

Which Wich Restaurant Review

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BUSINESS MANAGER

Over the summer in San Diego, I discovered the best sub sandwich chain restaurant. I had never seen one of those in Illinois, so I assumed it was a regional specific restaurant, like White Castle is to the Midwest. Once back in Illinois, my craving for a sub sparked my curiosity. After some quick searching, I found that they do exist outside of the West Coast. My newly found favorite sub sandwich chain is Which Wich.

After a quick ride on the Green Line and hopping on the Red Line to stop at Lake, I found the Chicago Which Wich, right at the exit from the basement of shopping center Block Thirty Seven. Some people might know the place better for the Disney store right next door.

At Which Wich, the customer decides what ingredients go on their sandwich, but in a non-traditional way. Instead of telling the employee what to put on the sub, the hungry customer fills out an extensive checklist of ingredients and options that they want on the sub. This checklist is completed on a brown paper bag with all the options printed on it. Instead of telling the employees what to put on the sub, there is a table with markers to fill out the bag, which once completed is given to the cashier. Upon the order being fulfilled, the bag then doubles as a sub sleeve to carry around the sandwich.

There are the standard ingredients like lettuce, tomatoes, and pickles, but then there are unusual options, like dried cranber-

ries, house chips, and candied walnuts. Along with that there are 10 types of cheeses to pick from, 9 sauce, 4 mustard, 4 mayo, and 6 dressing varieties, 3 onion types, 7 oils and spices, and the option for double meat, bacon, sliced egg, and avocado. There is an option for every possible customization that could be thought of and more.

On top of all these choices, there is still the meat choice, or lack thereof. There are 10 standard different varieties of meat to choose from, each with their own bag, and on each bag, there are sub-choices of different combinations of meat to pick from. Plus, there is a Sub of the Month bag, usually featuring an exotic sub based on some international food. However, this sub has limited options, sometimes none at all. For small children, a regular sub might not be appetizing, so they offer a PB & J sandwich.

Other than the obvious advantage where the sub is ultra-customizable, this checklist method minimizes possible miscommunication between the customer and employee. Plus, the process is very speedy, because the sub maker does not have to keep asking what to put on the sub. However, speed is not the emphasis, so for those with a fast paced lifestyle, Jimmy Johns would probably be better.

Compared to subway, these subs are bigger, include more meat, and have more flavors. However, Which Wich does not have as many choices of bread, featuring only white and wheat. The extra ingredients easily make up for the fewer types of bread, but if you cannot live without Italian Herbs & Cheese then Which Wich is not for you.

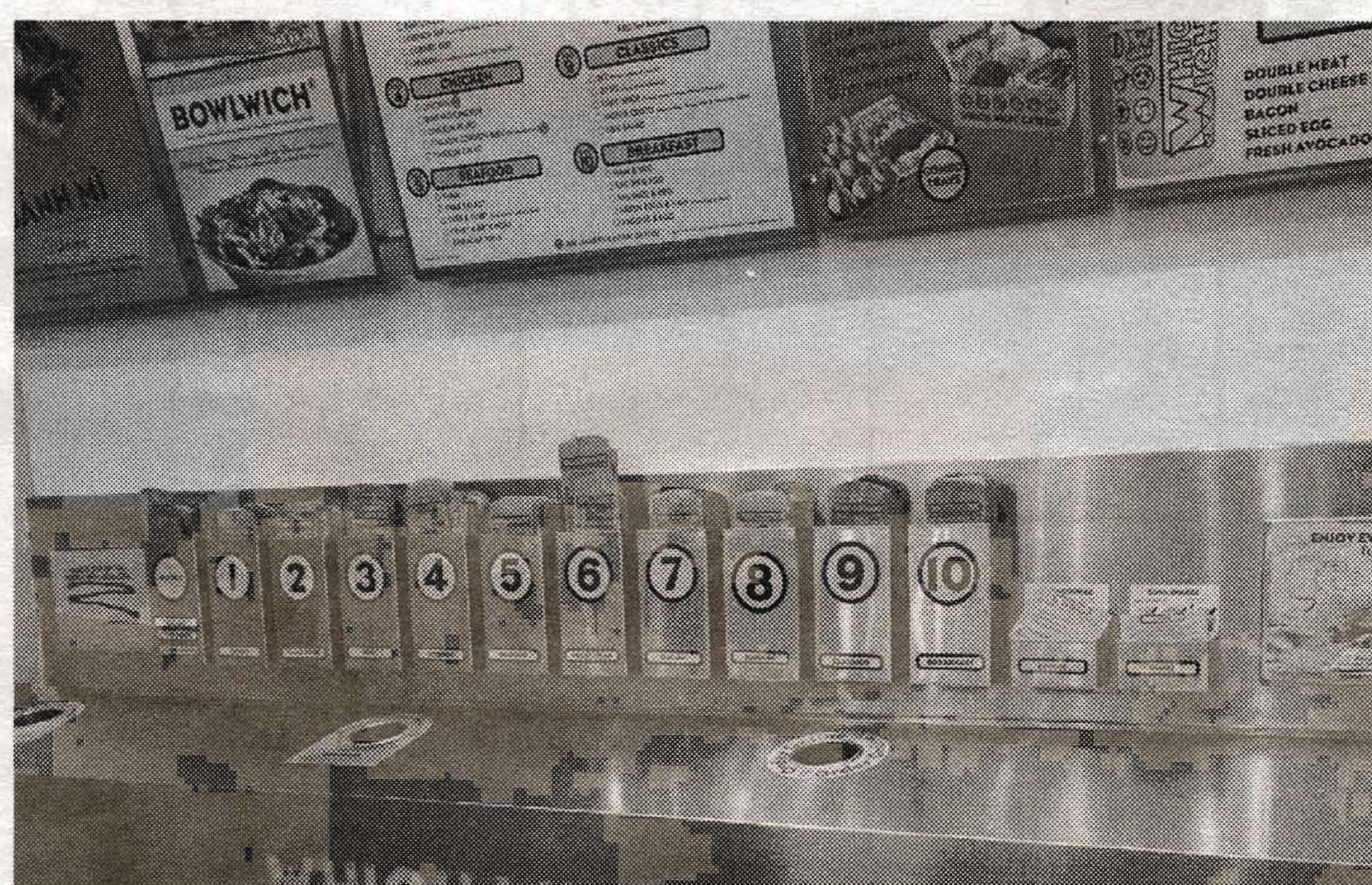
For drinks, they have a refrigerator with some specialty beverages, plus a soda machine for unlimited refills. If you want something a bit more filling to drink, they also offer milkshakes, that—in the spirit of Which Wich—are customizable. For dessert, they offer cookies, Wich krispies (rice crispy treats), brownies, and ice cream cookie sandwiches.

While the food is amazing, the atmosphere of Which Wich is surprisingly nice. They all feature a good selection of music that they call Which Wich radio. The interior is modern styled without looking industrial, with glass, stainless steel, white, black, and yellow. Plus there is an art wall where customers can hang their sketches done on the back of the checklist brown paper bags.

There is one downside to Which Wich, which only applies to the Chicago franchise. The ones in California all had a friendly staff and quick service, but the Chicago one was understaffed with sluggish workers. They did not mess up anything on my order, but they were preoccupied with something else so it took a while to get on my order even though I was the only person ordering anything.

If you want a filling sub, and don't mind paying a bit more than \$5, then Which Wich is worth trying. There are so many options that whatever mood for food you are in, Which Wich has you covered.

Which Wich
108 N State St #002
Chicago, IL 60602
Scale (1-10): Redefining the sandwich game
Cost: \$7-10 depending on options
Oddities: Too many choices (a good thing)



Photos by Kyle Stanevich