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TOP STORIES

The First and Only Manhattan Kosher Cheeseburger

by: Peri Grabin Leong | Dec 18 2007

Pork aside, I'd say that a cheeseburger is the ultimate non-kosher food. So, going to Talia's Steakhouse for my first-ever beef cheeseburger experience promised to be interesting.



NY Sephardic Jewish Film Festival February 7-14

by Blueprint Staff

The American Sephardic Federation/Sephardic House, in association with Yeshiva University Museum, announces the 2008 New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival line-up, celebrating a dozen years of thought-provoking films. With the ... [more](#)

Rabbinical Students Launch Social Justice Group

I've made cheeseburgers at home, but now I see that my veggie burger topped with real old-fashioned cow-milk-cheese melted over it (yum!) doesn't really count. Honestly, I never thought of trying a beef burger with soy cheese because soy cheese freaks me out. When I watch my soy ice-cream not melt right before my eyes, I know this can't be good. Soy cheese looks like plastic and I've been afraid to taste it.

Apparently, I had good reason to doubt this. Effie Nagar, owner of Talia's Steakhouse on the Upper West Side, told me about his first thoughts of his kosher cheeseburger idea. "I wanted to see if it would melt and I wanted to see if it would taste like real cheese," he said.

After many attempts to melt the cheese, they found the right temperature in a 1950 degree (F) broiler. A broiler so hot it can cook a steak in minutes. After taking my order (Effie recommended mozzarella over American cheese), Effie took me into the kitchen and offered me a taste of the soy cheese. I overcame my natural fear of fake cheese to find that I was right... it doesn't taste like cheese. As the chef placed my burger back in the broiler, I watched the cheese melt over it (yes, very impressive for soy). He placed it on a toasted bun topped with lettuce, tomato, red onion and pickles and I walked my burger back to my table.

Like myself, Effie had never had a cheeseburger before, so he brought some non-Jewish friends to try out his new burger and they loved it. He told me that he's had some lactose intolerant, non-kosher customers order the burger. "It's interesting for them too. It's the only place they can have [a cheeseburger]. Show me another place [in Manhattan]," he said. "I don't know of one."

As I took my first bite of the cheeseburger, Effie came over to check up on me. Coming to Talia's Steakhouse, I knew I'd get a great burger; my surprise was that the cheese, once melted, really tasted like cheese. The food was delicious, but I'll admit that the taste of cheese and beef together was a bit strange at first.

With my cheeseburger, side of fries and a Coke, I felt like I was in a diner of a classic old film - another experience we kosher-eating-Jews don't have in New York.

Talia's Steakhouse offers a wide variety of sauces for their burgers such as salsa, guacamole, barbeque, honey-mustard, garlic-mayo, ranch, Caesar dressing and, of course, the traditional ketchup and mustard. Personally, I recommend the salsa. It's a bit on the spicier side and adds some bite to complement the cheese.

While I may not know what a meat and dairy cheeseburger tastes like, I can tell you that Talia's Steakhouse will serve you a well-

by Rachel Cyrulnik

Workers' rights and immigration do not typically top the list of foremost issues in the Jewish community. This is why this fall, three rabbinical students from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Aaron ... [more](#)

prepared kosher cheeseburger with all the looks of the real thing.

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