

Soul food favorites keep Meta's customers coming back

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Almeta Poole knows what her customers want when they come through the doors of her restaurant. Poole, who doubles as owner and chef of Meta's, likes to know each of her customers' culinary preferences down to the drink order.

"I try to know all of my customers, and the ones that come back constantly. I try to know their names and how they like their food (cooked). This is what the line servers focus on - knowing the customer and making them feel at home," said Poole, who also runs Dudley's Cafe in Kernersville.

Poole describes her menu as "true Southern cuisine" dished out in a cafeteria-style setting. Poole hand-picks most of the food from the vegetables, fruits and meats, which she promises are brought in fresh



Photo by Courtney Gaillard

Owner Almeta Poole cooks nearly all the food that is served at Meta's.

daily.

"Our meals and our veggies do not have sodium and the artificial preservatives that other restaurants have because it's all fresh. A lot of people think that because it's Southern food that it's fattening," Poole said.

Located on the bottom floor of the Register of Deeds building, Meta's has been at its downtown location on Third Street for almost nine years. A former employee of the federal government, Poole operated a catering business called Vimeta's for three years before opening the restaurant. Poole

dropped the Vi - named for her partner at the time, Vina Johnson - when Poole started the restaurant. Poole still caters events upon request.

Beef tips, salmon patties, fresh fish, ribs, cube steak, baked and fried chicken, and pork chops are offered every day. Meta's also boasts an array of homemade cakes, including strawberry, lemon, pound, Oreo and coconut. Pies, cobblers, puddings and specialty breads all made with real butter also make the dessert menu.

"I don't consider it to be soul food for black people (only). I think of it as soul food for all types of souls, whether they are black, green, purple or whatever... (The term 'soul food') that's just an old Southern tradition," Poole said.

Ask Poole what her signature dish is on the menu and she will tell you "everything."

"Everything is prepared with the interest of the customer in mind and that means keeping each individual happy," Poole said.

Lunchgoers can expect to pay around \$5 for a meal with the price increasing \$1.25 after 3 p.m. for dinner.

Poole said she will extend the restaurant's hours of operations during the National Black Theatre Festival to accommodate festival performances and attendees.

Location: 102 W. 3rd Street
(adjacent to the Forsyth County
Sheriff's Office)

Hours: Monday-Friday from 11
a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sunday 12-4 p.m. (Hours
will be extended during festival.)

Price range: from \$5.99

Phone number: 750-4811



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