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Peace, Love and Sandwiches

One Kubideh sandwich with a side of peace and understanding to go.

HE STOREFRONT APPEARED almost overnight, slapped between a nightclub and a waffle shop. The vibrant blue and yellow sign beckoned in both English and Farsi, causing motorists to stop in the middle of the street, leap out of their cars and proclaim, "Finally! Iranian takeout food in Pittsburgh!"

The brainchild of John Peña, Jon Rubin, and Dawn Weleski, Conflict Kitchen (124 S. Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.) uses food as a starting point for dialogue about the people,

ideas and cultures of nations with whom the United States government is in conflict. We all get hungry, the thinking goes, so why not use lunch as a meeting point? We probably have more in common with our neighbors than just our appetite.

For more about Iranian food and culture, go to relishmag.com/conflictkitchen

Every few months, the kitchen staff serves up a different cuisine from a non-Western nation. First up was the Iranian Kubideh, seasoned beef packed in freshly baked flatbread with fresh herbs. Each "sandwich" was served in a specially designed wrapper, printed with facts and trivia about Iran—from pop-culture to more complex issues.

Customers can keep the conversation going after lunch via the website, conflictkitchen.com. Organizers moderate forums and announce special events, like live Skype meals shared by diners in Pittsburgh and Tehran.

Next up at Conflict Kitchen is Bolani—Afghani flatbread stuffed with vegetables, sure to open up a whole new can of coriander. I —Katy Rank Lev



