

New York-Style Bagels and Pizza Come to Maryland

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Bagel selection at Bagels 'N Grinds in Hanover.

Adam Greenberg claims to be “the world’s pickiest eater.” Let’s just say he has very sensitive taste buds.

“If I can’t eat it and I can’t serve it to my family, I won’t serve it to yours,” says Greenberg, owner of [Bagels ‘n Grinds](#) in College Park and Hanover, Md., as well as several Potomac Pizza locations across Montgomery County.



Adam Greenberg, owner of Bagels ‘n Grinds and Potomac Pizza.

When Greenberg, a Maryland native, first went into the food service industry, he says he was determined to make pizza and bagels that tasted as good as those he loved to eat in New York. “I could never look a New Yorker in the eye and say I make as good a pizza as the ones in New York,” he says.

But now, Greenberg says, “Mine are as good as any in New York — and maybe even *better*.”

Greenberg, 48, believes the minerals in the New York water supply are the secret ingredients behind New York pizza and bagels. New York water is filtered through the Catskill Mountains and aquifers in upstate’s Sullivan County before heading down to Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx, where it’s used to make arguably the world’s best pizza and bagels.

Greenberg says he had the Big Apple’s mineral composition re-created in a laboratory and a filtration system built to make the water “just as Goldilocks would want it — not too much, not too little, just right.”



Pizza from Potomac Pizza

A member of Washington Hebrew Congregation, Greenberg has been part of the Maryland food scene since 1992 when he opened the Cone Zone, an ice cream parlor in Bethesda. Several years later, he purchased Potomac Pizza, which was founded in 1978.

The first Bagels ‘n Grinds opened in 2012 in Hanover, near Arundel Mills. Business has been booming ever since. In fact, Bagels ‘n Grinds was named Small Business of the Year by the Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce last May.

Visitors can draw their own conclusions when they visit Greenberg’s restaurants. Last September, he opened locations for both eateries in College Park’s upscale The Hotel at the University of Maryland.

“The best part of the experience is meeting people and families in town with their kids, coaches with their teams and the players,” Greenberg says. “It’s a new challenge with brand new people — college students — and a lot of fun with it.”

Among the things that make Greenberg’s bagel shops unique are the glass enclosures allowing customers to see the \$50,000 water treatment operation and bagel-baking process.

“The ability to use ultra-purified water in the bagel-making process enhances the texture and flavor of our bagels,” says Greenberg, noting that the bagels at Bagels ‘n Grinds are crispy on the outside and chewy on the inside.

Customers can choose from such flavors as sea salt, blueberry, onion, Asiago cheese, egg, cinnamon, pumpernickel, sundried tomato, poppy, everything, sesame and garlic. On weekends,

Greenberg offers “flagels,” the flat bagels that may or may not have started in Brooklyn in the ‘90s.

“People — old and young, male and female — have gone nuts over the jalapeno cheddar,” says Greenberg. “People like things with a little bite. They love the bialys.”

Seasonally, Greenberg adds a pumpkin flavor during Halloween and he sells bagels in pretty, festive colors at Easter. “We’re looking to get creative and add different bagels at different times of the year,” he says.

By the way, Greenberg notes that his water treatment process does not end with his bagel creations. “Our water treatment facility makes three different types of water. We use this water in our fair-trade organic coffees at our 18-foot beverage station, so that our patrons receive only the best and purest products available,” he says.

When he’s not busy operating restaurants, Greenberg, a Potomac resident, finds time to teach pizza-making to local elementary school students. He’s also donated thousands of bagels to the Autism Speaks organization and to soldiers and personnel at Fort Meade.

Up next, Greenberg is awaiting the opening of his newest restaurant, the College Park Grill. The high-end neighborhood spot will be based in the new Cambria Hotel at College Park, which is scheduled to open in August.

Judy Colbert is a Baltimore-based freelance writer.