

# Butcher & Bee

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## MY PLAN WAS TO SHOP MY WAY UP KING STREET

and rendezvous with my hubby for lunch at Butcher & Bee. Not being a Charlestonian I may have underestimated the distance from Queen Street, my designated starting point and my final destination. Rookie mistake. Two hours and an undisclosed amount of dollars later, laden with shopping bags from Pottery Barn, J. Crew, the Gap, and Banana Republic, my forearms were burning and my stomach was growling as I neared 654 King St. I wasn't expecting my stroll to take me to the other side of the tracks, just past the U-Haul place and short of the overpass. Butcher & Bee isn't tucked sweetly into a 200-year-old building, amid cute shops. It sits at the back of a parking lot in an industrial space, which frankly, made me love it immediately. I'll always root for the underdog.



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## LUNCH WAS UP

and served on an old-school metal cafeteria tray (think *Shawshank Redemption*) lined with butcher paper. My roast beef sandwich was enormous (think stegosaurus burger) and there was no way to eat it daintily. So, I didn't even try. You know a meal is good when it is dripping down your arm. The meat was perfectly medium with plenty of flavor and really moist. The onion jam mayo was the ideal smear for roast beef, and the bread ... oh,

the bread. Made fresh daily and I learned it's also delivered to the most notable chefs and restaurants in the city. Mike Lata of FIG and The Ordinary, Sean Brock of McCrady's and HUSK, and Craig Deihl of Cypress all feature Butcher & Bee breads on their menus. Very cool. The faro salad was also cool, as in served cold, light and fresh and dotted with juicy tomato and feta cheese.

The corned beef was full of flavor and topped with B&B's take on sauerkraut... not finely shredded but big tears of cabbage,

paired with Russian dressing and squeezed between two pieces of soft rye bread. The fries were amazing. Crispy and hot, hot, hot. When dipped in the house made and subtly sweet ketchup, you can see how these babies would sell out on the late night menu. Every night.

We inhaled it all and left with full bellies, and a new lunch spot to add to our list. Hubby was at the wheel, so I enjoyed a two hour post-Butcher & Bee nap in the passenger seat back to Bluffton.

You can't beat that.



I knew the meal would be noteworthy. Last month, I had to rain check a lunch meeting with Southern Foodways Alliance Director John T. Edge scheduled to take place over sandwiches at Butcher & Bee. John T. knows bourbon and good eats, so I knew I had to repent and make my way back to the Holy City to hit this spot.

The first thing that caught my eye was the vintage cash register, which gleamed like a diamond. Don't be fooled though, they process all of the orders and payment through a very non-vintage, but hip iPad. At the iconic register, you look over your left shoulder and see the enormous blackboard touting the

day's specials. The menu changes daily and is posted via Facebook and Twitter. Seven days a week Butcher & Bee is serving up lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday they re-open late night at 11 p.m. for four hours of post-bar-curb-the-munchies-fill-your-belly-and-attempt-to-avoid-the-hangover folks. (Note to self: If I can stay up that late next time I am in Chucktown, I will be back.)

After perusing the big board, we ordered. A lot of food. (For the good of the story, of course.) It was the roast beef with onion jam mayo and a side of faro salad for me. Hubby went with the corned beef Reuben and an order of fries. We added two old school glass-bottled Coca Colas and we set out to find a seat

at one of the community tables—slabs of reclaimed wood surrounded by mix-and-match chairs. It was just after 1 p.m. on a Thursday and the place was packed. We found our flatware in a Mason jar and learned that if we had to wipe our mouths, we'd just pull a square from the roll of paper towels sitting tabletop.

While we waited for our sandwiches, I couldn't help but notice the décor. I felt a little like a treasure hunter on an episode of *American Pickers*. If you look closely you'll see old wagon wheels, tractor seats, and well pumps. Dry ingredients are stacked and stored in the dining room. Open cabinets wrap track the ceiling just above the countertop/prep area. Subway tile and reclaimed wood boards along the walls complete the look.