

Jewish Deli Phenomenon

Although it seems that Jewish Delis are prevalent in New York, they are not as common as they once were. In the 30s there were about 1,500 of them, but there's around 20 now. Why have they shut down? What was the impact of these establishments on the Jewish community? One of the most famous Jewish Delis was [Carnegie Deli](#), on Seventh Ave across from Carnegie Hall. It was a popular stop for people to catch a bite before visiting Rockefeller Center or to try the gargantuan Pastrami sandwich. Unfortunately, it closed due to a gas leak, but it was a huge part of Jewish culture. [Stage Deli](#), which is also on Seventh Ave, had been around just as long and was in competition with Carnegie Deli. The owner had to close due to the increase in rent every year. Both restaurants fought in a Pastrami War, which garnered several new fans and customers. In their wake, the closing of both delis has had a huge effect on the community.

The rise of Jewish Delis marked the marriage of Jews from the Diaspora of Eastern Europe with American norms after immigrating to New York. Many celebrities or Broadway stars would attend these delis as well, and dishes are even named after them. For example, Mel Brooks, Clint Eastwood, Howie Mandel, Adam Sandler, and more. Jewish Delis are a huge part of many Native New Yorkers' childhoods, even if they are not Jewish. They would serve as meeting places for non-religious Jews to connect with other Jews in the area.

There's a huge variety of dishes on the menu, some being Kosher, Kosher-style, and Goyish. [Goyim](#) is the Yiddish term for non-Jews. Due to the popularity of Jewish Delis, people from all religions and backgrounds would want to try the food. This allowed many Delis to advance their menus to create other meal options. Some of these Delis may not be Kosher, but they still keep [Jewish staple items](#) on the menu. This includes Pastrami on Rye, Matzo Ball soup, Knishes, Kugel, blintzes, latkes, smoked turkey, corned beef, and Brisket.

Although Brisket is a staple of Jewish cuisine, it is loved by all. According to the owner of David's Brisket House, [Riyadh Gazali](#), he claims to serve authentic traditionally Jewish food, except for the fact that it's not entirely Kosher. Whereas with delis like Gottlieb's, opened in Williamsburg in 1962, adhere to [Glatt Kosher](#) food standards. [Zoltan Gottlieb](#) himself came to America with the wave of Jewish Immigration. Therefore Gottlieb's became a comfortable spot for Jews with strict diets.

Strictly Kosher or not, Brisket is the kind of dish that I grew up knowing and enjoying. Back home in Los Angeles, my favorite Kosher Jewish Delis were Canter's and Brent's. Precisely because both places had expansive menus and no shortage of food that reminded me of my childhood. Both delis helped me connect with my family and my Jewish roots. Both establishments also welcomed people who were not Jewish and had something for everyone. This is a lot of what Jewish delis in New York have tried to do. New York delis have reinvented themselves to align with diverse clientele, but they still remain a spot for the Jewish community to connect.