

Your Next Bite

a delectable quest to find you the best from Fine Dining to Food Trucks

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10/01/2010

Takosher - the first certified Glatt kosher Taco Truck





A Rabbi, a Latke, and a Brisket walk into a Taco Truck and Takosher, "The Chosen Taco" is born, baptized, then circumcised...

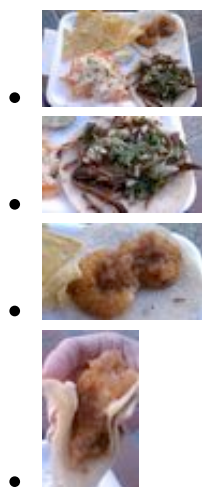
Just when you thought there was nothing more to love than the juxtaposition of high quality ingredients from a rolling street vendor, Takosher swoops in and breaks a delicious dish in your drooling face...

Ok, ok, I'll stop with the 1 liners, but I gotta say, the fact that the jewish-mexican fusion food has been certified "ritually pure" by Rabbi Kelemer, makes me wanna scream "holy guacamole!" (Did this last one make you wanna say "Ole" or "Oy Vey"?).

Enough with the fluff and onto, as Alec Baldwin puts it in Along Came Polly, "Mazel, Mazel, Good Things."

The Grubdown:

- rivaling Kogi, so sweet 'n tender The Original Brisketaco with Chili Sauce, Sauerkraut & Raisins (\$3.50)
- sweet fried bliss The Original Latketaco with 3 Types of Potatoes, Cilantro, Onions & Spicy Apple Jalapeno Chutney (\$3.50)
- refreshing, zesty Jicama Salad with Chopped Carrots & Cucumber (2 taco combo + chips + salad for \$6.50)





When I asked the truck server how big the tacos were and he answered 1.5 to 2 inches, he wasn't kidding. Good thing my hand model was MIA for the day, 'cuz there was NO WAY I was sharing these avante-garde taco treats.

First of all, Brisket in a Taco? So simple, yet so genius. (My Jewish friend Jackie who dies for Mexican food is probably super jealous she left LA.) The meat tastes like sweet smokey BBQ and the Diced Onions give it a sharp bite, while the Sauerkraut & Cilantro give it some tang.

The Latke Taco is surprising – perfectly crispy & crunchy on the outside, fluffy & soft on the inside. And right when you dive in, the Cinnamon in the finely chopped Apple Jalapeno Chutney leaps at your nose.

The Jicama Salad must be scooped up with the Tortilla Chips. Bite advice – add some Lime. But on it's own, it's cooling with a touch of vinegar, and balances the sweet flavors of the 2 tacos well.

Tomorrow & Saturday, Takosher will not be rolling as they're closed in observance of Simchat Torah & Shabbat. But they'll be open on Sunday from 11am - 6pm for the Jewish County Fair at the [Shalom Institute](#) off Mulholland. Follow the truck [@Takosher](#) on Twitter for details.

(I thought I'd spare you by not making another joke and finish on a L'Chayim note ;)

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09/29/2010

Happy Portions at Noir Wine Bar's Happy Hour



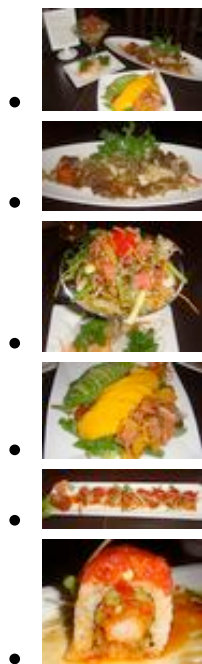


Three-month-old Noir Wine Bar marries the best of Asian cuisines – Bulgogi Jap Chae, Poke Tuna, even an off-the-menu Kimchee Sushi Roll – at Happy Hour prices from 3-7pm.

Located on La Brea just south of Wilshire, Noir sits quietly on the block with black & white awnings & black wooden signs. But step inside and a fiery red wall greets you on the left, while a lofty brick wall says hello on the right. The center 8-seater bar is brimming with 49 Wines, 17 Beers, 8 Sakes, and 4 Soju-tinis, which during happy hour are discounted from \$2 to 50% off. And the Happy Hour portions are some of the biggest I've seen at an Asian restaurant, priced at 2 for \$12.99 and 3 for \$18.99.

The Grubdown:

- might as well be a meal, sesame 'n soy, smooth yet crunchy Beef Bulgogi Jap Chae
- the almost bottomless Martini Glass of light 'n chunky, fresh 'n peppery Poke Tuna
- the whole Avocado, the whole Mango, but not the whole citrusy sweet Salmon Salad





I've been wanting to try Noir Bar for quite some time now. When the hand model and I showed up 15 minutes 'til happy hour ended, the bartender/waiter (thankfully) said, "No Sweat" and proceeded to give us a "Grubdown" of the most filling items on the menu.

We started with the Salmon Salad. The Salmon is fresh, cured in Yuzu Citrus Sauce, and decorated with tiny black & red Flying Fish Roe that pop in your mouth. However, the huge portions of delicate, Sesame Seed-sprinkled Avocado & Mango (probably a whole piece of fruit each) overshadow the Salmon – a.k.a. I wanted more of the fruity fish.

The Poke Tuna, on the other hand, is bursting with bounty and flavor. Served in a heaping Martini Glass, the Tuna is dusted with salty Nori Flakes, kissed with a Red Peppery Bean Paste, tangled up in Seaweed Salad, and swimming in Yuzu Cucumber Sauce. When I got to the bottom, I was tempted to drink up every last delicious drop – you will, too.

The biggest, most wholesome & filling plate of the bunch is the Beef Bulgogi Jap Chae with Cellophane (Glass) Noodles that are stir fried in Sesame Oil & Soy Sauce. The sliced Cabbage & Carrots give it some major crunch. The Beef is spicy & sweet, but a little chewy.

While these 3 dishes were enough to fill us up, I couldn't resist ordering the bartender's favorite Hot Night Roll (\$11.50) from the main (not Happy Hour) menu. Of course I spiced things up (pun intended) by customizing it, exchanging the imitation Crab Meat for Kimchee. This special order is not for the weak-at-tongue because it literally lights your mouth on fire. Served with Spicy Tuna on the outside and Tempura Shrimp on the inside, the Kimchee adds more heat, a touch of sweetness, and warmth (temperature-wise.) We let the bartender have a bite and he was impressed. The chef was equally too, so much so that by the time you visit Noir it might already be on the menu.

Noir also serves some Asian-American fusion Desserts, like Green Tea Ice Cream Shakes (\$5.50) and Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookies (\$6.50).

As for Sake recommendations, order the Okunomatsu Tokubetsu Junmai. As the owner states, "it's a best seller in Japan." The subtle, sweet 'n smooth melon flavor is probably why.


Kompai!

801 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. 323-933-3229.

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09/24/2010

Fishlips Food Truck - Simply Divine Sushi, Complicated Menus





Fishlips Food Truck has been rollin' out sushi on the street for over a year now. While their rolls & Temari (ball-shaped Kyoto-style sushi) are simply divine, their multiple menus are a bit much. My advice – stick to the pictures.

The Grubdown:

- just the right size, Spicy Small Set with 4 fire 'n ice Spicy Tuna Rolls, 3 lemon buttery Salmon Temari, and 2 sweetly charred Unagi Temari (\$6.95)





If you've been hesitant about trying fresh fish from a truck, fear no more. You can actually watch the sushi chefs prepare your food right in front of your eyes through the large glass window after you order.

Speaking of eyes, mine were kind of hurting after reading their overwhelming 5+ menus, so I decided to just succumb to the pictures – writer, fail. I chose the Spicy Small Set which is just enough for one person, but you might leave still curious about that yummy sounding Crunchy Hand Roll (\$3.50).

The Spicy Tuna Rolls are, as Katy Perry says, "Hot and Cold" with spicy seasoning, fresh 'n cool Cucumber, and creamy Avocado. The toasted Sesame Seeds give it a nice crunch, too.

The thin Lemon Wedges on the Salmon Temari add a surprising zest & bitterness from the rind that'll change your usual sushi salmon order forever, and the fish has a sweet buttery soft texture.

As for the Unagi (Eel), it has a great balance of sweet & char, but the sushi chefs really need to beef up the cut of the filet – a.k.a. I wanted more.

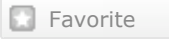
And last but not least, the rice is extremely light 'n fluffy, so be careful 'cuz it falls apart easily.

Overall, the quality of the fish is fantastic, and the value is huge for the small price.

Follow [@Fishlips Sushi](#) for their next truck stop, or to cater your next party.

Konpai!

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09/22/2010

Your Next Bite on Fox Providence The Rhode Show

What better way to conclude my New England Culinary Adventures, a.k.a. **The Grubdown:**

- Rhode Island Chowder, Fried Clams, Quahogs, Clam Cakes, Mussels, Crab Cocktail, Lobster Rolls & Sliders, Pizza, Donuts, and Ice Cream

- Nantucket Lobster Rolls & Salmon Firecones

- Kennebunkport, Maine Baked Stuffed & Boiled Lobsters

...than with a quick 1-minute video recap of Your Next Bite on Fox Providence The Rhode Show with commentary by TV host Ben Hague.

Bon Appetit!

Your Next Bite:

- Happy Hour at Noir Wine Bar in the Miracle Mile - Asian Cuisine

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09/17/2010

Top Chef Just Desserts Truck for just one day?



Just in case you missed the Just Desserts Food Truck on Wednesday, September 15th – officially named "[Top Chef Just](#)

Desserts Day" in honor of the Bravo TV show premiere – here's the proverbial Grubdown of the FREE tasty treats served at select trucks and locations around the nation.

The Grubdown:

- uber thick, perhaps a bit too much jam Strawberry Tarte Godiva Truffle with White Chocolate Cream
- i wanted to eat 5 of these to equal a whole slice Carrot Cake Godiva Truffles with Real Carrot Cake inside, Brown Sugar Crunch & Chopped Walnuts
- sweet peach flavor, but i wish it had some cookie crumble Peach Cobbler Breyers Ice Cream
- yummy, but i prefer actual chips to the thin chocolate rectangles Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Breyers Ice Cream
- the thickest, cream cheesiest I've ever had Red Velvet Cupcake
- banana flavor stands out, savory bacon saves the day in this too-much-goin-on Peanut Butter Bacon Cupcake with Banana Nut Frosting
- bursting with cinnamon you can smell from a distance, really soft 'n buttery Oatmeal Raisin DeLuscious Cookie
- forget the chips, this one comes with chocolate slabs, soft 'n chewy Chocolate Chip DeLuscious Cookie





I was quite surprised at the Just Desserts Truck's generosity. Each person got a Cupcake, a Cookie, an Ice Cream, and a Truffle while they waited in the long line. The portions of the Ice Cream and Cookies were rather small, but the size of the Cupcakes certainly made up for it. Out of the two flavors both were kind of off. The Red Velvet's Cream Cheese Frosting was bordering on too thick 'n savory, and while I appreciated the crazy creativity of the Peanut Butter Bacon Banana Cupcake, it was way too sugar and I immediately needed a lemonade after the first bite.

Even though the cookies were small and thin like air, they were still everything you hope for – soft, buttery & chewy. I was really impressed by the fragrant Cinnamon in the Oatmeal Raisin and will definitely be tracking [DeLuscious](#) down for some more. And the Chocolate more like "Slab" Cookie was so chocolatey, the dough barely covered it – but hey I ain't complaining.

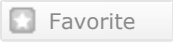
The Chocolate "Rectangles" in the Cookie Dough [Breyers Ice Cream](#) reminded me of those you find in the Mint Chocolate Chip flavor, so unfortunately that's all I could taste. The Peach was divine, but could have been better with some Cobbler Crumble.

And out of the [Godiva Bakery Dessert Truffles](#), the Carrot Cake was definitely the best, since the Strawberry was too goeey.

If you were lucky enough to catch the Just Desserts Food Truck on Wednesday and are now watching the show, you'll probably recognize L.A. pastry chef Danielle Keene who was serving the free desserts from inside. No word on whether they'll be returning to the streets anytime soon. So for now, follow the host of the show [@GailSimmons](#) as well as [@BravoTopChef](#) and [@BravoTV](#) for updates.

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