

Chowing down

Food Lovers' Guide gives gustatory glance at eastern Baltimore County

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Posted: Tuesday, March 12, 2013 8:22 am

By Kirstyn Flood For the Avenue News

There is something about Baltimore cuisine that trumps that of other cities.

Maybe it's the blue crabs dappled with savory Old Bay seasoning; the nostalgia associated with Berger Cookies; or, maybe, it's the sweet-n-sour taste of a summery, thirst-quenching half-n-half. Whatever it may be, the recently published Food Lovers' Guide to Baltimore features a dozen local restaurants for all of you Baltimore foodies on the hunt for those delicious Eastern Baltimore County must-haves.

Food Lovers' Guide to Baltimore is penned by two self-proclaimed foodies, Kathy Wielech Patterson and her husband, Neal Patterson.

Kathy Wielech Patterson discovered her love of food while on a European excursion through London and Paris. In 2005, she wanted to share her passion for the culinary arts, and started Minxeats.com and AllTopChef.com, with her partner-in-crime, Neal Patterson. Former financial writer by day and pulp-style fiction writer by night, Neal Patterson took a stab at freelance writing, and, alongside his wife, Kathy, has been chewing his way through the streets of Baltimore, ever since.

These two food connoisseurs guide Baltimoreans and tourists alike to local Foodie Faves, for a bite of Eastern Baltimore County heaven. Here's a nibble of what they say about local restaurants:

Al's Seafood, Essex: "Al's started out as a carryout in Fells Point, where our families routinely bought crab cakes and coleslaw...when such a bounty of seafood items is available in one place, we say go for it."

Arigato Hibachi & Sushi, Fullerton: "Arigato's sushi is some of the best we've eaten in Baltimore. The portions are properly petite and easy to eat, the fish is amazingly fresh and tender, and the rice is usually still a bit warm, which makes everything melt in our mouths."

Boulevard Diner, Dundalk: "It's typically shiny with chrome and neon lights, but it's not open 24/7 (except on Friday and Saturday). And the menu is long, but it's not mind-boggling. In fact, it's just right."

Broadway Diner, Dundalk: "What's most impressive about modern diners like the Broadway, though, is that not only can they churn out a huge variety of dishes, from pancakes to filet mignon, they also make dishes just as good as those in more expensive, fancy places."

By the Docks, Middle River: "Monday is Greek Night, which brings a small selection of Greek specialties to the menu. Tuesday is Italian night, and on Wednesday ribs and steak are featured. Seafood's day comes on Thursday, and the weekend specials include items not on the regular menu."

Chopstix Gourmet, Perry Hall: "The mix of Japanese and Chinese decor...lots of wood, and soothing lighting belies the fact that Chopstix is in a strip mall. The decor is fusion, and so is the menu."

Costas Inn, Dundalk: "The sound of mallet on crab is like music to our ears...Oh, there are plenty of other things on the menu (including some near-pornographic photographs of crab cakes and stuffed lobsters), and it's all good—crab soup, crab dip, crab cakes, pit beef or turkey sandwiches..."

Fiesta Mexicana, Rosedale: "Frederico Lopez's homey little restaurant specializes in authentic Mexico City-style street food, or antojitos. The key word here is "authentic," which translates as "delicious."...Everything is made to order, while you watch, which is all part

of the fun.”

Frank’s Pizza & Pasta, Overlea: “It looks much like any other strip-mall carryout on the outside, but inside Frank’s you’ll find amazingly friendly folks who are truly thrilled to feed you one or more of their specialities.”

Michael’s Steak & Lobster House, Baltimore: “This old-fashioned Baltimore steakhouse has a 40-ounce porterhouse that will make you feel like Fred Flintstone. And it costs about 20 bucks. How about a 32-ounce crab cake, which better resembles an entire meatloaf than the Maryland speciality?”

Mr. Bill’s Terrace Inn, Essex: “Once seated, get your crab and beer order in right away and only then peruse the menu for accompaniments to your crabtastic feast...Crack, pick, enjoy, and repeat until all crabs are gone.”

Vinny’s, Dundalk: “The chow is classic: cold antipasto platters, marinara everywhere, and veal Parmesan. Familiar comfort food Italian.”

El Salto, Parkville: “There are three words to describe El Salto: fast, cheap, good. Fast, in that your order comes to the table lightning quick, almost before you’ve ordered.”

Kitchen of India, Parkville: “Ignore the fact that Kitchen of India is on a swath of Joppa Road that is otherwise filled with strip malls and car dealerships, and stop inside for a taste of the subcontinent.”

Pappas Restaurant, Parkville: “Pappas is one of those old-school Baltimore seafood restaurant that are few and far between these days...One of many places that claims to have the best crab cake in town...There’s plenty more than seafood on the menu, including pasta dishes and a slew of sandwiches...”

There is no doubt, Eastern Baltimore County cuisine is some of the best around. It’s an eclectic tapestry of international, regional, and local flavors. The Food Lovers’ Guide to Baltimore, takes us on a satisfying tour of food faves. Indulge in the tastes of featured finds or discover dives of your own; there’s something for everyone in Eastern Baltimore County!

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