

◉ Louie's Ham and Corned Beef

This bright, bustling breakfast-lunch-and-dinner place in Eastern Market is one of the best places we know to savor the distinctive deliciousness of corned beef made by Detroit's 89-year-old Wigley's corned beef company. Louie's will make your sandwich any way you want it, of course, with or without cheese or all dressed up Reuben-style. But we ordered ours sublimely simple — warm and unadorned on perfectly toasted rye. So good. (3570 Riopelle; www.louieseasternmarket.com)

Hygrade Restaurant & Deli

"Since 1955" says the sign painted on the side of this vintage breakfast and lunch joint about 2½ miles west of downtown Detroit on Michigan Avenue. The well-worn dining room has the red-and-white vinyl floor tiles and diner-style furnishings you remember from decades ago, but service is fast, warm and friendly, and the clientele includes a little of everyone. The Reuben (with Sy Ginsberg corned beef) is Hygrade's signature sandwich — lifted beyond the ordinary with generous amounts of good, tangy sauerkraut; Swiss that's actually melted, sweet Thousand Island dressing and enough time on the grill to turn the rye bread a deep golden brown. Hygrade isn't on your way to anywhere, but it's worth a trip. (3640 Michigan. There's no website.)

Stage Deli

A West Bloomfield institution since 1962, the Stage believes in the bigger-is-better school of deli sandwich-making — and in carefully selecting every ingredient. The corned beef is from Kelly Corned Beef in Chicago, the breads are custom baked for Stage and the pickles are Detroit-made Topor's new dills. Owner Steve Goldberg says using special small briskets and gently simmering them for four hours is what makes Stage's corned beef "extra, extra, extra tender." The simple corned beef on seedless rye is a Stage favorite. (6873 Orchard Lake Road; www.thestagedeli.com; or check out the other location in Somerset North, 2800 W. Big Beaver, Troy.)

Bronx Deli

The No. 1 Big Mouth at the Bronx is a true delight, stacked with warm, deliciously moist corned beef cooked fresh daily, excellent house-recipe coleslaw, slices of Swiss and just the right amount of Russian dressing. The corned beef is Sy Ginsberg, and the pickles are from Topor's — both metro Detroit companies. Brothers-in-law owners Marc Zuccato and Lenny Mazzola opened their first location in Pontiac in 2007 and expanded to Farmington Hills earlier this year. (247 S. Telegraph and 37580 W. Twelve Mile; www.bronxdeli.com)

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Louie's Ham and Corned Beef restaurant in Detroit's Eastern Market keeps it simple with corned beef on grilled rye. SYLVIA RECTOR/DETROIT FREE PRESS

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