

# Enjoy Eating in the World Kitchen

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- [Bradley Hawks](#)

If Midtown West is notoriously known as Hell’s Kitchen, then Western Queens could quite easily adopt the moniker of World Kitchen. While Queens has longtime been famous for its ethnic culinary diversity, a recent boom in restaurant openings has fervently affirmed that claim. In fact, on Urbanspoon, Astoria and Long Island City have more restaurant listings than Hell’s Kitchen and Williamsburg combined. Read on for a spotlight on four recently opened neighborhood heavy-hitters, as well as a preview of 12 more that have already or are scheduled to be open within the month.

## **BASIL BRICK OVEN**

28-17 Astoria Blvd, Astoria (718-204-1205, [basilbrickoven.com](http://basilbrickoven.com))



**Basil Brick Oven**—“The pizza was invented in Naples, and then we developed it in the North,” grins Danielle Balbos, pizzaiolo and executive chef at Basil Brick Oven Pizza. Owned by Joe Giannola (who also owns neighbor Twirlz Yogurt Bar), the pizzeria features an astonishing pizza

menu, along with a few antipasti, pastas and panini inspired by Chef Danielle's home in Piemonte, Italy.

"When you truly, really love doing something, how can you possibly go wrong?" asks the owner of his talented pie-master.

Similar to a true Neapolitan pie, the wood-fired oven is kept piping between 850 and 900°F, the ingredients are imported from Italy and the mozzarella is made fresh daily (60 pounds of it a day, to be exact). So what makes the pizza at Basil Brick Oven different from the Neapolitan "artisan" pies that have taken the city by storm?

"Those pies cook in 90 seconds," explains the chef, "and are not built for toppings – they can get really soggy." Using a special recipe that yields a stronger, less doughy crust, and by baking each pie for 4 minutes, his Northern Italian pies are able to properly hold a variety of gourmet ingredients while still bragging a crisp, thin crust. Exotic combinations include smoked prosciutto with brie, yellow fin tuna with caramelized onions, mussels with roasted garlic and parsley and Williams pears with gorgonzola.