

The Legions of Frozen Yogurt Push East

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According to Herodotus, even the mighty armies of the Greek and Persian empires took the winter off from warfare. But not the forces of frozen yogurt.

Since the Korean chain Red Mango opened a store directly across from California-based Pinkberry in Greenwich Village in December, New York has become the second major battleground for the restyled, fluffed up, fruit-topped new wave of frozen yogurt.

'I'd call it a quiet face-off on Bleecker Street,' said Dan Kim, Red Mango's president for North America. Since 2006, Pinkberry has opened nine stores in New York, Red Mango has opened four, and competitors like Flurt, Berrywild and Yolato are scrambling to stay in the game.

California is already gripped by tribal conflicts among Pinkberry partisans, Red Mango loyalists, and the fans of Yogurt World, a San Diego emporium where multiple flavors of yogurt and hundreds of toppings are available via self-serve: patrons wander around with an empty bowl and a wad of cash. 'God must have come down and created this place Himself,' wrote one feverish poster on yelp.com, the online city-guide site that has become an Internet hub for frozen-yogurt enthusiasts. (Yogurt World alone has about 200 reviews.)

Most of these new yogurt joints, whether on the West or East Coast, are based on a simple formula of fresh fruit toppings on a consciously tart, decidedly yogurt-flavor creamy swirl that drives certain people to distraction.

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