

Next time you're in New York City, it's almost a requirement that you have at least one deli lunch or dinner. Our favorite is the Second Avenue Deli, a popular noshing place that was in Greenwich Village for more than 50 years. Three years ago, it moved uptown to Third Avenue and 33rd Street, but the restaurant still retains its famous name and great menu.

Although prices are not as low as they were in the 1950s, Second Avenue Deli still has the best, highest-stacked, artery-busting pastrami on rye in town. Add a couple of kosher pickles and a side of potato salad, and one platter has enough calories to keep a whole platoon of New York cardiologists wealthy for years.



Of course, that doesn't take anything away from its famous chicken soup, with a matzoh ball the size of a hand grenade floating in it. Nor the chopped liver, corned beef on onion roll, tongue on pumpernickel, latkes and apple sauce, pickled herring, stuffed kishka and whole boiled chicken in a pot.

For information about the Second Avenue Deli, go to 2ndavedeli.com, or call 212-677-0606.

The venerable Stage Deli has been at 834 Seventh Avenue for more than 70 years, and I can remember eating there almost that long ago back in my college student and Navy days whenever I was in Manhattan. Near the theater district, it has been a favorite of Broadway stars, including Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Danny Kaye, Ethel Merman, ex-New York Mayor Ed Koch, Frank Sinatra, Ronald Reagan and a hundred other luminaries over the years. For the past decade, it has also operated a Stage Deli in Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The clientele is less New York ethnic and much more touristy there, but the food is just as good. You know the usual: matzoh ball chicken soup, stacked corned beef on rye, chopped liver, tongue, herring, gefilte fish and all the rest.

For more information, call 212-245-7850, or online at stagedeli.com.

The Carnegie Deli is nearby at 854 Seventh Avenue, and named for the New York music temple, Carnegie Hall. While the food is just as tasty as the other delis I've named, this joint seems to proudly serve everything, cash only, extra \$3 for sharing a sandwich, with a snarl and a wise guy remark. It was the model for the deli in the Broadway musical, "Guys and Dolls", where waiters took no lip and handed out lots of it. As in the joke: Customer: What's this fly

doing in my chicken soup? Waiter: It looks like he's doing the back stroke.

Despite it all, the Carnegie still offers delicious sky-high corned beef and pastrami sandwiches and all the other ethnics delights.

The Carnegie followed the Stage Deli to Las Vegas and has a branch at the Mirage Hotel. Its a bare-bones, cafeteria hole in the wall. The food is nowhere as good as the home deli in New York, but the service is just as surly.

For more information, call 212-757-2245, or go online to info@carnegiedelistore.com.

Katz's Delicatessen at 205 East Houston (pronounced How-ston) Street, still holds th ethnic fort in Greenwich Village, near the heart of immigrant Jewish and Italian New York of the late 19th and early 20th Century. Its still operates in the old style where you wait in line until your ticket number is called. It claims to have the only hand-carved corned beef, turkey breast, chicken and pastrami service left in New York.

The sandwiches are delicious and high-stacked. Not quite as showbiz famous as the Stage and the Carnegie, it did serve as the scene of one of the most memorable lines in movie history, when an matronly lady (Mrs. Carl Reiner) asked, "I'll have what she's having." This was immediately after the faked restaurant orgasm scene in 1989's "When Harry Met Sally", starring Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal.

For information, call 212-254-2246, or go online to katzdeli.com.