

Tastes Like Brooklyn

By Anja Mutic

New York's once-forgotten borough is developing quite the foodie scene—and even drawing patrons from Manhattan.

I moved to Brooklyn in the late 1990s, before food became fashion. Back then, my personal favorites involved iconic eats like Russian fare in Brighton Beach. It was the time before the then largely desolate Fifth Avenue in Park Slope turned chock-a-block full of eateries and before South Williamsburg became a foodie enclave. A little more than a decade later, Brooklyn's creative culinary trends of homespun variety draw even Manhattanites across the East River.

When I crave delicious local eats on the cheap, I head to the **Brooklyn Flea** (brooklynflea.com). It's a quirky weekend market with cool vintage finds for your home, but don't miss the food! I love the funky franks from Asia Dogs with inspired toppings like kimchi and nori. Other standbys include rolls with fresh-picked Maine lobster meat by Red Hook Lobster Pound, Salvadoran pupusas from Red Hook Food Vendors and the perfectly moist almond croissants from Choice Market. In spring and summer, The Flea has two homes: a school parking lot on Saturdays and the gorgeous interior of the landmark Williamsburgh Savings Bank on Sundays.

When I want a bite of down-home Americana in a bistro setting, I head to South Williamsburg. Sure, the celebrated steaks at **Peter Luger** (peterluger.com) are nearby, but just a few blocks down hides one of Brooklyn's micro-gastro meccas. I love the seasonally inspired fare dished out inside the quirky 1920s dining car at **Diner** (dinernyc.com), where waiters scribble the many daily specials on paper tablecloths. **Marlow & Sons** (marlowandsons.com) next door does double duty as a gourmet bodega and buzzing restaurant, serving grub with a Mediterranean twist in a dimly lit wood-paneled back room.

More creative comfort food: the Court Street restaurant row in Cobble Hill. **Buttermilk Channel** (buttermilkchannelnyc.com) is a standout, a corner canteen that showcases American mainstays with the accent on local and organic such as its buttermilk-fried chicken with cheddar waffles.

In the hip neighborhood of Fort Greene, I make a beeline to the basement **Stonehome Wine Bar & Restaurant** (stonehomewinebar.com) to dine on stellar cheese and charcuterie as I sip on one of the 35 wines available by the glass. The simple menu of contemporary American cuisine is a surefire palate-pleaser. A re-

cent favorite: roasted Iowa venison with juniper-spiced sausage, cider-braised sauerkraut and fingerling potatoes.

Of recent dining discoveries, two stand out. I was lucky to snag a coveted seat—one of only 18—at the semicircular steel counter of **Brooklyn Fare** (brooklynfare.com), the borough's only restaurant with two Michelin stars. At this downtown Brooklyn spot adorned with copper pots and pans, chef César Ramirez cooks up an inventive 20-course culinary storm with a seafood slant. **Fatty Cue** (fattycue.com) in South Williamsburg is more my speed—a quirky eatery where smoked foods feature a Southeast Asian twist. Beef brisket with chili jam, aioli, bao, pickled red onion and bone broth, anyone? Dining out in Brooklyn never gets boring. 🍴

GETTING THERE

Daily nonstops to JFK from Dulles International on Delta and United Airlines, and Jetblue Airways, and from Reagan National on American and Delta Airlines. Daily nonstops to LaGuardia from Dulles International on US Airways and United Airlines, and from Reagan National on Delta Airlines and US Airways.