed with a slew of accoutrements.

Getting to that point, though, requires some rather complex ordering: First, specify which of the eight styles of breading you want, from Spanish (slightly spicy) to Chinese (sesame-seeded) to Yemenite (allegedly falafel-flavored). Then wait as the kosher chicken is fried to order.

When your number is called, tell the worker how to dress and sauce the baguette, Subway-style. Lettuce, tomato? Obviously. Israeli pickles? Of course. Onions fried or raw? Fried.

Then it gets complicated as you hear customers shouting out confounding sauce combinations, like "garlic mayo, chimichurri and pesto!" That combo actually works, and those may also be the best three sauces. The "spicy" sauce, alas, lacks kick.

Surprisingly, the ingredients all get along. The just-fried chicken plays off the cool, fresh greens and the sauces add punch.

The sandwiches are too big for one person, in theory. But in practice, you'll each need your own, even with a humongous order of "Schnitzi French fries", which are really potato chips fried to order (and occasionally a bit underdone).

Get a side of garlic mayo for the fries and grab a table. The place is friendly, lively, and mainly male on summer weeknights, when many local women and children are in the mountains.

Schnitzi's owners, Nir Messer and Yair Isner, modeled the restaurant after an Israeli chain of that name. They have other sandwiches, but schnitzel is the star.