

The West Virginia Hot Dog Blog

A place to discuss the uniquely delectable gift from heaven known as the West Virginia Hot Dog.

Saturday, July 15, 2023

The Great Kanawha Valley Hot Dog Joint Tour of 2023



The Secret Ballot Form

Last week Stanton and three other hot dog enthusiasts decided to sample hot dogs from six different HDJs in one long lunch hour. Beginning in Nitro and ending in Marmet, they selected the six from a long list of potential targets,

basing their selections on both quality and convenience: all HDJs had to have achieved at least a 4 Weenie score on their last review, and they had to be places you could be sure to get in and out quickly, because time is money. To make the trip go quicker, orders were placed to go and judged in the car. Not the most comfortable dining spot, but it proved efficient.

Please note: No claim is being made that these six are the best in the Valley, but it was felt that they offered a good representation of the variations that exist in the Kanawha Valley hot dog culture, so spare us your flaming comments.

At each HDJ, two hot dogs were ordered with chili, slaw, mustard and onions. Each of the four reviewers were given a half to judge. They were asked to score on our official Weenie Scale, using a private ballot form as to ensure their review was not influenced by the others. At the end of the trip, scores were to be tallied and the six HDJs would be ranked. Reviewers were also instructed to take notes to be used as tie-breaking criteria.

Nitro Dairy Queen

The tour began at the Nitro Dairy Queen, which is a locally owned "Treat" franchise that -- unlike "Chill & Grill" locations -- is not beholden to DQ Corporate on how to make its hot dogs which means that "everything" means chili, slaw, mustard and onions, just like God intended hot dogs to be dressed. Arriving at their opening time of 11:00, our reviewers were treated with a delicious Utilitarian Dog with perfect-looking slaw sitting atop equally perfect looking chili. Wrapped in wax paper, the hot dog had nicely steamed itself and was soft and warm. Three people said the hot dog seemed small, but everyone agreed that it was well-executed and tasty.

West Virginia Hot Dogs



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Welcome to the W.Va. Hot Dog Blog!

This blog contains Hot Dog Joint reviews from around West Virginia and serves as a discussion board for those reviews, as well as providing a space for general discussion of West Virginia Hot Dogs.

What Is A West Virginia Hot Dog?

A true West Virginia hot dog is a heavenly creation that begins with a wiener on a soft steamed bun. Add mustard, a chili-like sauce and top it off with coleslaw and chopped onions and you have a symphony of taste that quite possibly is the reason that many transplanted West Virginians can never really be happy living anywhere else. Different parts of

Bammy's Chili Dogs

Jumping over the bridge to St. Albans, the tour continued with a stop at Bammy's Chili Dogs. When the cashier heard the order placed as "two hot dogs with chili, slaw, mustard



Nitro DQ



Bammy's

and onions" she read it back as "two West Virginia Hot Dogs" which on this blog is worthy of extra consideration and should have scored Bammy's an extra point or two in their scoring. Turns out, they would need the extra points because our reviewers didn't like the too-large onion pieces and said the chili's taste was, in the words of one reviewer, "a little off." Kudos, though, for wrapping the hot dogs in both aluminum foil and wax paper to maintain their

freshness.

Next stop was supposed to be **Hot Diggity Dogs** in North Charleston, but as luck would have it, they picked this week to close for vacation, something our team didn't know until they drove up to the front door. Faced with this dilemma, the team had to improvise quickly and choose an alternate HDJ, preferably one that wasn't far away. After a brief conference they decided to visit the most recently reviewed HDJ on the blog, Dancing Dog Ice Cream on Charleston's West Side. Wimpy the Weenie Wonk had given this place a 4.5 Weenie score just last month so, it seemed promising.

Dancing Dog Ice Cream

At Dancing Dog in Elk City, our reviewers found it easier to get out of the car and do their judging inside, where they were greeted by a friendly staff and the only grilled bun of the day. The bun was grilled on top and bottom, but the sides were still soft and supple. The bun also held the snappiest weenie they found at any of the six HDJs. Reviewers mostly liked the chili and slaw combination and overall seemed impressed by the quality of the entire hot dog. One reviewer didn't care for the grilled bun, and another thought it made the hot dog better. If presentation mattered in the scoring, DD would have gotten some extra points, as it would have for friendly service.

West Virginia have variations on the theme but the common elements are sweet, creamy coleslaw and chili. Anything else is just not a true West Virginia hot dog!

Labels

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Super Weenie

A quick trip across town found our group at Super Weenie on Quarrier Street. Here they only had to order a "West Virginia Hot Dog" because the well-trained staff knows what that means, and it is posted on a sign that lists several optional ways to get your WV Dog, including a "Polite WV Dog" which comes with no onions. We've always found that Super Weenie lives up to its motto "We're Serious About These Hot Dogs" but on this day the reviewers were a tad disappointed in the taste and texture of the weenie, and one felt the chili was too spicy.

Of course there are several other options for good hot dogs in downtown



Dancing Dog Ice Cream

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Super Weenie

Charleston, but time was short so the group headed across the bridge and up McCorkle Avenue to Kanawha City.

The Pepperoni Grill

When the team arrived at the Pepperoni Grill, they were thankful to have a covered picnic table where they could escape the car's lackluster dining ambiance while they waited on their order. Once it arrived they quickly noticed and remarked on the

generous amounts of toppings piled high on the hot dogs. This had also been the slowest order of the day, and after one bite they understood that the delay was due to a well-grilled weenie that was still piping hot. Three out of four appreciated the extra effort and felt the grilling treatment made the weenie delectable. One reviewer found the chili and slaw to be too sweet, and one thought it was "too bready," but the overall consensus was that the hot dogs were filling and satisfying.

Chum's Hot Dogs

Last stop of the tour was Chum's Hot Dogs in Marmet, the home of the yellow slaw. It might have been a little apples-and-oranges to include Chum's because when you're having yellow slaw it's recommended to leave the mustard off of your standard order, so they did. Also, being the last stop of the day with the remnants of five other hot dogs in your belly, it might be hard to judge fairly due to

"Hot Dog Fatigue." Nevertheless, our team bravely faced the unique yellow slaw variation with as much objectivity as it could muster. Only one reviewer felt Chum's was up to snuff, with the others having complaints "too vinegary" or "a cheese-like flavor." One was disappointed because of his fond memories of yellow slaw at a HDJ of yesteryear that Chum's didn't measure up to.

Results

At the end of the tour, here's how these six ranked on this day:

1. Nitro Dairy Queen - Simply a great West Virginia Hot Dog.

2. Pepperoni Grill - Delicious and satisfying but the chili is a little too



Pepperoni Grill

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Chum's

sweet.

3. Tie - Super Weenie & Dancing Dog Ice Cream -

Our team couldn't break the tie, finding both of these HDJs a perfectly adequate for a lunchtime hot dog with nothing negative to say about either.

5. Bammy's Chili Dogs -

When four hot dog experts agree that the chili was

a little off, it's probably a little off.

6. Chum's - Unique doesn't mean it's better, just different. Too different from the others on this day.

Posted by Stanton at [8:03 PM](#)

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