

Moscow Restaurants: Tuck Into a Nutria Burger at Krasnodar Bistro

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November 21, 2016



Kholikberdiyev brings Cossack cuisine to Moscow diners at Krasnodar Bistro. **Krasnodar Bistro**

Krasnodar Bistro is the latest addition to the growing empire of butcher-turned restaurateur Tahir Kholikberdiyev, the brains and brawn behind meat-lover's paradise Yuzhane and Rebro Adama, a stall at the trendy Danilovsky Market.

The new eatery on upmarket Bolshaya Dmitrovka is packed with the southern specialties of Kholikberdiyev's home region, some of them with an interesting twist.

The restaurant's meat comes from Tahir's full cycle meat farm in the Krasnodar region, where cows are grown, butchered and then served at a restaurant called Skotina (Cattle). Krasnodar region is also known as Kuban, the home of Kuban Cossacks. With this opening, Kholikberdiyev has decided that it's about time for the hearty Cossack cuisine to make its mark on Moscow's gastronomic scene.

Start with surprising tomato salad that includes popcorn, cheese and corn oil (390 rubles). Then move on to the Kuban fish pie (490 rubles) which looks something like a hybrid of a French quiche and a lamb kebab. It's served with plum candy that melts in your mouth and feijoa-pineapple guava paste (690 rubles).

The biggest surprise on the menu is nutria, also known as river rat or coypu. Although nutria originated in South America, the whiskered mammal has spread all over the world and today, it is mostly bred for its fur. In Russia's South, nutria meat, which shares a taste similar to that of rabbit, has been popular for a long time.

Kholikberdiyev has made the bold decision to introduce it to Moscow's foodies, or at least those who aren't afraid of the word "rat". At Krasnodar Bistro you can try nutria in a burger (550 rubles), fried dumplings (390 rubles), hot dogs (350 rubles) or even in "golubtsi" — stuffed cabbage and vine leaves (550 rubles).

Kuban food goes down a treat with the "Cossack" craft beer from Ant Brewery in Krasnodar (280 rubles). Or if you are feeling adventurous, try the traditional Russian bread wine or "polugar," served with garlic and pepper (620 rubles) or rye (740 rubles).

Original url:

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