

CORKY & LENNY'S

The best corned beef you'll ever eat, served by the most colorful characters you'll ever meet – welcome to Cleveland's answer to deli nirvana.



In his book, *Save the Deli*, Toronto journalist David Sax wrote a love letter to Jewish delis, trotting the globe from New York to London, Los Angeles to Paris in search of the best pastrami, blintzes, and cabbage rolls, all the while bringing to light a startling revelation for fans of salty, cured meats – many of these historic delis across the nation are falling victim to the likes of corporate franchising, health food trends, and changing times (his book states that of the 1,250 delis in New York City decades ago, only a couple hundred remain). “Before World War II there

were 110 kosher butcher shops in Cleveland,” says Corky Kurland, after sharing Sax’s story, “today there are just three.” A sad reality of the food world, made all the more poignant considering it is being shared over a corned beef sandwich at the lunch counter inside the very crowded and busy Corky & Lenny’s.

To put it bluntly, Corky & Lenny’s is Cleveland; from its people to its décor to its food. It’s unfortunate David Sax overlooked this jewel in his *Deli* research, but they hardly need the publicity. This place is always packed with customers lined up at the bakery and deli counters (which greet you when you first

walk in) and guests enjoying a meal in their restaurant (Corky and co-owner Earl Stein estimate between 1,000 and 2,000 guests are served each day). The minute you walk in from its misleadingly small façade (from the outside it looks like nothing more than a crammed lunch counter) you know this is not your standard deli. The smells alone are a sensory overload, but the frenetic energy of the place only adds to that first impression.

The funny thing is you don’t just go to Corky & Lenny’s to eat. Yes, the Eastern European style Jewish deli (although the changing times have seen the addition of

wraps, veggie burgers, and other trendy foodstuffs to their menu) has the best corned beef in Cleveland, but part of the fun of dining at Corky & Lenny's is the experience. This place is one of the last joints with true character and attitude. Servers and kitchen staff are constantly bobbing and weaving through the rows of tables and lines of people and each looks like they have a story to tell (log on to www.gllmagazine.com to read a few).

The original Corky & Lenny's opened in South Euclid in 1958 and within a matter of years their popularity preceded their space, having to relocate down the street. The business moved a third time in 1972 to their current location on Beachwood's Chagrin Boulevard. *GLL* must-tries are the very three things Corky & Lenny's are most famous for – their matzoh ball soup, their Reuben sandwiches, and their cheesecake. Make a meal of all three (we promise you will have leftovers to take home).

PHOTOS AT RIGHT:

1. Most trips to Corky & Lenny's will end with one last large smile from cashier Nancy Altschuler.
2. Server Andrew Rosenlumd delivers one of Corky & Lenny's signature corned beef sandwiches.
3. Visitors from as far as Columbus and Pittsburgh make the trek to Corky & Lenny's. "Columbus has begged us to come there," reveals co-owner Earl Stein, "but it wouldn't be the same."
4. Halved sour pickles are complimentary, just ask your server.
5. Longtime employee Mickey Glasser.
6. "I've been coming here for over 50 years and I'm still alive. That says something about the food." Corky & Lenny's regular Stewart Lect talks with Stein.

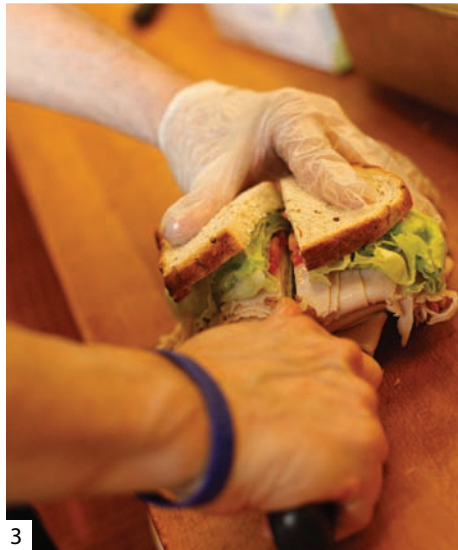
Corky & Lenny's is located at 27091 Chagrin Boulevard in Beachwood. For more information, call (216) 464-3838 or visit www.corkyandlennys.com.



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A WORD FROM THE OWNERS ON THE STATE OF DELI CULTURE:

Delis that were truly this or that are different today. Your clientele base has to be very mixed because everyone eats everything today. Everyone has a universal palate. Our customer base has been the same for years. We have people who eat 21 meals a week here.

— FROM LEFT, CORKY AND KENNY KURLAND AND EARL STEIN.