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# East Village Chinese Restaurants Report Vandalism and Harassment Amid Coronavirus Pandemic

Plus, nearly 2,000 NYC restaurants and bars laid off almost 70,000 people in the past week — and more intel

by **Erika Adams** | Mar 26, 2020, 11:21am EDT



Hunan Slurp's dining room | Hunan Slurp [Official]

Popular East Village Chinese restaurants report acts of vandalism and attempted robbery after Trump calls COVID-19 the “Chinese virus”

Chinese restaurants in the East Village have been suffering from escalating acts of vandalism and harassment amid the pandemic, **Bedford and Bowery** reports. **Gem Bing Shop** at St. Marks Place recently had street signage destroyed, and **Hunan Slurp** said that a man attempted to rob one of their employees out delivering food. A third restaurant reported that someone disguised as a delivery person tried to steal from its basement, according to the publication.

Gem Bing Shop's founder Xiaoyu Gu tells Bedford and Bowery that the actions may be connected to President Trump's recent racist references to COVID-19 as the "Chinese Virus." The president finally acknowledged that he would quit using the term **earlier this week**, after repeating the stigmatizing words on social media and in press interviews for days.

On Monday, March 23, New York's attorney general Letitia James **launched** a hotline for residents to report hate crimes and discrimination after a rise in reports of anti-Asian harassment across the state. Information provided over the hotline could lead to civil investigations.

Chinatowns in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens have borne the brunt of the pandemic's assault on restaurants in the city. These businesses were the first to experience steep sales drop-offs and move to temporary closures as news of the virus in Wuhan, China caused customers to avoid those restaurants, even as there was no evidence that Chinese restaurants were unsafe. The first known case of COVID-19 found in New York City stemmed from a person who had previously traveled to Iran.

Survey of nearly 2,000 NYC restaurants shows close to 70,000 people laid off  
The NYC Hospitality Alliance, a trade group that represents restaurant and bar owners in the city, released a survey on Wednesday, March 25 detailing the extent of the past week's mass industry layoffs. In the survey, 1,870 restaurants, bars, and nightclubs reported laying off or furloughing 67,650 employees in the five days since the state mandated that those businesses could only do takeout and delivery. But that number doesn't include all NYC restaurants and bars. According to the **Department of Health**, the city has some 27,000 restaurants, employing **an estimated 320,000 people** total.

Andrew Rigie, the executive director of the Alliance, calls the number "devastating," and says that new government policies must be enacted swiftly to counteract the extreme blow to the industry's economy. The group is lobbying local government to put a cap on delivery fees, get pandemic coverage added to business interruption insurance policies, and more.

Across the U.S., over three million people filed for unemployment benefits last week, according to the **Department of Labor**. That's the highest amount that the country has ever seen in one week, the *New York Times* **reports**. In the 50 years that the government

has tracked application data, the previous worst week was in October 1982, when 695,000 people filed to claim unemployment benefits.

In other news

— In an op-ed for the *Times*, **Dirt Candy**'s Amanda Cohen questions whether going back to business as usual will be good enough for the restaurants that survive the pandemic.

— Yelp is partnering with fundraising platform GoFundMe to add a functionality to the app that allows restaurants on its platform to accept donations directly through Yelp, according to a press release.

— Hospitality consulting firm BCD started publishing a series of video diaries **on Instagram** that feature the owners of Mexicue, Bareburger, Seed and Mill, Westville, and Alidoro chronicling the impact of the coronavirus crisis.

— Delivery company DoorDash partnered with the NYC Department of Education this week to deliver meals to hundreds of medically fragile students across all five boroughs, according to a press release.

— Chinese-American chain **Junzi** has launched a “crisis pop-up” called **Distance Dining**, according to a restaurant representative. The first delivery meal offered through the pop-up is a bowl of Shanghainese meatballs, goji, bok choy, rice, and a gingery chicken broth sweetened with red dates.

— Chefs, look away:

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– (((Judd Winick))) (@JuddWinick) **March 24, 2020**

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