



RIDGEWOOD

"Quooklyn" and the story that started with Houdini's Pizza



A few months ago, a curious new neighborhood appeared in the pages of The New York Times food section and was swiftly spat on by [Brooklyn](#), [Gothamist](#), [Brooklyn Magazine](#), and others. "Quooklyn": that little known borderland on the Queens-Brooklyn boundary that is supposedly the hotbed of New York's next hipster takeover and is technically actually just called Ridgewood, Queens.

With a setup like that, we couldn't help but check it out and share what we found. Below you'll find an anatomy of a neighborhood in transition, with its "hipster capital of the future" potential evaluated against a few criteria assembled from many a weekend wandering this city's neighborhoods. And let's be clear folks, yours truly isn't waiting for this neighborhood (or any of the other charming places we write about) to gentrify and price out the people living here. This guide is an observation of what happens and how it happens, in an effort to identify perhaps how we could write a different story for Ridgewood that isn't the homogeneous "cafes with vegan muffins" future that the NYT projects.

1. Stellar coffee: Barely there, but *might* be coming soon. Build it and they will come?

Topos Bookstore Cafe is really a charming place with a charming owner. And, it opened the day we walked in. Talk about witnessing the pace of change. This lovely place is so new that it doesn't yet have a beverage permit (or a working espresso machine) required to actually be a cafe. Topo's gets extra props for the combo cafe concept and having a beautiful space and well curated used book selection, but it's unclear whether and when the coffee starts flowing, let alone if its a good strong cup of brew.



Norma's coffee seems like the neighborhood spot, crowded on a Sunday afternoon with families, young people at their laptops, and grandmothers having an afternoon tea. Homey, neighborhood vibe: yes. Stellar coffee? Unfortunately no, but it'll do if you need to re-hydrate with caffeine.

