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DOUG YOUNG

Fried chicken is a popular dish for takeout or dining in at Salamander's on Front in Greenport.

Fried & fabulous

A dozen chicken dishes to cluck about

BY ERICA MARCUS AND MELISSA MCCART

erica.marcus@newsday.com,
melissa.mccart@newsday.com

Fried chicken stands as a stark rebuke to America's favorite lean protein, millions, yea billions, of grilled breasts. Every culture that consumes chicken has conspired to find a method of frying that amplifies the flavor and enhances the textural contrast between meat and skin. In fact, frying is probably the best way to preserve the moisture content of the breast, though for fried-chicken aficionados, dark meat — succulent drumsticks and thighs, not to mention the wicked crust-to-meat ratio of the wings — is the way to go. The best part: eating it cold the next day.

It's never gone out of fashion, but fried chicken is having a moment at Long Island restaurants. Here are some of our favorites.



MARISOL DIAZ

At the Orient and the Orient Odyssey, sections of chicken are crisply fried without breading or batter.

NASSAU

In addition to a full menu of authentic Korean dishes, **Koreana**, the restaurant adjacent to Hicksville's Asian supermarket H & Y, also makes takeout-friendly Korean-style fried chicken, batter-less, breading-less, relying on its own crisp skin for crunch. (Koreana no longer hosts a franchise of cult Korean chicken chain BonChon.) Big, meaty legs are \$14.73 for seven, \$20.25 for 10. Wings and breast portions are \$14.73 for 10, \$20.25 for 15. Everything comes coated in either soy-garlic or spicy sauce and with a side of snowy-white pickled radish. Koreana is at 478 Plainview Rd., Hicksville, 516-932-4690.



NEWSDAY / MELISSA MCCART

Crispy wings at The Rolling Spring Roll have a rice-flour batter.

The Chinese are masters of frying, so it's no surprise that they do chicken particularly proud. At **The Orient** in Bethpage and its year-old sibling, **Orient Odyssey** in Jericho, the chickens are hung up in the cooler to dry them out, then cut up — right through the bones — into manageable pieces. Because there's no breading or batter, the skin fries up into a shattering veil, and the bird is showered with slivers of golden garlic before being brought to the table. Half a golden fried crispy chicken is \$13.95 at **The Orient**, 623 Hicksville Rd., 516-822-1010 and \$14.95 at **Orient Odyssey**, 515 N. Broadway, Jericho, 516-719-0021.

It's the 10th anniversary of **LL Dent**, a family-run spot cooking up fine Southern fare. Mother Lillian and daughter and chef Leisa Dent, the culinary school graduate who used to be the personal chef for Eddie Murphy, run the show here. Though **Dent's** favorite dishes range from slab bacon and grits, fried catfish and pulled pork to collards and sweet potato pie, she's got a crispy fried chicken quarter on the menu for \$16.95 with a choice of two sides, from grits to mac-and-cheese, coleslaw to candied yams. 221 Old Country Rd., Carle Place, 516-742-0940, lldent.com



ALBERT TROTMAN

Wings 'n Things in Hempstead has attracted fried chicken fans since 1988.

Chicken wings are an exciting surprise at the new sibling to the Farmingdale location of **The Rolling Spring Roll**. Super crispy, light and thick, this chicken sings with garlic and seduces with crispy rice-flour batter. Don't underestimate the marinade, says owner Joe Bui, who uses a fish sauce that adds an umami element to the dish. 228 W. Jericho Tpke., Syosset, 516-677-9090, therollingspringroll.com

Tuesday is fried chicken night at **Swingbellys BBQ** in Long Beach, where \$16 buys you four pieces of juicy, crunchy chicken drizzled with honey and served with mac-and-cheese, smokehouse beans or collards and a BLT salad. Always on the menu is a nice hunk of boneless fried chicken sandwiched between two cornbread waffles with Sriracha ranch dressing and lettuce, \$12. Weekend brunch features fried chicken with a biscuit and sausage gravy, \$15. **Swingbellys BBQ** is at 909 W. Beech St., Long Beach, 516-431-3464, swingbellysbbq.com

Wings 'n Things has been serving Hempstead's fried chicken enthusiasts since 1988. Earlier this year, a second location opened in Elmont. The setup is fast food (the Hempstead location, said owner Paul Madonna, used to be a **Bojangles' Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits**) but **Wings 'n Things** birds don't taste like they come from a chain. Prices are beyond reasonable: three pieces with fries and cornbread or a biscuit for \$5.99, and there are combo meals, family value meals and what can only be described as bulk discounts: 50 to 100 pieces for \$1.29 apiece. To cater to the local clientele, sides include rice, beans and tortilla. **Wings 'n Things** is at 519 Fulton Ave., Hempstead, 516-483-0936 and 1717 Dutch Broadway, Elmont, 516-341-7075.

SUFFOLK

At **Jackson's**, a rollicking, family-friendly gastropub, there's a whole section of the menu devoted to "the farm bird," which you can have roasted, grilled, pecan-crust or fried. (The menu also advises you that it will take 20 minutes; birds are not cooked in advance.) **Pearl's Southern** fried chicken, four pieces on an order, comes with a Cheddar biscuit, coleslaw, hand-cut fries covered with cheese and gravy, \$20. **Jackson's** is at 6005 Jericho Tpke., Commack, 631-462-0822, jacksonscommack.com

If you've ever enjoyed a bucket of KFC on the beach, you've experienced a glimmer of the pleasures of fried



DANIEL BRENNAN

Vauxhall in Huntington serves boneless fried chicken in a waffle sandwich.



ALBERT TROTMAN

Storyville American Table uses a family recipe for its fried chicken.

chicken at **Navy Beach**. Seated at a picnic table on the Montauk restaurant's expansive private sands, with views of Fort Pond Bay and Gardiner's Island, you can eschew the cutlery and dig into three pieces of crispy buttermilk fried chicken drizzled with spicy honey and served with Cheddar cornbread and slaw, \$29. **Navy Beach** is at 16 Navy Rd., Montauk, 631-668-6868, navybeach.com

Three years ago, Claudia Helinski moved her off-the-beaten-path shop to spacious new premises in a prime spot with a full bar and seating on two levels. At **Salamander's on Front**, however, the fried chicken remains the same. All Helinski will reveal about the recipe is that it involves a seasoned brine and a pressure cooker. The result is chicken that really tastes like chicken, veiled with a crisp but not overbearing crust. Two pieces, plus fries, cornbread and thick-shredded purple slaw, is \$14. For takeout (24 pieces plus cornbread for \$49), call ahead — up to a week ahead for holiday weekends. **Salamander's** is at 38 Front St., Greenport, 631-477-3711, salamandersonfront.com

Both locations of **Spicy's BBQ** hold charm, with the double arches like a cockscomb in Bellport and the nostalgia of the former diner space in Riverhead. Billed as a barbecue joint, **Spicy's** offers fried chicken that steals the stage. Grab an order of 10 wings for less than \$8 or 50 for \$38. They're the kind of wings that make you covet the crispy bits. In the event you can save some for later, it's as good cold. **Spicy's BBQ** is at 501 Station Rd., Bellport, 631-286-2755, or 225 W. Main St., Riverhead, 631-727-2781, spicysbbq.com

Chef and partner Brian Finn cooks up his grandmother's recipe for fried chicken at New Orleans-inspired **Storyville American Table**. Though a chicken dinner is not sold a la carte, here's how you can try it: On the Four-Play menu — soup, appetizer, entree and dessert for \$21.95 — boneless fried chicken pairs with waffles drizzled in a sweet and spicy syrup dubbed "Colonel Wallace" by sous chef Mike Wallace, a co-owner. On Sundays fried chicken makes an appearance as an all-you-can-eat option. From 4 to 9 p.m. diners can stop in for a drumstick, thigh or chicken breast or two, served with slaw and mashed potatoes for \$27.95. The restaurant is at 43 Green St., Huntington, 631-351-3446, storyvilleamericantable.com

The yardbird chicken and waffle sandwich at **Vauxhall** is a competitive alternative to the comely burgers at this hipster haven. That's because the (boneless) buttermilk fried chicken served on a waffle-as-sandwich is made with cornmeal studded with bacon. And it's served with some highly addictive fries for a mere \$12. **Vauxhall** is at 26 Clinton Ave., Huntington, 631-425-0222, vauxhallhuntington.com