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Grilling Up Some Bargains on a Stick

by Joanna Lovinger

Eating burgers and pizza every day can make lunch mighty repetitive, to say nothing about the damage it does to your waistline. So if you're looking for a change, consider steak or chicken kabobs. If you throw a skewer in Downtown you'll probably hit a kabob place - they're everywhere. Kabobs are usually fresh and quick, and almost of all the meals in this round up cost less than \$10.

Downtown Grill

619 S. Olive St.
(213) 622-2488

The Downtown Grill serves steak, chicken and ground beef on a skewer, along with a skewer of tomatoes, onions and bell peppers (\$7.50). If you prefer swarma, the beef is marinated in tahini sauce (\$7.50). The chicken is marinated in garlic sauce, then layered thin and placed on a vertical broiler (\$7.50). Both swarma dishes come with salad, hummus and rice or French fries.

Nayeb

326 E. Pico Blvd.
(213) 746-4800

On the lunch menu, the chicken kabob has four pieces of boneless chicken and comes with rice, bread, salad, lemon, grilled tomato and green pepper (\$6.45). They also offer a ground beef kabob, which comes with the same side dishes.

The Grill Table

103 E. Ninth St.
(213) 622-3343



Kabob have the bargain lunch market cornered, with most meals less than \$10. Photo by Gary Leonard.

The Grill Table serves a white meat chicken kabob, marinated in garlic sauce and lemon juice, which comes with a combination of rice and salad, hummus, tabouli, eggplant and Israeli salad. All lunch specials include one spoon each of basmati rice, dill rice, regular rice and tomato rice with carrots and peas (\$8). If you're in the mood for red meat, the filet of beef is marinated with salt, pepper, onion and lemon juice, then grilled on the skewer. (\$9)

Shekarchi Restaurant

914 S. Hill St.
(213) 892-8535

At Shekarchi, the chicken kabobs are made with either dark meat or boneless, white meat. The ground beef kabobs are marinated with onions and spices (\$9). All are skewered with grilled tomato, parsley and onion and come with rice or salad. For \$1 more, customers can have flavored rice instead. Shekarchi makes lima bean dill rice, Persian berry rice (with a sweet and sour taste), cherry rice and orange peel rice (made with orange peels cooked and marinated with rosewater, cinnamon and pistachio flavor.) They also offer stews for lunch (\$10). On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, they serve eggplant, tomato, lemon and lentil stew. Tuesdays and Thursdays bring ghormehsabazi, which is made with spinach, parsley, beef and kidney beans and lemon.

Farid

635 S. Broadway
St. Vincent's Court
(213) 622-0808

Filet mignon at Farid is marinated with onion juice, salt and pepper and cooked on a shish kabob with onion, bell pepper and tomato. The kabobs are served with Basmati rice and topped with saffron. They come with green salad or Persian salad, which is made with cucumber, onion, tomato and parsley. Kabobs are also served with Lavosh bread (\$8.99). The stews at Farid are a real treat; one is made with lentils, split peas, eggplant, tomato sauce and veal shank (\$7.99) while another consists of parsley, cilantro, green onion and spinach, cooked with veal shank and red beans (\$7.99).

Lilit Restaurant

109 E. Ninth St.
(213) 489-5156

The signature dish at Lilit is soltani, which is filet mignon and ground beef skewered and marinated in special sauce and spices. It's served with rice, tomatoes and salad (\$9.99). The chicken breast is marinated and skewered, and served with basmati rice, tomato and salad (\$6.99). Side dishes include yogurt with cucumber (\$1.99), hummus (\$2.99) and tabouli (\$2.99).

Afshan

112 W. Ninth St.
(213) 622-1010

At Afshan, all they serve is kabobs. All Glatt Kosher kabobs come with rice, bread, and access to the salad bar. Customers can choose from the eight-piece boneless chicken kabob (\$9), filet mignon kabob (\$13) or a two-skewer combination with beef and chicken (\$14).

Kamok

934 S. Los Angeles St., #8
(213) 624-5008

Kamok offers something out of the ordinary. They have two special Persian soups: Ash Reshteh is made with spinach, noodles, garbanzo beans, white beans, cilantro, parsley, onion and mint (\$3.50). Abgosh is lamb shank cooked like a soup, with garbanzo beans, potato, tomato, dried lemon and spices, then all the ingredients are blended together. It's served with cucumber, onion, fresh mint, radish and green onion on the side (\$6.50). Vegetarians can

order koo koo, which consists of parsley, cilantro and green onion cooked with eggs in a pan and then made into a sandwich (\$5.55). Vegetarians might want to stop reading now: Kamok claims to be the only restaurant in L.A. serving the treat that Iranians clamor for each day: Kaleh pacheh is a head of lamb cooked like soup, then cleaned and served with the tongue, meat from the lips, and brain (\$7.50). Hey, variety is the spice of life.

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