



Roosevelt  
Avenue  
Photo Essay  
by  
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Diverse languages were spoken all around, and a specific culture concentrated on each block with vendors galore. The 7 train passing overhead reminded me of Brooklyn and being under the D train at 18th avenue. It has a similar energy in a sense, where it is vibrant with a lot of diverse places to eat from all different cultures but minus the actual street vendors on the sidewalks. It didn't feel abnormal at all, and actually felt more comfortable like home because 18th avenue was my stop, I got off to get home every day from Manhattan in high school.

As we walked along Roosevelt Ave., we were filled with so many distant aromas. Some aromas we couldn't even identify yet they smelled so delicious it intrigued us to follow. At times there were so many small restaurants and food vendors it was hard to not become overwhelmed. The street was lively and loud as people were bustling past but what we admired the most was how rich in culture, customs, and heritage it was.



I read the article before I actually visited Roosevelt Ave, and when I saw this video store, this line popped back into my head. “Seemingly everywhere in Roosevelt’s path, there is a heightened sense of the ‘old country’—of memories that haven’t faded over long stretches of distance and time.” I have not seen DVDs sold like this since I was young. It brought me back to being a little girl and how I would beg profusely for my dad to bring me home DVDs that people sell along the trains of new movies that were out that we couldn’t afford to go theater for.

My boyfriend pointed out how crowded this area was and said how it felt like we were in Manhattan because of how many people there were. I saw with my own eyes how this was easily the epicenter of epicenters for COVID when it hit. I am glad to see how even with masks, there is still so many people.



When reflecting back on the article, it was interesting to have a new perspective on the small everyday exchanges I have with people. For instance, when someone curses at a fellow driver, I try to think how the car that might have just cut us off is being driven by a mother whose child is hurt or sick and trying to rush to the hospital. I always think of these hypotheticals, not always that specific, but just that there are a million stories around me. I thought of the article when making small purchases here and there, thinking how maybe that money exchange might end up in a different country because that money might be sent back to that person's relatives.



This experiment was very interesting and fun to me as I always enjoy learning about and experiencing different cultures, especially through their food. Although we drove to different areas due to the cold, we ended up parking nearby to walk around and take it all in. We started going up more blocks, and spotted a few shops that caught our attention. We stopped at some Korean beauty stores and K-pop merch shops. Phil ended up having his own form of déjà vu and realized that he actually passed Roosevelt Avenue before to go to small shopping center a few weeks ago. I find it interesting we both have been there without even realizing it, a place that holds more than 300 languages varying not just from street to street but store to store.

As our day came to an end, we wanted to finish off with a delicious treat. In this picture, we are at a small business called UGLY Donuts & Corn Dogs, where we ordered delicious Korean cheese dogs to go. I hope to be visiting again soon.



As we were approaching Main Street, we noticed such a drastic difference in our surroundings. Coming from a neighborhood rich in Latino culture, with various street vendors and Spanish shops, to now all Asian shops with Chinese and Korean titles felt like a culture shock. Walking along Roosevelt Avenue from Corona to Flushing Queens felt like transporting continents, just as the article described. This feeling gave me *deja vu* as I realized I have, in fact, been here before. Back in high school, I remember hanging out with two friends, one who lived in Corona and the other from the Bronx. We walked along Roosevelt Avenue to bring our friend to her bus stop at Roosevelt Ave and Main street, where she took the Q50 home. Both of my friends were of different cultures, one with a Mexican background and the other Ecuadorian and Puerto Rican. We talked about how lucky we were to experience New York in this way, in that we are exposed to so many different cultures. We all come from immigrant families, and if our lives played out differently and my father decided to stay in Sicily or if their families stayed in Mexico or Ecuador/Puerto Rico, we would have had a more linear experience in just being enriched in our own cultures and not so much those of others. New York allows for that to happen seamlessly, and Roosevelt Ave. is a beautiful example of that.

