

The Absolute Best Egg Cream in New York

By [Mary Jane Weedman](#) 03-23-17



Yes, the city's best egg cream comes from a pizza place. *Photo: Liz Clayman*

You don't have to look far to find someone bemoaning the end of the egg cream. Maybe that's true in Omaha, but the homegrown soda-fountain hero is still easy to find in New York, for now. To wit: On the west side of Second Avenue, between 7th and St. Marks alone, you can get three different, perfectly adequate versions, from [B&H Dairy](#), [Paul's Da Burger Joint](#), and [Gem Spa](#). The ingredients are almost always the same: seltzer, milk, and chocolate syrup, which purists say must be Brooklyn-made Fox's U-bet. (No cream and no egg, though that's debatable, by no less than [Daniel Bell](#).) But like with its two-or-three-ingredient cocktail sisters — the [Martini](#), the [Old Fashioned](#) — it's plenty easy to find a bad version. The soda jerks can't simply plop the ingredients together in a glass; every creator has his or her own technique. We went out sipping, sticking to chocolate flavor. Here, the absolute best.

The Absolute Best

1. **Juliana's Pizza**

19 Old Fulton St., nr. Elizabeth Pl., Downtown Brooklyn; 718-596-6700

Juliana's chocolate egg cream — which is served in a pint glass with a long milkshake spoon — is different than nearly every other offering in the city. A chocolaty richness thanks to U-bet is cut by a frothy head buoyed by **Brooklyn Seltzer Boys** seltzer, which here has gentle but long-lasting bubbles. What makes it truly different is that said frothy head has a root-beer-float-style reaction — that is, intense; it looks like a third-grade science experiment. And that froth lasts through even leisurely consumption (often, the froth on other, lesser egg creams will dissipate before you've even had a chance to unwrap your straw), meaning you can alternate bites of pizza with sips of egg cream throughout an entire pie.

2. **Shopsin's**

120 Essex St., nr. Delancey St., in the Essex St. Market; 917-907-4506

The terrific egg cream comes to the table with a couple of inches of biting froth, and is creamy with a hint of a flavor like milk powder, which an egg-cream enthusiast will be quick to tell you could probably be attributed to the U-bet (milk powder and/or whey protein are ingredients in the syrup, along with sugar and cocoa powder). Anyway, going on at length about the ingredients in Shopsin's food is sort of against the point of the place, so just go drink it, and be kind.

3. **Classic Coffee Shop**

56 Hester St., nr. Ludlow St.; 917-685-3306

At this excellent luncheonette, you can have a bagel in peace and feel transported to decades earlier, when the place first opened. In keeping, the egg creams are priced at \$2 per cup — it's up there with a dollar bag of Hong Kong cakes for the best cut-rate dessert in the city. There's U-bet, a little milk, and a good amount of (canned) seltzer, so this one's particularly refreshing. (Note the shop is closed on weekends.)

4. **Katz's**

205 E. Houston St., at Ludlow St.; 212-254-2246

You already know **Katz's setting is iconic**; what of its maker? We've seen him, and we're believers. The counter guy uses about an inch of U-bet, then adds whole milk, and then seltzer from a fountain — a stir, some seltzer, a stir. It's creamy, but shot through entirely with bubbles. Good for a slower night at Katz's, maybe after a long post-dinner walk. (Go to the counter line on the right, **where you get the hot dogs**.)

5. **Eisenberg's Sandwich Shop**

174 Fifth Ave., nr. 22nd St.; 212-675-5096

This 1929-opened lunch counter's staffers are egg-cream artists who get a lot of practice. On a recent weekday, everyone surrounding us had one, including a mother-and-daughter pair out celebrating her 10th birthday. ("I used to come drink egg creams here when I was pregnant," the mother said, which practically felt scripted.) They tip toward the creamy end of the refreshing-to-creamy spectrum, owing to heavier-than-average pours of (almost-icy-cold) milk.

Honorable Mentions

Anopoli Ice Cream Parlor

6920 Third Ave., nr. Ovington Ave., Bay Ridge; 718-748-3863

A pervasive sparkling bite, courtesy ace stirring technique and seltzer from a silver-fountain tap; a good amount of froth; and the way the chocolate syrup streaked across the bottom of the elementary-school-style plastic cup. Plus: listening in on the Bay Ridge gossip.

Brooklyn Farmacy & Soda Fountain

513 Henry St., at Sackett St., Carroll Gardens; 718-522-6260

Brooklyn Farmacy's owners' egg-cream recipe is documented in their [book](#). Theirs is one of those rare, especially beautiful egg creams with a pretty solid-white top (they kind of look like cappuccinos). Their method is uncommon, though not unheard of: adding very cold seltzer to a couple of fingers of very cold whole milk to create a head *before* the chocolate-syrup addition. (Most places go chocolate-milk-seltzer.) Very light, very refreshing — kind of like a chocolate Pellegrino.

Joe Jr. Restaurant

167 Third Ave., at 15th St.; 212-473-5150

A great diner option that, like Eisenberg's, is heavy on the milk and stirred vigorously to create a nice head of froth that doesn't last long, but leaves a very nice, charged chocolaty treat. One of the best egg creams we've had at a diner; at some, employees can be too rushed to invest the time to make a good version.

Ray's Candy Store

113 Ave. A, nr. 7th St.; no phone

Ray's has nontraditional flavors (unlike virtually everywhere else in the city, there's more than vanilla and chocolate — coffee, mango, etc.). Still, especially if it's your first egg cream, go for chocolate: four pumps of syrup into a paper cup, plus a little milk that's been chilling in a bucket of ice, stirred with a cocktail spoon while adding seltzer. Drink quickly, because the froth bubbles away quickly. It's not unlike Gem Spa's (whose sign declares itself to be the "World's Best"), but we think Ray's is the winner in that matchup.

Russ & Daughters Cafe

127 Orchard St., nr. Delancey St.; 212-475-4881

Russ & Daughters' restaurant may be fancy, but its egg cream is the recognizable classic: U-bet, milk, and slow-poured seltzer from the tap, added in spurts. It's lightly bubbly, and (like many good egg creams) the chocolate syrup isn't 100 percent incorporated — which means an occasional straw-sucked sip is delightfully heavy on chocolate. P.S.: You can get them at the [Houston Street shop](#), too.