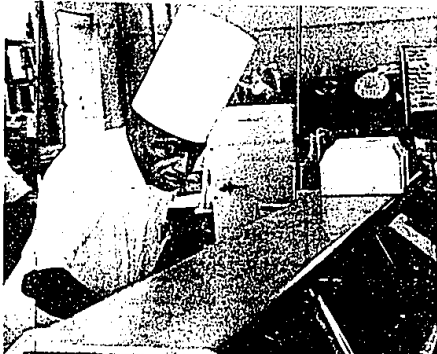


Thursday, February 10, 1983 O&E

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Deacon Burton keeps the Southern chicken frying Monday through Friday at his Burton's Grill in suburban Atlanta. But don't bother stopping by on weekends — Burton reserves that time for fishing.

Down-home dinin' Atlanta offers culinary delights — Deep-South style

What follows is an insider's restaurant tour of Atlanta: Part One.

ATLANTA — You'll never get this tour of Atlanta, unless you have an insider like Bill Schemmel to show you around. Bill, a friend and fellow travel writer, is the restaurant critic for Atlanta Magazine.

If you have taken a business trip to this southeastern hub city, or passed through on your way down Interstate-75 to Florida, you have probably seen the high-rise center of town focused on the Peachtree Center.

But have you ever had down-home Southern cooking at Deacon Burton's or Mary Mac's, or a running commentary on Atlanta's restaurant scene while driving north up Peachtree Road to the grand homes and wonderful shops near Lenox Square? Lunch for three at Burton's, plus dinner for three at Mary Mac's Tea Room, totaled less than \$25.

Burton's Grill is in Inman Park, at the corner of Hurt Street and Edgewood Avenue. MARTA, Atlanta's pioneering new rapid rail system, stops at this corner, five minutes from downtown, or you can drive it in 10 minutes on Edgewood.

This is the kind of place you would never walk in



1-of-a-kind traveler
Iris Jones
contributing travel editor



Bill Schemmel (left) restaurant critic for Atlanta Magazine, knows where to get Atlanta's finest and most inexpensive — down-home Southern cooking.

off the street to explore, a single sign over the corner door and two signs that read Fried Chicken on the old brown brick on either side of the door. Inman Park was Atlanta's first grand turn-of-the-century suburb, but it became a slum before being born again in the 1960s.

This corner cafe looks like it belongs in an old area. You've seen a hundred doorways like it in Detroit, but this is a strictly Atlanta experience.

THE PEOPLE who crowd the counter and the tiny tables are young and old, black and white, a few in suits, most in workmen's caps. You can eat it here or take it out, but either way you get in line and the line moves fast.

Deacon Burton is the black man in the tall white hat; he calls all the women who work for him "mama." He serves fried chicken every day, but there are always other meals on the menu. Today it's meat loaf and chicken stew, but it sometimes gets as exotic as pigs' ears, chitlins or neck bones.

You get one meat and two choices from the vegetable list for \$1.75. 25 cents extra for coffee, another 40 cents for the fruit cobbler that always seems to sweeten the end of the hot line. The vegetable list includes black-eyed peas, macaroni and cheese, turnip greens, rice.

Burton's is open from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Deacon goes fishing on weekends.

If that's a little too down-home for you, try the small restaurants and pubs in nearby Virginia Highlands or Mary Mac's Tea Room on Ponce de Leon.

Virginia Highlands is the Greenwich Village of Atlanta, with a mixed crowd of every age, color and sexual preference on the streets that focus

around Virginia and North Highland, just north of Inman Park. They have Sunday brunch at Theda's, jazz and food at Walter Mitty's.

The most famous tavern in Atlanta is at North Avenue near North Highland: Manuel's, where politician Manual Malof displays autographed photographs of John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter on the walls near the long, polished mahogany bar.

You'll find Mary Mac's Tea Room at 229 Ponce de Leon. It may once have been a storefront like Deacon Burton's, the small tables crowded between close walls and a window overlooking Ponce de Leon, but the shirt-sleeved crowds pushed the wall back through a second, third and fourth doorway to the skyline of Atlanta that now mingles the distant wall.

They come in suits and slacks and dresses, overalls, families, retirees, young lovers, secretaries, id eat the Southern cooking and drink from the bar. It's the kind of place you could take either your grandmother or your date.

You'll find the usual steak or broiled fish on the right side of the menu, along with "fried" quality mushroom rice," but most folks like the left side, the Southern side. Choose one meat from section one — roast beef, chicken fried steak, chicken pan-fry, etc. — and either two or four servings from section two. Section two includes everything from rice, squash, turnip greens and pickled beets to chicken dressing, boiled or baked custard, cherry cheese dip and ice cream.

Next week: A restaurant critic does a running commentary up Peachtree Street to Lenox Square.

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