

NEW YORK CHAINS THE REST OF THE COUNTRY DESPERATELY NEEDS

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6,220

While the phrase “chain restaurant” may bring to mind images of congealed food served in a dark, pungent mall basement, in New York City, our local chains are actually great – and certainly worthy of national attention. From meatballs done a million ways, to BBQ brisket with inventive sides, to Cambodian sandwiches, there are tons of mini-chains in NYC that have broken down boundaries of what it means to be a chain – and they’d do just as well on a national stage. To the rest of the country: this is what you’re missing.



COLE SALADINO/THRILLIST

The Meatball Shop

Number of locations: Six

Why it's great: As a seasoned New Yorker, you probably don't even remember the days when your best option for a meatball sub was Subway. This city specializes in the quality execution of lowbrow foods, and The Meatball Shop sets the standard. From its simple yet clever menu – which begins with “Naked Balls” and offers a variety of sauce options (did you want those balls covered with Parmesan cream or mushroom gravy?), as well as several ways to consume said balls (on a hero? Over greens? As a slider? Topped with a fried egg?), The Shop takes your favorite Sunday night dinner at Grandma's and makes it accessible, cheap, and fun. And because this is New York, sides include such decidedly un-down-home options as daily roasted veggies and steamed spinach. The rest of the country deserves meatballs done every way you could possibly want them.