



Eating on the Go

The original Gypsy truck and its smaller sibling Little Gypsy offer large waffle cones filled with french fries and topped with a crab cake and spicy chipotle sauce, or even a burger.

Photo courtesy of Kathy Wielech Patterson

Keep on (Food) Truckin'

by Kathy Wielech Patterson and Neal Patterson
Community Contributor

If you've been in downtown Baltimore on any given weekday, you've probably noticed the food trucks. Oh, not the familiar hot dog or halal carts that have parked at regular sidewalk locations for years now — the trucks. These colorful restaurants on wheels offer everything from grilled cheese sandwiches to sautéed scallops to macaroni and cheese cones. And let's not forget the cupcakes!

There are, at last count, three cupcake trucks. IcedGems Creations, which hails from Reisterstown, hits several locations per day and usually sells out of flavors like french toast and birthday cake. Flavor Cupcakery, a Food Network "Cupcake Wars" winner, has shops in both Harford and Baltimore Counties, and their truck can be found peddling the bakery's moist cakelets in both counties and Baltimore City. Finally, Federal

Hill's Midnite Confection's Cupcakery has a fairly new truck on the road, and it can usually be found somewhere between Baltimore and Washington, DC.

For some of us, a red velvet cupcake topped with fluffy cream cheese frosting makes a reasonable lunch, but others might insist that sweets should only be a post-meal treat. Those folks will still be tsk-tsk-ing at some of the decadent lunches served on local food trucks. For instance, the Gypsy Queen's infamous mac-and-cheese cone. Topped with a savory jam they call "bacon bling," this portable lunchtime treat is nearly as decadent as cake. The original Gypsy truck and its smaller sibling Little Gypsy also offer large waffle cones filled with french fries and topped with a crab cake and spicy chipotle sauce, or even a burger. Waffle cones aren't just for ice cream anymore.

For those who prefer to eat their food with a knife and fork, there's Bistro Lunch Box's fresh grilled fish presented in a Chinese take-out-style box. You might also want to try their messily delicious truffle cheddar fondue fries. Charm City Gourmet's offerings are on the elegant side like their seared scallops with sweet creamed corn and prosciutto bacon served in a plastic martini glass. The truck even serves lobster in the form of lobster mac and cheese and a lobster roll, plus finger food like bacon-shell tacos and finger-licking baby back ribs.

More ribs can be found on one of several BBQ trucks prowling the streets. There's the Smoking Swine, with real dry-rubbed and smoked 'cue like pulled pork, dee-licious brisket, and both meaty St. Louis-style pork ribs and gigantic beef short ribs. One can order a whole rack of smoked pork ribs from Kommie Pig, or something more dainty like a Nathan's hot dog topped with pulled pork. Jurassic Pork is another fine source for pulled pork and chicken.

Tacos? You say you want tacos? We have those, too. That crafty Gypsy Queen has several kinds, but Woody's Taco Island specializes in them. The Jolly Pig also has lots of tacos, including Korean bbq and Thai-style ones. For something more traditional, El Cuervo, which recently won Baltimore Magazine's Best of Baltimore award, fills theirs with carnitas, barba-coa, or cornmeal-fried catfish. You can also try their Mexican sandwiches called tortas as well.

While we're talking sandwiches, we can't ignore Kooper's Chowhound Burger Wagon. One of the original food trucks on the scene, Chowhound serves several species of burger, from beef, bison, and turkey to lamb and the more exotic duck or Wagyu beef. Order one of their classics, like the MacGuinness topped with applewood smoked bacon and cheddar, or build your own with any of thirty or so cheeses, toppings, and condiments.

This may sound like a lot of food trucks. but this isn't the end of the food truck road. There's a bunch of ethnically-inspired fare: KoCo Korean Fusion (tacos and bulgogi); Busia's Kitchen (pierogi and golabki); Darua Brazilian (feijoada and pastels); and the Sultan (chicken tikka masala and vindaloo with freshly-baked tandoori naan). Other trucks offer more familiar foods, like the grilled cheese sandwiches of GrrChe and Wheyich, the chicken and waffles at...Chicken 'n Waffles', and Souper Freaks' fabulous soups.

While the trucks park all over the city and county during the day, most or all of them can be found in one place on Friday nights. Called "The Gathering," these events are held in various locations around town.



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