

Serious Eats

Street Food Profiles: Windy City Red Hots in Northern Virginia

Posted by Leah Douglas, July 12, 2010



The truck! [Photographs: [Windy City Red Hots](#)]

Name: [Windy City Red Hots](#)

Twitter: [@windycityredhots](#)

Vendors: Angel and Pia Miranda

What's on the menu? Chicago favorites like hot dogs, Polish sausage, Italian beef, Italian sausage. Check out the menu [here](#).

Location and hours?

Ashburn: Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. (trailer)

Leesburg: Tuesday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (store)

How long have you been street fooding? 1.5 years

How has Twitter affected business? It helps us connect with customers and give the ability to have real time posts of announcements.

Why a mobile business over brick-and-mortar? Well, there are a number of reasons but mainly, start-up costs, and we wanted to be a little different. Northern Virginia does not have a lot of mobile kitchens with the exception of construction site trucks. We wanted to bring a unique experience to our local customers and the unique Chicago foods to Northern Virginia/DC metro area. We have now opened a store in Leesburg, but have decided to keep the trailer and even upgrade it to a bigger trailer so we can serve more folks.

Who are your typical customers? Business folks in the area, hot dog lovers and most especially, Chicago transplants. There isn't any authentic Chicago food out here and as it turns out, there's a lot of folks like us (from Chicago, love Chicago food or just simply love good tasting food).



The Italian Combo dog.



Some hungry customers.

Describe a typical day from start to finish. Just like any restaurant, we prep for the day, pick up supplies if needed and get ready for the lunch rush. Clean once the rush is over, then inventory before close. We inventory a lot since we cannot store a lot at the trailer, so we pick up supplies from our vendors frequently.

What were you doing before this? Angel used to have corporate job when one day he just decided it was time to follow his dream. I, on the other hand, continue to work in the corporate world while also working behind the scenes. We did however used to work in hot dog joints and restaurants in Chicago.

What makes your food so special? Can anything else like it be found in the city? We are authentic, from the meats to the special condiments (Vienna Beef shipped from Chicago) and how it is prepared. We are from Chicago and we make the food the way we grew up eating them in Chicago. There are some places that claim Chicago-style near us, but do not carry or serve the true Chicago items.

How would you define "street food"? Hmm. Food that you can pick up from a street vendor, a local favorite.

The best street food city and why. Los Angeles, only because they have a huge selection. But with new mobile kitchens serving gourmet foods and drinks, soon my answer would be Northern Virginia. It won't just be street food, it will be gourmet and awesome street food.

Your comfort food after a long day? Italian sausage! Warm poppy seed bun, sweet Italian sausage, grilled peppers, hot giardiniera peppers, grilled onions with Provolone cheese.

Advice for an aspiring vendor? Do your research before you start, make sure you know your market. Also make sure to ask yourself if you have what it takes to work LOTS of hours and manual labor (just because the place is closed, doesn't mean the work stops there).

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