



Meals ready to go to those who need them from Beto and Son in Trinity Groves / *courtesy of Beto and Son*

Weekly Roundup: Restaurants Giving Time, Meals and Support to Those Who Need It

ALEX GONZALEZ | MAY 20, 2020 | 4:00AM



Bars are expected to reopen at 25% capacity this weekend, while restaurants are able to increase their capacity from 25% to 50%. Many restaurants and bars are still opting to remain

closed, despite Gov. Greg Abbott decision to allow them to reopen at a limited capacity. Still, while employees are furloughed and medical workers are hard at work, Dallas-Fort Worth restaurants have not slowed down on giving back.

Beto & Son

3011 Gulden Lane, Suite 108 (Trinity Groves)

Beto & Son has been supporting several local hospitals and first responders, including those at Children's Health, Baylor Scott & White, Hope City Dream Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center and Dallas Fire-Rescue. They have also been providing free chicken tacos to furloughed service industry workers. Last weekend, Beto & Son donated Essentia Water and groceries to 300 people at the Dallas Dream Center.

In-Fretta

Multiple locations

Prior to COVID-19, **In-Fretta** owner Ram Mehta was committed to **feeding food-insecure people**. The pandemic has only inspired him to up his game. Mehta and the In-Fretta crew started the #EveryoneEatz movement and have provided more than 52,000 meals, no questions asked. Last week, they provided meals and **masks** at Frisco Fieldhouse.

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Haute Sweets Patisserie

10230 E. Northwest Highway (Northeast Dallas)

Last weekend, **Haute Sweets Patisserie** donated 250 cupcakes to Parkland Hospital. Talk about a sweet gesture.

Mooala

Available at Kroger, Whole Foods, Tom Thumb and Natural Grocers

It's amazing how many ways there are to make milk. Dallas-based, non-dairy milk company **Mooala** has many non-dairy options, including banana milk, oat milk and almond milk. Last week, Mooala donated 2,700 bottles of non-dairy chocolate and strawberry milk to Metrocrest, Dallas Life and Salvation Army.

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Invasion provides meals that make the palate happy and make you feel well physically. / **Taylor Adams**

Good to Go: Invasion's Twisty Journey Toward Opening Pays Off With a Powerful Menu

TAYLOR ADAMS | AUGUST 13, 2020 | 4:00AM



Good to go is a column where our food writers explore Dallas' restaurant scene through takeout orders, delivery boxes and reheated leftovers.

If you live in East Dallas, there's a good chance you've heard about the Cardi B sandwich – or maybe you've been lucky enough to scroll through your Instagram feed then swipe back up to look at the [photo](#) of a giant fried chicken sandwich on your screen.

It's a top-seller from Invasion, which opened an incredibly long time ago, or was it a few months? Anyone else losing their grasp of time? It was April when it opened, and contributor Alex Gonzalez wrote a [first look](#) earlier this summer.

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All Seniors Drivers Should Claim This Large Reward (Check If You Qualify)

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So, yes, a while back, during the pandemic, chef and owner Airric Heidelberg opened this tiny restaurant, giving this part of Old East Dallas a menu many of us can get behind. But it took some time for the restaurant to get there.

“We were supposed to open the 17th [of March] and [the city] shut down the 16th,” Heidelberg says. “We decided to give to the community and give to the homeless” with the extra food they had then.

Invasion got some [press](#) for the good deed, which provided some momentum in a time when

that wasn't easy to achieve.

"That trust that you usually build up with an establishment wasn't there," he says. "We started hiring a staff and most of the PPP loans and the stuff the government was giving to the businesses, we weren't able to get because we didn't have a history.

"All the restaurants that I know that opened up during this time, there was no help, it was just all uphill to make it through. So even though in the beginning we were struggling and losing money each week, we were giving 200 to 300 meals to the homeless."



Bonus points for takeout containers that are reusable / **Taylor Adams**

Invasion made it through the first few months, getting word out from the good deeds and also getting a bump when there was a stronger push to support Black-owned businesses.

"We are doing better. It's almost like a roller coaster: You get momentum and you're just trying to sustain a certain number," Heidelberg says.

As for how you can help with that number, getting a meal here isn't just a good deed, it's also solid food.

Friends of mine really are crazy about the Cardi B (insert whichever **sound** of hers you prefer

here). Buttermilk fried chicken joins spicy mayonnaise, pickled coleslaw with jalapeño on a buttery toasted bun (\$10.99). The bomb Brussels sprouts are excellent, too, roasted well with house-made “bomb” sauce (\$7.99).

“That chicken sandwich, I knew was going to be the No. 1 seller, even though we were trying to do healthier food,” Heidelberg says.

Less obvious on the menu is a dish that travels well: the Iron Fist (\$7.99). It’s a bowl of fried rice with cabbage, carrots, broccoli, bell peppers, green onions and more of that bomb sauce. That sauce is perfectly suited for vegetables and makes this bowl addicting. The meal itself traveled well in a 15-minute car-ride home, and saving half of it for the following day’s lunch worked, too. (I throw it in a small glass dish with a bit of water, cover with foil and bake at 350 in the toaster oven for 15 minutes. It’s my usual process for reheating fried rice, and I endorse it.)



It’s spicier than it looks. / Taylor Adams

I made a visit for this bowl before speaking with Heidelberg – at that time, he was surprised I was only getting a bowl of rice and vegetables. First, I eat rice nearly every day. Second, I desperately need more vegetables in my diet – I spared him these reasons and insisted I’d get a sandwich later. More sandwich specials are to come, he said.

Those specials have arrived, along with a bigger menu. Plus, Heidelberg is having a patio built this week – a welcome adjustment since the dining room is rather cozy, space-wise. Invasion is just one restaurant in Dallas making **outdoor dining** accessible for customers.

We’re also a fan of Heidelberg’s using halal beef on his menu for better quality and softer texture. It’s usually

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more expensive for a restaurant.

Whatever you get, this is a good addition to the East Dallas neighborhood, and the food travels well, too.

Invasion, 4029 Crutcher St. (Old East Dallas). Open 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and noon to 3 p.m. Saturday.



Taylor Adams has written about the restaurant industry for the *Dallas Observer* since 2016. Now the *Observer's* food editor, she attended Southern Methodist University before covering local news at *The Dallas Morning News*.

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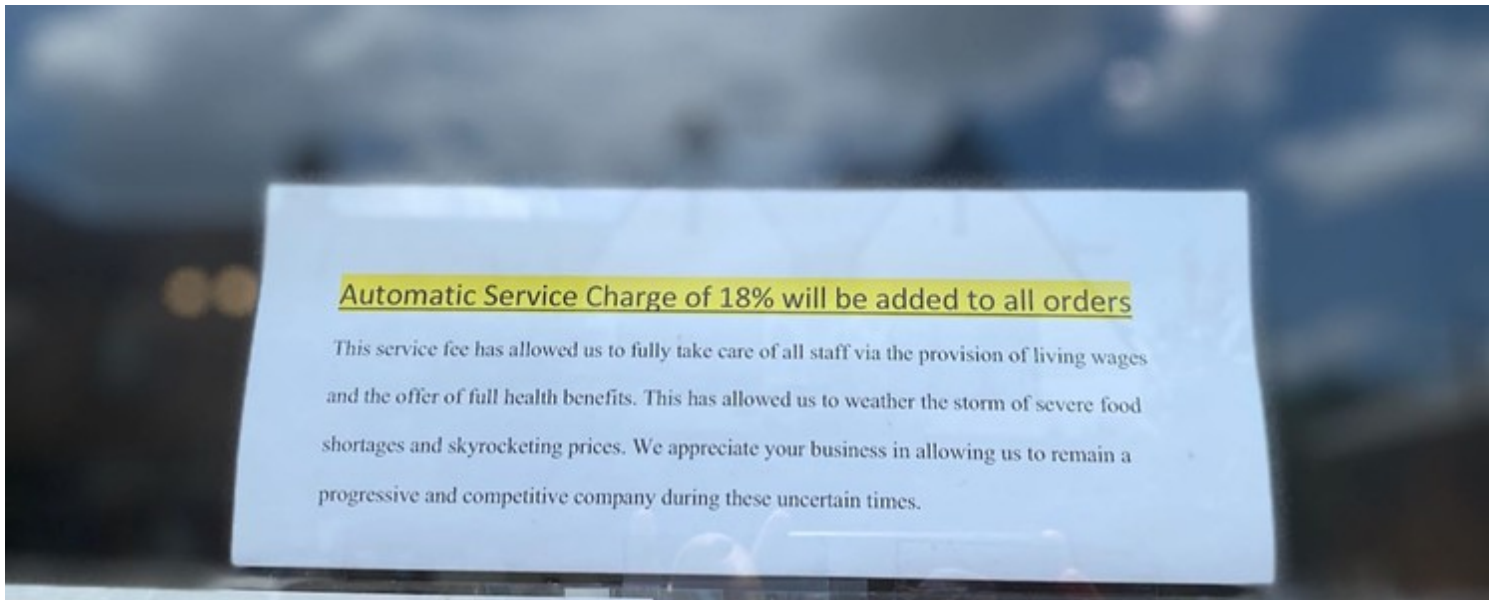
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A sign outside Old Hag's explains the restaurant's 18% mandatory service fee. / **Lauren Drewes Daniels**

Is Now the Time for Mandatory Gratuity to Make Its Move?

LAUREN DREWES DANIELS | AUGUST 13, 2020 | 4:00AM



Ah, tips. The bellwether of decency when eating out. That fickle territory where the customer squares up with a server. Or not. Big life decisions are based on tips. Bosses, first dates, in-laws want to know: What did they tip? And based on that slide across the table, is this a relationship they're willing to move forward with?

Meanwhile, as we're all trying to figure out if there will be a second date, a person is trying to pay bills.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the service industry has taken some of the hardest punches from social distancing requirements. And now, for those who have tables of customers, tips carry more importance.

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New York restaurateur Danny Meyer has been a proponent of a no-tipping policy. In 2015, he began a practice of “factoring full liveable wages and benefits for all of our employees into our menu prices” at all his New York restaurants.

More recently, when his spots reopened in late July after being closed because of the pandemic, he changed course and added tipping again, because, as he explained through a LinkedIn [post](#), “We’ve come to believe that it’s the inability to share tips that is the problem, not the tips themselves.”

Meyer wrote that tips can only go to the dining room team. [As in Texas](#), tip-pooling only extends to the front-of-house and isn’t supposed to include janitors, dishwashers, chefs or cooks.

Locally, some restaurants and bars are dabbling with mandatory gratuity or service fees.

Local Restaurants Change Policies

When I placed an order at Old Hag’s a few weeks ago, there was an 18% service fee added to my bill. As I mentioned in this [ode to their fettuccine formaggio](#), this stipulation was both on a recorded message that I had to listen to before placing my order and taped to the front window of the restaurant.

Also, just prior to federal unemployment benefits expiring in late July, Ivan Pugh of Bucky’s Moonshine posted the question on his Facebook page. His servers were “freaking out” because they were about to lose federal stimulus money and business was down about 60% at his Deep Ellum restaurant. He was seeking input via social media about how patrons would feel about a mandatory tip.

As of Aug 12, the post has nearly 300 comments. Painting with a really broad brush, most were in support of the mandatory tip, expressing disgust that customers could walk out of a restaurant without tipping, particularly during these stressful financial times.

But, the responses came from his customers, friends or fans. When Allie Pillyards NBC5 [posted](#) her receipts with gratuity added in on Facebook, one of the first comments was that gratuity should only be determined by customers, which got 92 thumbs-up reactions, six mad faces and four hearts. Because that’s how we do science now. A mad face and a thumbs-up.

The Survey Says ... No, Thanks

Researchers at Washington State University recently studied mandatory fees, and they found that diners don't like the idea of not being in control of the gratuity.

Ismail Karabars, lead author of the study, concluded that nonvoluntary tipping was part of the experience for diners. When it's removed, customers lose their ability to express their gratitude. And when it's enforced upon them, customers are less likely to return.

Sort of like when your mom calls you to remind you to call your dad for his birthday and you want to say, "I was already gonna! But, you ruined it now!" It takes away from the sincerity.

Karabars also looked at how tipping affects back-of-house employment. As in the case of Meyers, many restaurants are looking for a more judicious spread of the extra funds.

"The person who cooks your meal may be working harder than the server, but servers end up making quite a bit more money when you add in the tips," Karabas wrote. "That's led to turnover of kitchen staff, which is a concern in the restaurant industry."

Execution

In complete transparency, when I signed my receipt at Old Hag's, I felt a pang of guilt for leaving the tip line empty. I hesitated, but then reminded myself I'm paying 18% above price for takeout. So, I casually mentioned to the cashier, "The tip is included, right?"

In a sigh he said, "Well, we don't see any of that."

That cut. I'd already signed my receipt. I was irritated, but wasn't sure at whom or what. On the way home I kept going through it in my head: I paid a really fair and decent amount for my food. I went home and emailed Old Hag's for clarity.

Owner Michael Lindsey replied almost instantly: "Thanks for letting me know; and I will share clarification with people how to address such questions. The technical aspect is it is a service fee, but the response that should have been given is 'tips are not necessary as we are compensated well because the service fee' and we really appreciate you patronizing us and please don't feel bad, the employees we have working the front honestly are not concerned if people add a tip – I think they were just tongue twisted."

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Perhaps. Regardless of how one employee spoke off-the-cuff, there's a bigger point to this; it has allowed Lindsey to keep all his staff.

“The service fee has allowed us to not only [not] lay people off with the pandemic, but make sure we are able to pay all employees, front and back of the house, a really competitive wage and offer health benefits, while also absorbing the really high food and supply price increases happening over [the] last few months, all without sacrificing our employees' payroll,” Lindsey wrote. “We pay our team members well, so you do not have to tip.”

Some servers may appreciate the security in knowing that they have a liveable wage guarantee and that rent isn't left to the whims of diners. Others might be drawn to the profession for the opportunity to get tips. From the customer's perspective, it's in the air. Execution definitely plays a part; being transparent upfront is important.

But, when "this" is all over and we're able to pack restaurants, drink margaritas and order bowls of queso, will a mandatory service fee be more acceptable? Now that a greater light has been put on the vulnerability of restaurant workers, perhaps this is the time for "service fee" movement to gear up.

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The Chicago dog with sport peppers and mustard for \$6.50 / **Andrew Kelley**

Will Hot Dogs Ever Work in Dallas? New York Sub Tries Franks and Shaved Ice



Hot dogs haven't had an easy time in Dallas. In the past decade, a number of **mom-and-pop** hot dog joints – whether they have burgers or fried chicken sandwiches or wings on the left side of the menu – have opened and closed in a blink, quicker than a Texas winter.

New York Sub, an **institution** on Asbury Street across from SMU, is fully aware of the challenge, even in a pandemic, and added 100% Angus beef dogs to the menu anyway.

Midday in August in Dallas is sensational hot dog weather; it's dragon-breath hot, and the astroturf outside New York Sub is achingly green.

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They have a new window open at this classic sandwich joint for shaved ice. The strawberry shortcake is high-wattage red, capped with a huge cloud of whipped cream. There's no indoor dining at the 44-year-old sandwich spot right now. A hand-written sign says "help wanted," and a long table blocks the entrance as a bottle of hand sanitizer stands guard.

Their new dogs are instant gems, a true tribute to the classic dogs you'd find in New York City. Tangy sauerkraut is nested in fine shreds, speckled with intense brown mustard. The beef frank is sourced from Fort Worth: It snaps lightly and is full of juices. It does not taste of curing agent and mind-numbing salt; it bears the flavor of beef.

“Historically it is difficult to sell a hot dog in Dallas, so we figured, if we’re going to do it, they might as well be the best,” says owner Andrew Kelley. The beef franks have been on the menu for a week.



The shaved ice window is now open at New York Sub. / **Nick Rallo**

The Chicago dog has a bun that’s wall-to-wall dipped in poppy seeds. It’s soft, lightly chewy, sturdy against a skyscraper of toppings. This is not a bun that will open like a trap door and send all of the ingredients to the floor and over your shoes.

Get zig-zags of mustard, relish, thick tomato slices, sport peppers and a pickle spear to surround your frank. Customization is one paper-thin silver lining of being driven to online ordering during the pandemic.

Another option, the “Dallas Dog,” tempts with a dangerous proposition in the online ordering system: “Tell us in the notes how you like it,” reads the text on New York Sub’s Chowhound system. There is a huge blank canvas of a text field beneath. It’s like being set loose in the hot dog equivalent of the Wonka factory. After a to-go margarita or two, one can imagine the horrors and madness that could be requested for the Dallas Dog:

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Sauerkraut and brown mustard on the New York dog for \$6.50 / **Nick Rallo**

Can the frank get wrapped in prosciutto? Can you crush Zapp's Voodoo chips and let them hail over the dog like a dangerous storm? Can you stack four dogs in two layers like the beginnings of a log cabin? "Have it your way," the online ordering system warns.

Maybe the success of hot dogs in Dallas can be guaranteed with some light rebranding. Hot dog classification is frequently debated on Twitter: The question often posed is, "Is a hot dog a sandwich?" The answer, probably, is "it's a hot dog." Whatever the

definition – it's a pandemic, and these aren't the times to spar over semantics. A hot dog is a classic hot dog here.

New York Sub, 3411 Asbury St., University Park. Open for *takeout* and *delivery* 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

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Taylor Adams

Chilled to Go: Burger House's Fries and Milkshakes Live Up to Early Memories

TAYLOR ADAMS | AUGUST 12, 2020 | 4:00AM

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It's a lousy feeling when something you loved as a kid turns out to be terrible or mediocre at best when you experience it as an adult.

But there's nothing like that to worry about with Jack's fries and an ice-cold milkshake.

The perfectly seasoned french fries from Burger House were wonderful when we were kids, and they still hold up today. And we're not saying only that they taste good on an adult's palate: They hold up well in year 2020 when we're getting all things to go and getting acquainted with soggy fries. These are not those; they're crisp and wonderfully seasoned.

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Fries at Burger House come wrapped in paper and sit on a paper boat. I remove the latter two and shake the fries in the bag for even salt distribution. It's worth the effort. / **Taylor Adams**

Sometimes, it's tempting to go through the drive-thru of the East Dallas location just to get them. But then the person over the intercom – quite possibly a Woodrow Wilson High School student – sincerely asks, “Is that all?”

While your go-to order should probably be the hot dog with mustard and onion, those salted fries will pair fine with something sweet. Go for the Oreo shake.

The folks at Burger House aren't messing around with their malts and shakes (which I guess is why they list them as “Real Malts & Shakes”). There are no imposters here, just ice cream spun with chunks of Oreo cookie.

