



Fish and Chips

By Diana Cormack

Fish and chips has long been regarded as a traditional British meal. You went to the chippie and that's what you got. But gradually things began to change. Saveloys and sausages, chicken and pies, mushy peas and gherkins were added to the menu.

Many people will remember Peter's Fish Bar at 102 High Road, now the Poseidon Fish Bar and Restaurant, where, according to the present owner Stelios Andreou, there has been a fish and chip shop for over thirty years. He has only been there for not quite two of those years, yet in that time he has brought about changes which would probably amaze the original owner.

Your meal might consist of hamburgers or doner and shish kebabs. You can spice up your dish with curry sauce. All very international and a long way from the basic battered meal for which the British have become known all over the world.

Casting wide

Now, instead of the traditional fried fish, customers at the Poseidon restaurant can choose to have it grilled. Some things don't change though, for cod is still the most popular fish. There is a wide range to choose from, including Dover Sole, Sea Bass and Sea Bream

with all the fish being of high quality and delivered fresh daily from Billingsgate.

"People will travel far for good fish," Stelios told me and said that some of his clientele come from places as far as away as Gants Hill and Watford. He named well-known customers such as Stanley Baxter, Martin Bashir, Steve McFadden and other members of the cast of EastEnders.

Friday fryday

It may be a hangover from the Roman Catholic tradition or just a good way to start the weekend, but Friday is still the busiest day. Last year, unbeknown to Stelios, the shop was visited by someone from the Good Eating Guide. This resulted in an award of distinction for excellence, with a certificate of outstanding achievement for maintaining very high standards of traditional quality and customer service. Obviously Stelios and his staff have no need to fish for compliments!

Allergy Attack

By Daphne Chamberlain

Allergies can be fatal. They can bring on anaphylactic shock, in which blood pressure drops dramatically, tissues swell and the throat closes. If treatment is not administered immediately cardio-respiratory arrest causes death.

The most common allergens are peanuts (groundnuts), tree nuts, dairy produce and eggs, fish and other seafood, wheat, and soya. Whether eating out or preparing meals at home, people with severe allergy reactions face potential problems.

Check it out

Aspokesperson for the Anaphylaxis Campaign, a national charity with over 7,000 members, advises always checking out a restaurant, preferably beforehand. Ask to speak to the chef. If he or she shows uncertainty, be very wary. Tell them clearly what the allergy is. If there is a language barrier, write down the offending food in the other language. Whenever possible, have a witness.

Ask how the food is prepared. Cross-contamination - e.g. using the same knife, or re-using an oil which has been used for the allergy-causing food - is dangerous.

Check, when your order arrives, that ingredients have not been substituted. It has been known for flaked

almonds, for example, to be replaced by peanuts.

There is no legal obligation for caterers to list ingredients, but if they give you wrong information which triggers an allergic reaction, that is a criminal offence.

Show and tell

Follow the same guidelines at home, and be scrupulous about checking ingredients of anything each time you buy. Manufacturers can - and do - make changes, and that extra ingredient could be lethal.

When entertaining, always ask your guests whether they are allergic to anything. Young people, in particular, can feel awkward about making a fuss or drawing attention to themselves.

People with severe allergies should carry medication at all times, and make their companions aware of this.

Useful websites are www.allergyaction.org and www.anaphylaxis.org.uk. The Anaphylaxis Campaign can be contacted on 01252 542029.



Fresh tomatoes, paxamati bread, slices of halloumi cheese and a portion of makaronia dou fournou are accompanied by bowls of black eyed beans with spinach, raw onion and vegetables, or a mixed salad topped with yoghurt and Calamata olives. Be generous with the oil and lemon... Photo by Erini Rodis.

Middle Eastern food in East Finchley

By Erini Rodis

What is Greek food? Is it all kebabs in pitta? The meze, like the Spanish tapas, is a recent arrival on our High Road and consists of many delicacies for sharing. Or do you think of mousaka? This classic layered mince and potato dish is labour intensive to make and chronically mispronounced! So please let the stress fall on the last syllable; it should be: mou-ssa-kah!

When I was young 'exotic' food included Yorkshire pud and toad-in-the-hole, just because we didn't have them at home! Shops like Continental, which has been run by four Cypriot families since the sixties, supply 'exotic' foods, like Greek yoghurt, olives, taramasalata, houmous and tatziki, as everyday foods.

Same difference

The culinary overlap in the eastern Mediterranean means that many recipes are similar but with different names: for example Greek *dolmates* = Turkish *dolma* = Cypriot *koubebia* = stuffed vine leaves! *Feta* goat's cheese (great in salads) is from mainland Greece, while *halloumi*, (delicious sliced and grilled) is Cypriot.

Turkish cuisine includes deep-fried meatball *koftes*. The Lebanese have *gadeifi*, a sort of spun pastry surrounding the same honey and crushed nuts filling as *paklava*, which is made with *filo* pastry, which in turn is used to wrap a number of delectable fillings, both sweet and savoury.

To give a salad a Greek twist just add the juice of a freshly cut real lemon, a little salt and a generous amount of extra virgin olive oil. Or drizzle this concoction over a fresh hunk of *koullouri* bread and eat it alongside a plateful of *louvi* (black-eyed beans with spinach), or *fasolia* (white kidney beans) stewed with celery. Round

it all off with a little Turkish/Greek coffee (it's all grown in Nicaragua anyway) for a sense of gastric fulfilment...

If we are what we eat, then how many different cultures we becoming? Who cares? As my late Auntie Evrou, who could tell how ripe a watermelon was just by tapping it, used to say, "Now hush, and eat!"

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