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Oct 18, 2010 **EAT. Drink. Post.** 02:51 PM

## Taiim Falafel Shack Hits Hastings, Industry Night at The Cookery, and the Best Thing That Ever Happened to a Chickpea

BY JULIA SEXTON

### FirstTaste

#### About Taiim



Hummus, Babaganouj and (center) Israeli Chopped Salad at Tim

Thank God the *New York Times* hasn't lost its Quick Bite. Now that the paper has 866 its Westchester section, and castrated its county reviewers (who now offer limp "worth its"), the New York/Region's Quick Bite section is the best county content in the *Times*.

A couple of weeks ago, **Emily DeNitto** sang the praises of **Taiim Falafel Shack**, a newcomer that stepped into the old Comfort spot at 598 Warburton Avenue in Hastings. Though I'm often at odds with *Times*

reviewers (see DeNitto's impression of New Rochelle's **Spadaro** and **mine**), I'd have to concur that Taiim Falafel Shack is an absolute, stop-the-presses "worth it."

Comfort's former nook still only holds a few seats (eight at tables, four at a wall-facing counter—and still, no bathroom), but Taiim is well worth its intimate squeeze. Its falafels are a wonder of texture—soft, yet the chickpeas are distinct and nutty. Unlike many restaurants that use canned chickpeas, at Taiim, they buy the pulses dried and then soak them overnight. This extra effort means that the chickpeas retain some crunchy texture and nutty flavor. After coarsely grinding (and subtle spicing), the chickpeas are formed into balls, fried, then mashed onto freshly grilled pita. The falafels are generously slicked with house-ground tahini sauce—and best of all, they're enlivened with batons of sour kosher dills and punk-pink pickled turnips. One luscious bite (keep your napkin handy!) and you'll see why falafels are the dirty-water hot dog of the Middle East.



Pickled turnips, kosher dills, and olives at Taiim

Chicken shawarma and beef shawarma, made with marinated layered meats roasted in an upright rotisserie underneath an onion, are complex and (correctly) a bit funky—like a gyro to the Nth degree. (They're served with sautéed onions and peppers, as Taiim's incredibly handy menu key informs us. And who knew? It also seems that warbat are custard-filled phyllo pastries.) We loved Taiim's veggie sampler with the lemony velvet of tahini-rich hummus, while Taiim's stellar, cinnamon baklava was honey-soaked yet wonderfully crisp. These precious diamonds are perfect to munch while sipping a glass of cardamom-haunted Turkish coffee. Yum.

### HotDate

#### Parrrrrrty!

Put on your drinking shoes for these great, all out parties. We'll definitely be lurking somewhere in these crowds, trying hard not to be noticed (don't say you saw us).



**Halloween Industry Night at The Cookery**  
October 29, 11pm-2am  
\$15 cover; includes food and live music

Think Chef Dave DiBari is the darling of Westchester food press? So pleasant, so cultured, so unassuming—a nice boy? Well, show up on October 29 after The Cookery is closed, and you'll see the real DiBari in all his twisted glory. We're talking loud, rude music paired with loud, rude food, like crispy veal tails with gremolata and fried brains with apple mustard and horseradish. You'll see beef tendons "agro dolce" with shaved

escarole and toasted pignoli, so get out of your (culinary) box and, even, come in costume. Sure, the winning costume gets a \$50 Cookery gift certificate (perfect to use at the bar), but remember that you'll have to walk back to your car through cop-swarmed Dobbs Ferry.

#### Birdsall House Fall Fest

October 23, noon-11pm

Duh! Birdsall House and Oktoberfest: perfect together. This event in the Birdsall House beer garden offers grilled bratwurst, pumpkin ales, and Oktoberfest beers, all slung to the live strains of Phineas and the Lonely Leaves.

#### Peekskill Brewery

October 28

#### "Truly Bloody" Halloween Party

Okay, they had me with the teaser, "Come do bad things..." This *True Blood*-themed party will offer New Orleans-style brews and food. Now, if only they had some of those hot vampires, too.

### HotPlate

#### The New Falafel in Town (That Ups the Game)



If you have bad memories of gobstopping falafels that date from your momentary flirtation with vegetarianism in college (damn you, bacon!), then swing over to Hastings-on-Hudson to **Taiim Falafel Shack** for a revelation. These juicy, nutty-textured wonders sport intense, house-ground tahini; plus, they're packed with sprightly pickles and loads of yummy, fresh chickpea flavor.

#### Reader Comments:

POSTED BY **FOODFAN** OCT 19, 2010 09:45 AM  
I grew up on falafel in Isreal--love the stuff but love chumus better. Does Taiim do a good chumus too?

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#### About This Blog

Julia Sexton, restaurant critic, food writer, and CRMA award-winning blogger, is a rampant traveler who will go anywhere to try anything. When not furtively sneaking cinghiale sausage past airport bag sniffers, she cooks and writes at her home in New Rochelle. A regular in *Westchester Magazine's* pages, where she reviews local restaurants, Sexton's food writing has also appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*. She'd love hear from you, so email questions and comments to jsxtonatear@gmail.com.

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