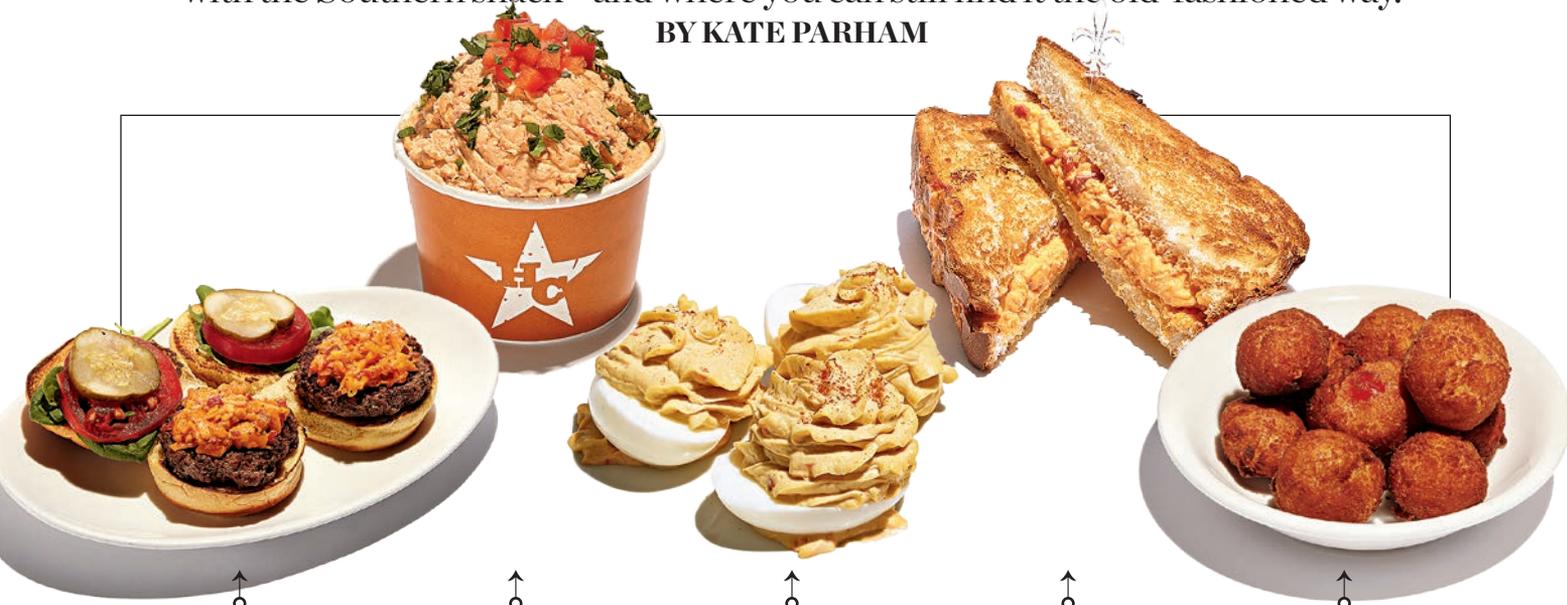


PIMIENTO, PLEASE

Pimiento cheese is no longer just a zesty, creamy spread. Here's how chefs are playing with the Southern snack—and where you can still find it the old-fashioned way.

BY KATE PARHAM



Jackie's

Rumor has it Elvis topped his White Castle burgers with pimiento cheese. These sliders—the only dish here since day one—follow suit.

8081 Georgia Ave.,
Silver Spring;
301-565-9700

Hill Country

If you prefer your cheese spreadable, try this version with sharp cheddar and sweet Dromedary-brand pimientos.

It's served with a stack of saltines.

410 Seventh St., NW;
202-556-2050

Virtue Feed & Grain

This gastropub punches up deviled eggs with cheese, mayo, and pimientos, then adds house-made hot sauce.

106 S. Union St.,
Alexandria;
571-970-3669

Bayou Bakery

New Orleans transplant David Guas sandwiches creamy cheese between buttered Texas toast, ensuring a cold center—“like a well-cooked steak.”

1515 N. Courthouse
Rd., Arlington;
703-243-2410

Evening Star Cafe

Georgia-native chef Jim Jefford's sweet-and-sour fritters substitute Peppadew peppers for pimientos.

2000 Mount Vernon
Ave., Alexandria;
703-549-5051

The Needle What's hot, what's not



RAY'S TO THE THIRD

We took the casual route at Michael Landrum's latest restaurant. The enormous Mack burger—with American cheese and tangy “heck” sauce—was juicy perfection. Tender slices of rib eye

elevated a sandwich that included melted American and provolone and grilled onions on a Lyon Bakery sub roll. A side salad lent lovely contrast to the sandwiches, and a boozy shake with bourbon and bacon bits made an indulgent ending. 1650 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; 703-974-7171.



WOODBERRY KITCHEN

Spike and Amy Gjerde may have their mind on new projects, but that hasn't diminished anything at their farmhouse-cool flagship. Our table became cluttered with terrific snacks: cucumbers

seasoned with fish pepper, crab dip with a shot of sherry, a crisp salad of charred sugar-snap peas. Excellent desserts—from a blackberry meringue pie to a marshmallow-and-malt sundae—helped make the meal one of the best we've had here. 2010 Clipper Park Rd., Baltimore; 410-464-8000.



SPICES

Lots of Cleveland Park residents use Spices for takeout and delivery, but the food is at its best in the warmly lit dining room. We dug into a tangy salad of green papaya, mango, and red cabbage, and

another Vietnamese classic—grilled shrimp over cold vermicelli with nicely crunchy spring rolls, cucumber, mint leaves, and peanuts. Less inspiring: gummy drunken noodles with flavorless minced chicken and the limp, over-steamed edamame. 3333-A Connecticut Ave., NW; 202-686-3833.