

Second Avenue Deli
162 East 33rd Street (between Third and Lexington Avenue)
New York, NY 10016

Second to None

The location may have changed but for a taste of classic old New York deli, there is no place that comes close to the Second Avenue Deli. If you grew up eating this kind of food, you will be in heaven here. If you didn't grow up eating this kind of food, you will be an instant convert.

The menu is huge and has every deli staple imaginable. When you sit down, you immediately get a big carafe of ice water with lemon, as well as a bowl of pickles and sour tomatoes, along with tangy and refreshing health salad.

There is a different soup on special everyday but old reliables like mushroom barley and matzo ball are served all the time. I highly recommend both. The matzo balls are so light and flavorful, they're just as good as my mother's, and that's high praise indeed.

The real standouts here, though, are the sandwiches. I seriously think I could eat their pastrami on club for lunch everyday and not get tired of it. The pastrami practically melts in your mouth. And for \$15.00, it is not only cheaper than most of the other big name delis, but it is the perfect size, unlike the off-putting overstuffed sandwiches at tourist traps Carnegie and Stage.

The decor is warm and inviting, with lots of nice comfortable booths. Unlike Katz's, where you literally are forced to share your table with strangers, the Second Avenue Deli is civilized and relaxing, even despite the noise level, which is high simply because there are so many people eating there. And your meal finishes with a complimentary shot of chocolate soda – a very cute touch.

I had lunch here with two friends recently and it was one of the most enjoyable meals I have ever had in a restaurant. I am not one who looks to talk to strangers, but there were two women sitting at the table next to us who were a hoot. Maxine lives in Westchester, her sister-in-law Yumi lives in the city. They were friendly, charming, and funny. They said we were entertaining them, but actually they were entertaining us. Maxine even insisted we taste her stuffed derma, which was delicious. It was a very "only in New York" experience. In fact, our waitress was not particularly friendly when we first sat down, but halfway through our meal I think our enjoyment was catchy – by the time we left, she could not have been sweeter.

If the Second Avenue Deli is not my favorite restaurant, it is definitely one of my two or three. It's Jewish soul food and there's nothing in the world like it.

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<http://www.2ndavedeli.com/>

