

When we lived and worked in center city Philly many years ago, our favorite neighborhood to get really good food at very reasonable prices was the Chinatown district from 8th to 10th and Race Streets. We weren't earning big salaries, so our lunch budgets were usually around two bucks.

For that price each and less, four to six of us could sit around a table and share almost unlimited everything from wor won ton soup, egg rolls, chow mein and a host of chicken, pork and beef dishes. Although the prices may have changed, one well-regarded contemporary example is David's Mai Lai Wah Chinese at 1001 Race Street, phone 215-627-2610.

Just down the street several blocks from Chinatown at 1200 Arch Street and extending up to Market Street is the huge Reading Terminal, originally a downtown railroad base. Famed for generations for both its cafes featuring home-made foods, and attractive shopping mall delights, much of the produce, dairy products and meats are brought in fresh daily from farms in nearby Lancaster County.



Several years ago, Oprah Winfrey extolled Delilah's Mac and Cheese at the Terminal to be the best daily cafe in America. The owners advertise that all their dishes are made from scratch with fresh cheeses straight from Pennsylvania farms. Prices at the shopping stands and cafes in the Reading Market are very reasonable and the portions are generous.

For visitors in Philly there to see the historic sights of Independence Square and the Liberty Bell, and have a taste for deli, Kibitz in the City is just up the street at 703 Chestnut, and can more than satisfy their craves. The corned beef on rye with slaw specials are guaranteed to burst at least one heart ventricle unless each is shared with another person. Although located in a heavily-traveled tourist trap area, Kibitz keeps its prices reasonable.

Of course, it is almost a criminal offense to visit the City of Brotherly Love and not stop by at one or both of the rival South Philly Italian neighborhood sub shops, Gino's and Pat's Steaks. Like battle lines drawn at Gettysburg, they sit just across the street and bombard each other with claims as to which one has the best Philly cheese steak sandwiches in town.

From Philly friends who eat at one or both regularly and a close relative who was there just a month ago, the verdict is that the contest is a tie score. Both have excellent cheese steaks,

hoagies, pizzas and other great foods, and are famed for the freshness of their products.

Of course, their sandwich ingredients are fresh. They sell hundreds daily and need to get new shipments every morning. Geno's Steaks is 1219 South 9th Street. Phone 215-389-0659 or contact online at [www.genosteaks.com](http://www.genosteaks.com). Pat's King of Steaks is at 1237 E. Passyunk Avenue, phone 215-468-1546, and online at [www.patskingofsteaks.com](http://www.patskingofsteaks.com).

If you're planning to be in the center city Philly and nearby areas, another suggestion is to check with [restaurant.com](http://restaurant.com). Often you can print out coupons that will give you attractive discounts at many local eateries.