

Why I prefer to eat at a mom and pop restaurant rather than a national chain

By: Jeffrey J. Atto
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When given the choice, I always opt for a locally owned restaurant over a national chain. Here are the reasons which influence my decision:

1. I enjoy items which are colloquial, local, or regional in nature. If I am going to Kentucky, for example, I do not want to dine at Burger King or P.F. McChang's, rather at a restaurant whose cuisine reflects the surrounding culture. I do not enjoy seeing the same damn chains in every city that I go to. It makes these cities seem like cookie-cutter, homogenized, empty, and boring places.
2. I believe that the quality of the ingredients used in national chains is inferior to that used by local chains. I used to work at a national chain restaurant, when I was in high school. All of the food in this particular restaurant was shipped from the corporate supply warehouse, which mandates (of course) that all food produced by the franchises is to be identical. This means more preserved food, less fresh food, less nutritious food, less delicious food. It seems to me that local chains use more local suppliers and local farmers, which would naturally be more nutritious (i.e. less time in a truck, traveling across the country or around the world), higher quality food.
3. I own a small business, and many of my family members own small businesses. Out of sheer principle, as well as out of self-preservation, I like to support small businesses in the way that my clients support me. My clients choose to send business my way rather than using my ill-equipped, poorly-trained, and otherwise overpriced national competition.
4. I prefer the ambiance in a local mom & pop restaurant over the manufactured ambiance in a national chain. This could be anything from the art on the walls (say, made by a local artist vs. some generic print), the music that is playing, lighting, and other design influences.

I am going to stop here and admit that I stole the next few items from the article ["Why You Should Shop at Mom and Pop Stores"](#).

5. Local Businesses Provide Access to Business Owners: When you shop or dine at a locally owned business, you usually get to meet and to know the owners. The owners have much more of stake in the success or failure of their businesses than even the head manager of a national chain. Local owners will hear your complaints and act on them.
6. Local Owners Reward Patronage: Local owners do not need to resort to "frequent buyer" promotions or other promotions. They know their clientèle and they reward it. When was the last time you walked into a Starbucks, ordered a cup of coffee, and been told by the barista "no charge"?
7. Local Owners are more Likely to Support Your Business: Local business owners are far more likely to adopt an "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine" approach. Local owners have symbiotic relationships with one another. If you stop at a locally owned sandwich shop for lunch, that shop owner is going to be much more likely to use your services, whatever they may be.

8. Local Owners can become Your Friends: When I visit my French cafe, I am visiting business owners who were strangers a year ago but who are now my friends. I have tried to bring a spirit of friendship to national chains as well, but the staff never last long enough for me to get to know them.
9. Mom and Pop stores can be a lot of fun! They have more of a tendency to offer unique items... frequently made by local artisans. They're also much more helpful when it comes to special orders. They go out of their way to help you find exactly what you're looking for and want.
10. There are a lot of reasons to demonize big box stores. They take money out of the local community. They are a visual blight on the land. They destroy a community's look and feel. I would much rather shop in a locally owned business than in a national chain.

This is why I will go out of my way to support mom and pop restaurants. I believe that the best way to vote your mind is with your wallet. "Put your money where your mouth is" in action...! Food from privately owned, locally owned mom and pop restaurants is consistently of higher quality, you receive better service, and a better overall experience.

Source: <http://www.attoz.com/mom&pop.htm>