



Station 1 Hot Wings Cafe is where starting a gastronomical fire is welcomed by many.

Sound the alarms! Roll out the hoses! Hampton Roads warmly welcomes its first Station 1 Hot Wings Café, specializing in Buffalo-style Hot Wings and the legendary Philly Cheese Steak Sandwich.

Boys young and old, will love the Firehouse motif, complete with fireman's hat, coat and boots. Knives clang on the metal grill, as steak and onions sizzle, sending puffs of mouth-watering aromas into the café. Hosts take orders and yell "fire in the hole!" as the staff rushes to deliver fast, friendly service.

Owners, Beniamino Llorens along with daughter and son-in-law, Cynthia and Rory Techeira, recently opened Station 1 in Virginia Beach, after visiting one in Georgia. Originally from Philadelphia, the family was well acquainted with the "authentic" Philly Cheese Steak Sandwich, and was impressed with Station 1's version, called the *Hook & Ladder*.

Get Hooked on the Hook & Ladder

What exactly is an "authentic" cheese steak, you ask? Well, quite simply, it is grilled, thinly-sliced steak on a steak roll with cheese, grilled onions and hot or sweet peppers, as you wish. When I say cheese, I mean either American cheese, or Cheese Whiz. No other cheese is acceptable. When I say steak roll, I mean an Amoroso roll, baked only in Philadelphia. And when I say hot or sweet peppers, I mean hot or sweet cherry peppers.

The Amoroso roll is the most difficult ingredient to provide locally. It must be imported from Philly. Many have tried to replicate the famed Amoroso roll, but none have succeeded. Their recipe is a closely guarded secret. There are a few shops that have tried recreating the cheese steak sans Amoroso roll, but most so-called Philly-style cheese steaks around here fall short.

Firehouse Wings come prepared several different ways, including Lemon Pepper, Sweet & Sour and Teriyaki, with Honey Bar-B-Que and Hot Wings tied for the lead.

Hot wings come 4 ways, with varying degrees of heat. There's *Water Down* (Mild,) *Back Drafts* (Hot,) *3 Alarm Blaze*

(Extreme) and *Inferno* (Major Heat.) We tried all the above, and after some kicking and screaming, decided not to exceed the *3 Alarm Blaze* in the future. Die-hard heat-seekers can kick it up a notch by

requesting a sauce called *Ridiculous* be added to your *Inferno*. But, you have to sign a waiver first! Cynthia calls this a "total esophagus burn!" FYI, 90% of the waivers signed at Station 1 are by women! You go girls!

Interestingly, even after we tried several very hot sauces, our mouths never went numb! The numbing factor is paramount when eating hot, spicy food. After the initial zing, you do

want your buds to eventually calm down enough to enjoy the next bite. Station 1 keeps their sauce recipe a secret, though we know the Habanera is the main culprit. Wings are available in various quantities from 10 pieces for \$5.50 up to 200 pieces for \$76.50.

With 10 wings, fries and a drink, The Fireman's Special is the best-seller on the lunchtime menu at \$5.50 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The menu also features *The Chicago Spark* double cheeseburger (\$5.95), a *Kickin' Chicken* sandwich at (\$5.65) and some nice salads. All sandwiches come with skin-backed, seasoned steak fries, the kids menu starts at \$1.99, and a fried cheesecake dessert called a *Xango*, is an awesome ending!

Committed to community and thankful for those who serve it, Station 1 Hot Wings Café is an active sponsor of Rescue 4 and St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children. A percentage of their monthly earnings is donated to their local fire department, and Firemen, Rescue and Police officers receive a 20% discount.

Station 1 Hot Wings Café is located at 5193 Shore Drive, Suite 108 in Virginia Beach. Hours of operation are Monday thru Thursday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Delivery area is limited, phone (757) 460-7900 for more information.



Renee Newby is a freelance writer and international cuisine fan