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Iskra Restaurant Lights Up the City

By Olivia Bagnall

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The new bright and airy Iskra — which means 'spark' — on Ulitsa Pokrovka fills up quickly with a hip and mostly young lunchtime crowd looking for healthy fast food.

Brunchers, lunchers, drinkers and health fanatics will love the newest addition to Pokrovka — Iskra. This casual eatery and bar is the brainchild of project Stay Hungry, Moscow's first supper club and the driving force behind the recent installation of a number of new restaurants at Danilovsky Market. Iskra is the first independent restaurant venture from the Stay Hungry team who have combined their many years of cooking experience to create a fresh, healthy and innovative menu that pays homage to all things chicken.

Iskra is a cool mix between high-class dining and fast food. The food is high quality and fresh, and the kitchen rapidly churns out orders — you even order and pay at the counter before sitting down. Bare walls, high ceilings and one large front-facing window combine for a chic and modern space that matches the menu concept.

Chicken lovers will adore Iskra. Free range hens and their eggs feature in almost every dish. For breakfast — which is served all day — try the scrambled eggs with chopped sun-dried

tomatoes on fresh ciabatta, the Asian-style omelette or blue cheese and chicken sandwich. Salads are grain-based and colorful. Must-tries are the smoked chicken salad and the "bird seed" salad with quinoa, bulgur wheat, millet, dried cranberries, dried cherries and roasted sunflower seeds. For the hungrier diner, the star of the menu is the roast chicken that you can watch slowly browning and crisping behind the bar. A quarter chicken is 450 rubles and arrives with fries, salad and two sauces; a whole one is 1,000 rubles more.



Iskra

There is a small, intimate bar tucked away in the basement of the cafe — open in the evening and is fully stocked with beer, liquor and wine. The Iskra bar menu on the dining floor may be small but packs a punch. They have dark and light beers, red and white wines and a selection of four sophisticated cocktails that come in at 400 rubles. They recommend their French 75, a mix of brandy, sparkling wine and cider.

The venue is small with room for 25 diners, so arrive early for weekend brunch in order to snag a table. However, the kitchen prepares food quickly and diners chow down — those waiting for a table are swiftly rewarded.

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