

The Unspoken Leader of the Chicken Sandwich World

By Dominic DeSantis

August 12th, 2019, a day that will forever be known as the day of divide. Only a few other historical events have been known to cause a divide much like this; but this event was different. On that August day, Popeyes Louisiana kitchen released their newest product, the chicken sandwich. This was unheard of! Up until this point, Chick-fil-A was the leader in the chicken sandwich game. No one knew how to react to this. People took to the internet in swarms and rushed to their local Popeyes to see if it was comparable. This is when you started to see the divide in the nation. Many of those who used to stand on guard in support of Chick-fil-A began to falter in their loyalty. It seemed to be an even split between these two restaurants, but are there only two restaurants? For long I thought this was the case, then I committed to Loyola University of Maryland. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, I walked the halls of this campus for the first few weeks trying to acclimate and understand how things go in Baltimore.

One night freshman year when the dining hall was closed, I did what most people my age do when this happens—I opened Door Dash. I come from outside of Philadelphia and to me food was simple. If you're hungry at night, you Door Dash one of three things: Wawa, Cheesesteak, or Chick-fil-A. As I began browsing through the selections that were available, I noticed that I was not home anymore. I scrolled through in utter disgust as it was saying things like, "5.99 delivery fee" for Chick-fil-A or, "60-minute delivery time & 5.99 delivery fee" for Wawa. This was unheard of! I surely was not going to get one of the so-called "cheesesteaks" that I saw—that would be profoundly against my Philadelphian roots. For long I suffered. I lost all hope in the Door Dash scene in Baltimore and when I was hungry at night, I couldn't do anything about it. It wasn't until later that I realized everything was going to be okay.

Fast forward until beginning of sophomore year. I had just gotten back to school and was overwhelmed with joy to see all my friends again. I also had more amazing news coming my way. Football season was starting up and my Eagles were going to take this year with vengeance. I optimistically awaited the start of the season (a little too optimistically seeing how we played this season but that's beside the fact). First Sunday of the season and we all gathered to watch the game. Naturally we became hungry cheering for our teams, but none of us were willing to rise from the couch in our overly superstitious unwashed "lucky" jerseys and colorful pants to go cook. We did what most in our situation would do—we opened Door Dash. I remembered the disappointment that I received that year, and I didn't bother opening the app. I'm in college, I can't afford a 5.99 delivery fee just to be disappointed. Then someone shouted out a name none of us had heard before, "**BRD**." We figured why not, the Eagles just got into the RedZone and the chances of me getting out of my seat now where next to nothing. We ordered BRD that Sunday and I still thank my lucky stars we did. As a proud supporter of the Chick-fil-A family, I hated to make that conversion, but it is what needed to be done. BRD wasn't in some mere debate between Popeyes or Chick-fil-A, no, they were in a league of their own. One that is so elite and held to such a high praise you won't see BRD commercials or billboards in the same sense you won't see that for Lamborghini either; they are simply too good for public advertising. This hidden gem, nay, diamond in the rough, is exclusive to those who take the leap of faith and make the courageous decision that my friends and I did that fateful Sunday.



Neon BRD sign that hangs outside of the store



What exactly makes a good chicken sandwich? There are four major components that come together to make a great chicken sandwich. First is the bun. For any great architectural masterpiece, the foundation is the key to making sure the creation can hold its form, and BRD spared no expense when sourcing their buns. This is not your run-of-the-mill, average bun that you find when you go to any fast-food restaurant where it has that dry, tasteless presence. Standard flour buns serve the purpose of transporting the chicken and don't contribute anything besides keeping all the components together. BRD's potato-based buns aren't styled to be a mode of transportation for the chicken, but instead they contribute flavor to the sandwich. Its potato base makes the bun keep its form and helps conjoin all the surrounding flavors in a perfect harmony. The next component is the most overlooked component of any great sandwich, coleslaw. Most restaurants get lazy with this and merely throw two pickles on the bun and call it a day, but coleslaw is the X factor that keeps you coming back for more. Sandwiches are heavy food and for most can be a one and done; however, coleslaw eliminates that weight—using a perfect blend of vegetables and vinaigrette to make the coleslaw as refreshment in the middle of the sandwich. Coleslaw acts as that ocean wave overtaking your taste buds giving them a break from the hot sensation much like that of a July sun. Coleslaw delivers you that crisp timeout, to make sure your taste buds are ready for round two that is the next bite. The third component of a perfect chicken sandwich is the sauce. The sauce is an incredible blend of sauces and spices making it taste like the infamous Big Mac Sauce on steroids. The sauce is flavorful and pivotal in this sandwich, and it works in a gorgeous unison with the saliva it induces. It will coat your mouth in this heavenly blend that will bring you so much joy you won't want to take a sip of soda in fear it will wash away the taste. Finally, the last and most important component to the masterpiece that is a BRD Chicken Sandwich, the chicken. This isn't a patty that you see everywhere else you go; no, these are tenders that make up the chicken. Bringing along those fond childhood memories we all have growing up of eating chicken tenders. BRD employees place the perfect number of tenders on each sandwich using their professional judgement to determine, in that very moment, what the perfect ratio of bread and chicken will be on each sandwich. These ten-

ders aren't like those seen at Royal Farms, which every Loyola student has at one point or another been disappointed by. These are a chef-d'oeuvre. Breading that delivers a crunch but doesn't force you to chew for an eternity after every bite; strips that release these pockets of juicy flavorful goodness only similar to that of a jelly donut.

The BRD chicken sandwich is a harmonious combination of all these great individual pieces. Other restaurants cut corners when they created their sandwich: only having pickles, bad sauce, lousy bun, or worst of all, dry chicken. BRD is the only restaurant serving a chicken sandwich that was able to perfect each and every category making it surpass the competition with flying colors. Being that there are only two BRD's in the world, we are beyond blessed to be able to say we have them in our own Loyola backyard. To those members of the Loyola community who have yet to be blessed with trying BRD, I would like to say, "you're welcome" (for informing you of this). When you take your first bite of their beautifully crafted sandwich, you are taking an oath to do your part forward and inform the next generation of "The Unspoken Leader of the Chicken Sandwich World." One day we as a community will give BRD the national spotlight it deserves, but for now let us go forth and inform friends and family about this hidden gem.



The most notable sandwich BRD sells, The B'MORE