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The Triangle's food

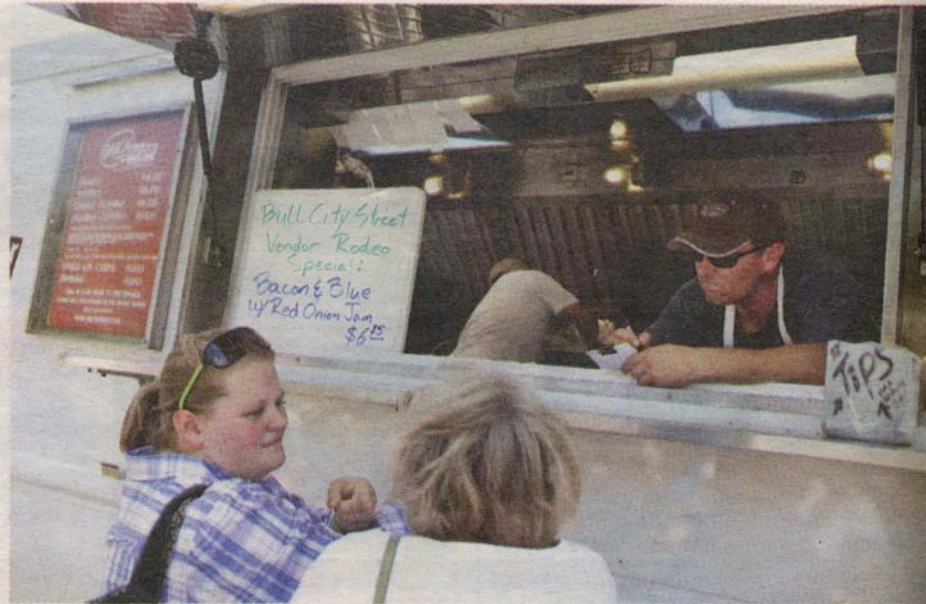
ROAD FOOD

A peek at the local
mobile food scene

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PHOTOS BY JEREMY M. LANGE





What's next? A second OnlyBurger truck and plans for an OnlyPasta truck, serving just that, prepared fresh daily.

The truck accepts cash and cards.

Above left: Meals on wheels at the Bull City Street Vendor Rodeo

Above right: At OnlyBurger, the question is Single, double or triple?

Or try a hemp milk, made from the cannabis seed and blended with lucuma powder (another Andean fruit). At \$2.50, the milk is rich, smooth and lactose-free. (Pulido also blends cashew and almond milks.) Hemp, an essential amino acid, is found in the nutrient-rich Nunonana smoothie, a popular drink concocted by Pulido's young son consisting of hemp milk, cacao powder, banana, cinnamon, pure vanilla extract and honey. Pulido suggests adding a half cup of spinach, and maybe some blueberries, "so kids get their greens and don't know the difference!" She lets customers play around with the combinations.

Carboro Raw accepts cash and cards; there is a \$10 minimum.

WEDNESDAY

The **ONLYBURGER**—perhaps the area's most popular mobile vendor—gallivants through the Triangle like a king as followers watch every move on Twitter and line up in droves. It's a simple concept: burgers and fries, done impeccably well.

On Wednesdays, OnlyBurger will most likely be stationed at Durham's American Tobacco Campus during lunchtime. They knock out an average of 60 to 80 pounds of antibiotic-free ground beef a day, according to co-owner Brian Bottger, whose business partner is Durham Catering's Tom Ferguson. The 100 percent chuck comes from a ranch in Montana but is processed at Cliff's Meat Market in Carboro. "Cliff takes a big chunk of that fat off, so it's about 85-15 lean beef," Bottger says. The burgers are a quarter pound. Turkey burgers are also available.

Tomatoes come from Eastern Carolina Organics. The lettuce isn't local, because Bottger insists on the crunch of iceberg.

"It doesn't grow around here, and a lot of local farmers don't want to touch it," he says. "They give me a sneering look, like, 'Why are you using iceberg?' But to me, that's what you eat on a burger. It's crunchy."

A Saturday morning staple at the Durham Farmers' Market, OnlyBurger often picks up a few heirloom tomatoes and eggs for the special market burger, a smaller 2.5-ounce patty topped with a local fried egg and fried green tomato. They whipped it out at the most recent First Friday in Raleigh, too, stopping even the hipster bikers on fixed-gears in their tracks. They also have an occasional blue cheese burger special, spread with a thin layer of homemade onion jam.

About three to four employees work on the small truck at a time. "It's tight," Bottger says. "It's greasy. It's hot, but it's ... *cozy*."

The truck also runs the Duke campus circuit, where late-night parties are notoriously rowdy. Bottger remembers an outdoor fraternity gig in the pouring rain that turned into "a mud fest, like Woodstock. People were hanging off the truck."

"The younger employees working the late-night shifts would tell me harrowing stories," he says.

Twenty-three-year-old Patrick Phelps-McKeown recalls manning the OnlyBurger truck at a college music festival at a farm.

"It turned into a sea of drunken people standing around the window, demanding meat," he says. "It's a different dynamic from a restaurant. There's no line. Some big football player bro wants a hamburger, he'll surge through the crowd and wave money at us. There's this pandemonium. And I'm thinking, 'I'm at a farm, cooking a hamburger and listening to some band cover Toad the Wet Sprocket. How did I get here?' There are definitely moments like that."

OnlyBurger organized the first Bull City Street Vendor Rodeo in Durham earlier this month and hopes to foster a growing community of food trucks through local collaboration. OnlyBurger will open a restaurant next month at Hope Valley Square at 3710 Shannon Road.

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THURSDAY

BULKOGI KOREAN BBQ, a new truck to hit the Durham scene, transports Korean-style tacos, a popular California trend; to the South. Jin and Jenny So, with the help of their teenage daughter Christine, wheel out homemade Korean plates and fusion dishes six days a week at the Wachovia parking lot on Ninth Street in Durham. (Hours are Monday–Thursday 5–9 p.m., Friday 6–9 p.m., Saturday 5–9 p.m.)

Bulkogi is a traditional Korean-style beef, marinated in a variety of ingredients including soy sauce, garlic and sesame oil.

Spicy pork tacos, the most saucy of the tacos, are a favorite, with chunks of marinated, grilled pork atop a corn tortilla. (The tortillas are store-bought at El Mandado in Raleigh.)

The bulkogi beef taco is sweeter, and the barbecue chicken is both sweet and sour, with a hunk of kimchi on top.

Jenny, who cooks all the food, is tight-lipped about her secret ingredients.

But with Christine translating, she did tell me that the added sweetness in the kimchi is not from sugar and that she's conscious to use natural ingredients.

"She makes a new batch of kimchi every week," says Christine. "There are a lot of ingredients added to the cabbage, like chili powder, onions, garlic. My mom likes to add a little sweetness, so she'll put in ground apples or grapes."

The most traditional menu items are this summer's specials. The Bi Bim Bap is rice topped with shiitake mushrooms, soybean sprouts, spinach, carrots, sometimes squash and egg, then drizzled with another from-scratch secret recipe: a fiery red-orange hot sauce. The Kimchi Bok

