

Tom's Takes

April 3, 2009

Restaurant Recommendations From Post Food Critic Tom Sietsema

GREEK DELI & Catering (Unrated)

(1120 19th St., NW; 202-296-2111)

Entrees \$6.70-\$9.99

Some of the patrons of this Greek shoebox are so loyal and trusting of owner Kostas Fostieris, they simply ring him up and tell him to surprise them for lunch. This anecdote is supported by the lines, that typically form outside the tiny business on any given workday, and by the affection so many of customers have for the guy, who typically hovers over the big pans of homey Greek food set to the side of the cash register. Spanakopita, Moussaka, Gyros in flavors from tuna to chicken to beef. All the Greek classics are accounted for here, and while I admire the hearty lentil soup and the homemade bread, the specials tend to make my mouth water the most. Regulars know Thursday as a day for meatloaf, but judging from my most recent visit, roast pork deserves a permanent slot, too. Fostieris, who gets to work no later than 5 a.m., marinates the pork in olive oil, lemon, white wine, bay leaf and oregano before cooking it to soft, savory satisfaction — then dishing it out with a generous hand. The \$9 entree is shored up with a green salad, a thick slice of that bread, a mound of luscious orzo and a vegetable of the day (crisp green beans on my drop in).

The line moves fast at lunch, but if you really can't wait, you can call Greek Deli at breakfast and place a request for later pickup.

(Reviewed December 7)

Fearless Critic

Washington DC Area Restaurant Guide

Food - 7.1 Feel - 6.0

Simple, no-fuss Greek: get there early for the specials

The lunchtime line out the door of Greek Deli says it all. Tucked into a storefront on 19th Street, this carryout-only joint is a single long room barely wide enough for two people to stand shoulder-to-shoulder; the line snakes forward along the right side to the cashier in front of the kitchen, and then people step to the left to await their white Styrofoam containers of authentic Greek food.

The pace is swift, so make up your mind before you reach the front of the line. The specials tend to run out quickly, but you won't go wrong with of the choices, like spanakopita, here a surprisingly light dish, with layers of flaky pastry encasing a tender, creamy spinach and cheese filling that can be cut even with a plastic fork.

Hot baked dishes, such as mousaka or pastitsio, are accompanied by plain orzo, salad (mainly ho-hum iceberg lettuce), and the vegetable of the day (such as creamy white beans and green beans stewed with tomato and oregano), all dished out by owner Kostas himself. Also available are acceptable gyros, juicy but with minimal lamb flavor under garlicky tzatziki, as well as other sandwiches on lightly toasted, soft pita. Greek salads come in lunch-sized portions, topped with your choice of protein (lamb, grilled chicken, falafel that is perfectly crispy on the outside and gooey on the inside, etc.). Grab a slice of Kosta's homemade bread, a simple, dense, white loaf with a mild flavor that perfect for mopping up extra juices and sauces.

The baklava is almost too crunchy and sweet, but since you're only here for lunch anyway, you can do without dessert. The real draws here are the approachable Greek classics, prepared by a native who cares about the quality of his food. While on the pricey side for a lunch place, you are paying for something rare in DC — convenient, authentic Greek made with gruff love. And the chance to annoy your cubicle neighbors with pungent odors. — CD

WASHINGTONIAN

Dirt Cheap Eats—All Under \$15 December 2008

Greek Deli (1120 19th St., NW; 202-296-2111). This popular takeout's Greek combo platter (\$9.99) could feed at least two people with its large, delicious portions of cheesy spanakopita, comforting baked pasta pastitsio punched up with nutmeg, a boulder-sized meatball over orzo, stewed green beans that maintain their snap, plus house-made bread and a side salad. It's not just a meal; it's a dare. The souvlaki sandwich (\$7.25) is more like a succulent lamb stew tucked into a pita, the tender meat melding with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, fresh herbs, and house-made yogurt. Get there late and some favorites—such as the chicken-lemon soup—may be gone. Open weekdays for breakfast and lunch.



To Our Customers:

Just as a point of interest, we would like to give you our personal guarantee that we use only the finest food products available.

For the health conscious, it's good to know the we cook only with olive oil, soy bean, and margarine. No preservatives or monosodium glutamate (MSG) are used.

Kostas



DELI MENU

Specializes in Greek, Mediterranean Cuisine

1120 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-2111
Fax: (202) 296-1829
Mon-Fri 7am-4pm

www.greekdelidc.com

or

www.eats.com
click on Greek Deli

Phone & Fax Orders Only.
No E-Mail Orders Please.

HOT BREAKFAST

Feta and Tomato Omelette	4.99
Western Omelette	4.99
Egg Sandwich on Pita with Feta and Tomatoes	2.99
Egg & Sausage Sandwich on Pita	3.99
Toasted Pita with Feta & Tomatoes	2.65
Toasted Pita with Egg and 2 Slice Gyro	3.99

ALA CARTE MENU

Lamb with one side	8.99
All other main entrees with one side	7.65

Combo meal is not included in the ala carte menu

ENTREE SALADS

Our Famous Greek Salad	Sm. ... 6.25	Lg. 7.25
Grilled Chicken Salad	Sm. ... 8.24	Lg. 9.24
Tuna Salad	Sm. ... 8.24	Lg. 9.24
Turkey Salad	Sm. ... 8.24	Lg. 9.24
Humos Salad	Sm. ... 8.24	Lg. 9.24
Falafel Salad	Sm. ... 8.24	Lg. 9.24
Lamb Salad	Sm. ... 8.98	Lg. 9.98

SANDWICHES

Souvlaki	7.50
Fresh Turkey on Pita	7.50
Falafel on Pita with Feta Cheese.....	7.50
Egg Salad on Pita with Feta Cheese	6.99
Our Famous Tuna on Pita with Feta Cheese	6.99
Humos on Pita with Feta Cheese	6.99
Veggie on Pita with Feta Cheese	6.99
Tuna Gyro style.....	6.99
Chicken Gyro	7.50
Our Famous Gyro	7.50
All Sandwiches on the Bread.....	8.99

The GREEK DELI AND CATERING
uses only the finest products available.
Our homemade style pita
has no fat – no sugar – low in calories.

HOT GREEK SPECIALTIES

Spanakopita (Spinach Pie)	9.50
Authentic Greek Meatballs	9.50
Athenian Baked Pastitsio	9.50
Baked Chicken Youvetsi 1/4	8.99
The Authentic Gyro Platter	9.50
Baked Mousaka.....	9.50
Greek Combo	10.50
Hot Pasta with Feta Cheese	6.99
String Beans Greek style (Medium)	7.99
Lamb Platter.....	10.50
Chicken Breast Platter.....	9.50
Turkey Platter	9.50
Hot Veggie Platter with Salad	9.50
Pasta with Salad and Feta Cheese	8.99
Spanakorizo Small	3.99
Large	6.99

All Platters Include Orzo, Vegetable and Salad

SOUPS

Avgolemono (Chicken Lemon).....	3.50
Lentil	3.50
Homemade Chili (on Mondays)	4.25

SIDE ORDERS

Boiled Eggs69
Orzo with Feta	2.99
Lima Beans	2.99
String Beans.....	2.99
Dolmades	3.99
Humos	3.99
Taramosalata	3.99

DESSERTS

Baklava.....	2.99
Rizogalo (Greek Rice Pudding)	2.49
Homemade Yogurt with Honey and Walnuts	3.99
Homemade Chocolate Chip Cookies	1.99
and more.....	

**We Cater To Parties At
Home or At The Office**

**36 Years Experience in
Fine Greek, Italian
and American Cuisine**

The GREEK DELI AND CATERING
is not limited only to items in this menu.
Please call us for daily specials.

WeekendPass

express

DEC. 14-17, 2006

It's Greek to Us

In the heart of the big city, an eatery with small-town appeal

NEIGHBORLY | At 3:30 in the morning at 19th and L streets, Fostieris, the owner and chef of the Greek Deli Express readies his tiny kitchen for the daytime rush as he has every weekday for the past 17 years.

At this ungodly hour, Fostieris accepts his daily deliveries and prepares soups, spanakopita, gyros and other Greek specialties that have won fans who will wait in a lunch-time line winding out the door. And as cold weather approaches, business is "crazy, crazy, crazy," particularly when Fostieris makes his meatloaf for Tuesday's special and meatballs with rice in a wine-lemon sauce for Wednesday's.

Every day, Fostieris prepares between 20 and 30 gallons of lentil and avgolemono soups. Making soup is what reminds him most of growing up on Andros, the northernmost of Cyclades on the Aegean Sea. "We used to eat soup every day: navy bean, split pea, lentil. ... Meat was for once or twice a week." Fostieris does cater to a meat-eating clientele, as indicated by customers shouting out orders for the "authentic gyro platter" (\$8.50) and the pastitso (\$8.50) – a meat-based Greek lasagna, layered with tomatoes, bucatini, cinnamon and nutmeg.

Regulars stop in to say hello to Fostieris, a neighborhood institution. He knows his customers, too. As he took a break to catch some fresh air, he greeted regulars by name, asking about family and work as they passed.

Though there's a small Greek community in the area, Fostieris said, he doesn't see them much during the day. "Not many Greeks work around here,," he said. "They come to me and ask, 'Why don't you open up a restaurant that stays open past four o'clock?' I say, 'I'm tired.'" MELISSA MCCART

The Washington Post Magazine

December 7, 2008

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The anecdote is shared by Fostieris's wife, Irene, and it's supported by the lines that typically form outside the tiny business on any given workday, and by the affection so many of his customers have for the guy, who typically hovers over the big pans of homey Greek food set to the side of the cash register. "Hiya, Kostas!" a woman salutes Fostieris, briefly interrupting her cellphone conversation to place her order.

Spanakopita. Moussaka. Gyros in flavors from tuna to chicken to beef. All the Greek classics are accounted for here, and while I admire the hearty lentil soup and the homemade bread, the specials tend to make my mouth water the most. Regulars know Thursday as a day for meatloaf, but judging from my most recent visit, roast pork deserves a permanent slot, too. Fostieris, who gets to work no later than 5 a.m., marinates the pork in olive oil, lemon, white wine, bay leaf and oregano before cooking it to soft, savory satisfaction — then dishing it out with a generous hand. The \$9 entree is shored up with a green salad, a thick slice of that bread, a mound of luscious orzo and a vegetable of the day (crisp green beans on my drop in).

The line moves fast at lunch, but if you really can't wait, you can call Greek Deli at breakfast and place a request for later pickup. Forget phoning the joint at prime time, though. The owner is too busy serving and schmoozing to answer.

Open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.