

LIVING

Your Second Avenue subway restaurant guide

By Steve Cuzzo

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Second Avenue **astride the new Q train route** is the city's sleeper culinary mecca. Its delirious mashup of global tastes rivals Brooklyn's Smith Street and Jackson Heights' Roosevelt Avenue, although few outside the neighborhood have a clue.

Second Avenue on the Upper East Side isn't picturesque. Ten years of subway construction **killed off more than a few shops and cafes**. Even so, the blocks between East 69th and 96th streets are home to unparalleled ethnic choices — American, Italian, kosher Italian, Brazilian, French, Belgian, Czech, Persian, Indian, Mexican, Thai, Argentine, Turkish, Vietnamese, Japanese, German, Greek, Hungarian, "rustic Latin," Latin-French, Irish, Spanish, Afghan and Szechuanese — in every price range.

The new subway, with stations at East 72nd, 86th and 96th streets (and entrances stretching three blocks south of each), should liberate Second Avenue from obscurity. Enjoy the feast now, before new development reduces it to morsels.

Near 72nd St.

5 Napkin Burger

Chef Andy D'Amico's all-beef "Q" Burger (\$14, below), inspired by the nabe's German-immigrant past — and the Q train running along Second Avenue — is topped with pastrami, Gruyere cheese, knackwurst spices and braised sauerkraut on a pretzel bun. 1325 Second Ave., at 70th Street; 212-249-0777



Stefano Giovannini

