

# A Grocerlook

No longer old-time relics, general stores are providing New Yorkers of the naughts with the latest culinary status symbols (and we don't mean sun-dried tomatoes). By **Rebecca Flint Marx**

Back when Giorgio DeLuca (of Dean & DeLuca) first sold imported balsamic vinegar and sun-dried tomatoes at his Soho store, the act spawned copycats all over the U.S., creating a template for what it meant to be gourmet (think pesto, espresso and fresh mozzarella). Enter the local foods movement, and the focus has shifted. Today, homegrown American goods trump imports (though they're not obsolete—see Maldon salt). In a nod to the back-to-Arborio rice as the fashionable grain, Virginia ham is sexier than prosciutto, and the general store has become the go-to venue for off-the-moment comestibles.

## Stocked market General stores (p.78)

### Eat Out



#### Bedford Cheese

**229 Bedford Ave at North 4th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-7588)** As the name suggests, this store peddles primarily in curds, but its well-curated selection of imported and domestic nonchese edibles make Bedford Cheese a one-stop shop for lining a yogurthy panny. The windows are crowded with jars of artisanal pickles, jams, chutneys and honeys that are almost too ornate to eat. Lipping the aile on other condiment-crimed cheesesmongers, Bedford also offers meals—some of which are locally sourced.

**Our picks:** McClure's pickles (\$12), hailing from Michigan grass-fed, beef raised in Granville, NY (\$13/b); and UK-based Hawkshead Relish Company's ketchup (\$7).

#### Little Piggy (Market)

**61 Lafayette Ave at South Ethel Pl., Fort Greene, Brooklyn (718-797-1011)** Craig Samuel and Ben Grossman made their name putting a Yankee spin on lowlands grub at their barbecue eatery, Smoke Joint. They applied the same blue state mentality to the country store concept, when they opened Little Piggy, the Southern-inflected gourmet shop next door. The speck of a space opened last month with salads, baked goods, coffee from a top-secret roaster in Queens and jars of penny candy, and it's already gained a rep as a gathering place. Little Piggy doesn't yet offer the full range of products, but look forward to Tennessee hams and produce from nearby farms.

**Our picks:** Watch out for Rexcroft Farms chuk honey (\$9) and Schindlhouse Kitchen Barbsbar chutney (\$9), both made upstate; and Anson Mills grits (\$4).

#### Marlow & Sons

**81 Broadway between Berry St and Myrtle Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-384-1441)** Sealing an array of fetish foods in the front room of their tuxen-style eatery, Marlow & Sons is the unofficial standard-bearer for the new breed of general stores. The shop is both cozy and rarefied. Thanks to touches like typewritten descriptions of their local and imported groceries. They're so dedicated, they even publish their own food quarterly, *Diner Journal*.

**Our picks:** Michigan's Kaeze & Company peanut butter (\$9); Evans Farmhouse Creamery Chianengo cheddar from New York grass-fed cows (\$8); and Huetzel's Leblanc pistachio oil from France (\$18).

#### Market Table

**54 Carmine St at Bedford St (212-255-2100)** Let's hope this brand new nom-and-pop-up market and restaurant from chef-proprietor Mike Price (of The Harrison, Mermaid Inn) will exorcise the cantankerous demons of former tenant Shopshins. Expect sundry offerings of fish, meat, dairy products and local produce for now, plus house-made pickles, jams and breads down the road. In true general-store style, dry goods like soap, flowers and kitchen supplies will coexist with the eats. Beginning next spring, Price will grow vegetables in planters salvaged from Chumley's.

**Our picks:** Pat LaPride's Applewood smoked bacon (\$5/b); English Maldon sea salt (\$11).