

East Village's Secret Cheese Griller

Amateur grilled cheese sandwich maker an 'underground' sensation

By [Jillian Scharr](#) | Monday, Aug 2, 2010 | Updated 2:30 PM EDT



He operates out of an East Village apartment, takes orders via text message, and meets his customers on street corners. And allegedly he makes the best grilled cheese sandwich in the city.

"Bread. Butter. Cheese." is an unlicensed grilled cheese sandwich business, operated by a man who prefers to be identified only as "Ronnie" because his clientele's rapid increase makes him fear a Health Department investigation.

"I feel like a drug dealer because I'm handing people a paper bag and they're handing me cash," Ronnie told [the New York Post](#). His sandwiches cost \$5 to \$7, depending on the type of cheese and bread and the extra ingredients.

Customers in the know text their orders to Ronnie, who then grills the cheese sandwiches at his brother's apartment in the East Village. He used to deliver, but no longer has the time.

Ronnie cooks the sandwiches from his brother's apartment in the East Village, and customers pick up the sandwiches from the apartment, the *Post* reports. He used to deliver, but no longer has the time. He grills over 40 sandwiches a day, he told the *Post*, and his [Facebook page](#), "Bread. Butter. Cheese." has just under 2,000 fans.

He used to grill sandwiches for just a few friends, but as his fame grew so did his business.

"It's not cool with the Department of Health... I don't know how much longer I want to do it because I'm living in fear," Ronnie told the *Post*. "It would be such a stupid thing to get in trouble for."

His customers might disagree. Ronnie's trick is to grill the sandwiches in a pan with unsalted butter, then wrap them in tinfoil and bake them at 500 degrees in the oven to achieve that extra crispy crunch, he told the *Post*.

"The sound the sandwich makes when you bite into it is incredible," customer [Lia Strassler](#) told the *Post*. "There's a crispy buttered top, and then the bread is soft and the cheese strings out. It's better than any grilled cheese my mom ever made."

Ronnie is not the city's first surreptitious sandwich salesman.

A [Brooklyn](#) native who sells lobster rolls for below-market prices and calls himself "Dr. Claw" is also ducking federal regulation. The [Brooklyn Paper reported on him in May](#), and Ronnie touted his rolls last week on his [Facebook](#) page.

Original article appeared at:

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/East-Villages-Secret-Cheese-Dealer-99764119.html>