

By [Tammy Jaxtheimer](#)
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VIRGINIA BEACH

I first tried Smoked From Above BBQ in October at "A Taste of Virginia Beach" at Homearama. The restaurant had packed up its smoker last August and moved to Landstown Commons on Princess Anne Road after three-and-a-half years on Baxter Road.

Husband-and-wife owners Lee and Michelle Holland smoke their own meat and make their own rubs and sauces - which they'll soon be selling - and most side dishes.

The casual, counter-service dining room with kitchen window pickup and self-service beverages is clean and inviting. Service was friendly and fast. The restaurant appears to be well prepared for takeout, too, offering barbecue by the pound and sides in small, medium, large and quart sizes.

Kids' meals (\$3.99) include grilled cheese, chicken tenders or a mini barbecue sandwich (chicken, beef or pork) with one side and a soft drink. My daughter loved her barbecue beef sandwich with hot french fries. On Mondays, kids' meals are half-price with the purchase of a combo meal or more.

Smoked From Above ribs lived up to the restaurant's name. They were heavenly - moist and tender, with a pleasant smoked flavor. The meat easily came off the bone. We found the basting sauce to be tasty on the ribs but a bit too sweet as a dipping sauce. The barbecue sauce on the table had more tang. Onion rings were golden and delicious. Brunswick stew was packed with corn, tomatoes, butter beans and chicken.

The two-meat sampler platter (\$11.99) offers a choice among pulled pork, beef or chicken; quarter rib; and quarter chicken. It comes with two sides and six hush puppies. With the chicken, a choice of dark or white meat is offered; we tried white. A petite breast with wing attached had good flavor; however, we found the breast dry, unlike its tastier attached wing. Pulled pork was lean and savory. The homemade cole slaw was fresh, crisp and delicious. The homemade potato salad was unappealing, with too much celery salt. I look forward to trying the "porkey beans" and green beans.

Hush puppies, golden nuggets of corn meal with just enough onion, were terrific. They deserved a real butter packet instead of the mini Country Crock tub.

The cinnamon apple trough (small \$2.50, large \$3.99), baked apples in a cup with graham crackers, wasn't enticing enough for us to overstuff ourselves or to end the pleasant barbecue taste in our mouths. Lee Holland said the trough is popular, but the restaurant is testing other homemade desserts.

Now that Smoked From Above is on my regularly traveled track, I have added its menu to other local places that I rely on for call-ahead and take-home meals on hectic days.

Smoked from Above BBQ is close to heaven

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Lee and Michelle Holland own Smoked From Above BBQ in Virginia Beach. (David B. Hollingsworth | The Virginian-Pilot)

The spot: Smoked From Above BBQ, 3376 Princess Anne Road, Landstown Commons, Virginia Beach

The vibe: A counter-service barbecue joint that is casual and clean

To try: Barbecue salad and “BBQ slop trough” (barbecue in a cup layered with beans and slaw)

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday

Prices: Sides, 79 cents to \$2.79 (quart sizes \$5.49); sandwiches, \$4.79-\$6.19; dinner platters, \$7.49-\$18.99; desserts, \$2.50-\$3.99

Reservations: Not accepted

Smoking: Nonsmoking dining room; smoking permitted at outside seating

Handicapped accessible: Yes

Contact: (757) 499-4959