

## New York-style bagels are no joke at Brooklyn Dough With a Hole



Steve Batitsas, who's been hand-rolling the New York-style delicacies for more than 25 years, opened his first shop in Naples in September. Shelby Reynolds/Naples Daily News

If there is any doubt over why we allow New Yorkers to drive on our roads, the cream cheese spread at Brooklyn Dough With a Hole should remove it.

There's a little-known rule hidden deep in the county code books that says, "Just give us X amount of New York bagel places and we'll let X amount of New Yorkers tailgate, veer between lanes and otherwise behave as though they have someplace important to be."

Throw the code away. The blueberry cream cheese, and just about everything else at Dough with a Hole, is good enough to let the whole lot in.

Steve Batitsas, who's been hand-rolling the New York-style delicacies for more than 25 years, opened his first shop in Naples in September. Located on Third Avenue North just off U.S. 41, it has a full menu of breakfast and lunch sandwiches, plus a case full of the big, round, puffy bagels.

There's cinnamon raisin, sesame, poppy, egg, cheddar and probably another two dozen or so varieties made fresh on site. Regular bagels are \$1.50 each, or \$18 a dozen, while specialty bagels cost \$2 each. Traditionally, New York bagels are boiled before they are baked, to give them that chewy texture and a shiny look.

Some say it's the Big Apple city water that makes the bagels so unique, but Batitsas says that's an old myth, and after a recent visit for lunch on a Sunday, we believe him.

Meant for quick take-out orders, the deli itself is small — about 2,000 square feet — with just a handful of tables and chairs. It's in the former Whisk Treats & Eats bakery cafe space, with parking available on the street or in the adjacent plaza's lot.

Inside, there's another counter filled with vats of homemade cream cheese flavors, which Batitsas's wife, Diana, prepares every day. There's olive and pimento, cucumber dill, Nutella, maple cinnamon raisin, cannoli and wasabi, to name a few.

And Batitsas doesn't skimp on the cream cheese. In fact, it's a huge schmear of the stuff, and it oozes out the sides of the bagel and onto your fingers.

We sampled a few different kinds, like the jalapeño cream cheese on a garlic bagel, and the strawberry cream cheese on a rainbow bagel. What's so impressive about the spreads is that there are real bits of jalapeños or strawberries inside.

And it's so sweet Batitsas could serve it with a spoon and sell it as gelato.

From the breakfast sandwich menu, the pork and egg breakfast bagel has to be about as good as a breakfast bagel can be — simple, pure comfort, with generous slices of Boar's Head pork.

We ordered that one on the bialy bagel, a tender Polish variety that's simply baked, not boiled, with a depressed middle, filled with onions and topped with poppy seeds — a delicacy straight off the streets of Brooklyn.

We also ordered the savory pastrami and egg on a cheddar cheese bagel, the bacon and egg on a whole wheat bagel, and an egg and cheese on a cheddar cheese bagel. Each was savory and filling, but we still ate both halves of the breakfast sandwiches.

Off the menu of signature sandwiches, the turkey club (\$10.99) included a massive stack of juicy Boar's Head turkey breast, cheddar cheese, lettuce, sliced tomato, bacon and a spread of mayonnaise on a choice of bagel; I chose the cheddar cheese one. It was a gargantuan sandwich that should be considered for one of those near-impossible food challenges. Despite all that, the cheddar cheese bagel was still the star.

Other sandwiches on the menu include a tuna melt, hot pastrami and Swiss, egg salad and curry chicken salad.

Service at Brooklyn Dough With a Hole is quick and efficient. Batitsas, in true New York style, specializes in no-frills customer service. He takes orders, no matter how complicated, and delivers them a few minutes later, without much small talk in between.

And that's OK, because the quality of the food stands up on its own. The next believer of the New York City water theory clearly hasn't tried Brooklyn Dough With a Hole.

*The Naples Daily News pays for all meals for dining reviews. We do not solicit or accept free meals.*

#### Brooklyn Dough With a Hole

- **Where:** 935 Third Ave. N., Naples
- **Hours:** 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays through Wednesdays; 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays
- **Prices:** Bagels \$1.50-\$2.50; cream cheese \$3.25-\$4.50 per bagel; breakfast sandwiches \$3.99-\$7.50; cold sandwiches \$7.99-\$8.99; signature sandwiches \$9.49-\$12.99
- **More information:** 239-231-3159
- **Forks:** 4½ out of 5