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NYC Import The Meatball Shop Sets Opening Date in Logan Circle

The lively neighborhood restaurant and bar plans to start slinging spheres on Tuesday, August 7

by Tierney Plumb | Jul 19, 2018, 2:49pm EDT



The Meatball Shop plans to start serving its eponymous menu on Tuesday, August 7. | [The Meatball Shop/official photo](#)

D.C.'s newest build-your-own-meatball meal shop is a few weeks away from feeding late-night Logan Circle diners.

[The Meatball Shop](#), which started in 2010 on Manhattan's Lower East Side and has since spread to five more locations across the city and Brooklyn, plans to debut its first location outside of the Big Apple on Tuesday, August 7 at 1720 14th Street NW.

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"It's amazing what has happened with the food scene in the past couple years. It's a fun time to come down to D.C.," says Meatball Shop CEO Adam Rosenbaum.

Its entire meatball-based menu will be served until last call, hoping to fill a void of post-11 p.m. dining options along D.C.'s thriving 14th Street corridor. The 70-seat Meatball Shop will open with dinner service starting at 6 p.m., sprinkling in lunch service a week later.

The meatball menu includes beef, pork, chicken, veggie, and a daily special, slathered with sauces that swing from classic tomato to pesto. Meatballs can come naked, or served on pasta or veggies, a salad, toasted baguette, or a brioche roll with melted mozzarella or provolone. There's also fresh cookies and scoops of ice cream for dessert.

The Meatball Shop is sliding into the space formerly occupied by [recently relocated Cork](#), and the 2,400-square-foot interior is being completely transformed into a hip hybrid of an Italian grandmother's house-meets-upbeat bar.

Charged with the redesign is New York firm [MP Shift](#), also behind [Union Square Hospitality Group's](#) newly opened [Tacocina](#) project on the Brooklyn waterfront. The Meatball Shop is integrating lots of reclaimed wood and tiling, going for a lived-in look via vintage lighting and mirrors.

Team Meatball is also contributing some aesthetic features. Expect food-themed photographs shot by Daniel Holtzman, who co-founded the brand with his childhood best friend Michael Chernow. Rosenbaum hints at other unique accents slated for the space, saying its Hells Kitchen location includes a neon sign of a pig exiting a grinder as meatballs.

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Some elements from Cork days are staying in place, like its brick walls, (refurbished) wood flooring, and a white tin ceiling. An open glass wall is being installed to showcase the kitchen in the back. Some funky details will have to wait for future permitting approvals, like a huge burgundy painting of a grinder inching up the facade's white wall.

Brunch is projected to join the mix in late August, with items like "balls, biscuits and gravy" and a debut "lobster ball Benedict" dish.

Rosenbaum says the brand is all about "inclusivity," in that vegetarians and vegans can also enjoy meatballs. Playfulness is also a big theme, with a company tagline that reads "show us your balls."

"We don't take ourselves too seriously. Names are a little irreverent — not offensive, but slightly edgy," says Rosenbaum.

Cocktails include Whack-A-Mole (Hornitos tequila, lime, pomegranate, and mole) and Smokin' in the Boy's Room (Highland Park scotch, almond, lemon, walnut liqueur, and nutmeg). Its Moscow mule is a top seller across existing spots, and a seasonal rosé sangria will also likely join the D.C. menu. Its opening "OTR" (off the rail) cocktail — a rotating drink created by on-site bartenders — will integrate Cotton & Reed rum. Expect four beers on draft, with at least one being local.

Each Meatball Shop has its own "vibe and energy" dictated by the neighborhood, he says; its Brooklyn location features a Madonna Mondays playlist, for instance. If it's raining outside, reggae music is played to perk up customers.

Team Meatball recently previewed their wares locally, catering a small 30-person wedding rehearsal dinner for a Logan Circle-based couple who are fans of their New York shops.

As of now there are no more leases in the works, but Rosenbaum is "definitely looking" to add another location in the near future. He thinks the D.C. area can sustain a cluster of Meatball Shops, naming Clarendon, Ballston, and Bethesda as potential future markets.

Scroll on for a look of The Meatball Shop coming together in Logan Circle:



Cork's existing mezzanine level will stay in place and could be reserved for private parties. | Tierney Plumb/Eater DC



The front bar at The Meatball Shop will feature vintage glass wall detailing. | Tierney Plumb/Eater DC



The Meatball Shop plans to open on Tuesday, August 7, pending permit approvals. | Tierney Plumb/Eater DC

