

## MEATLESS FAST-FOOD CHAIN



When we wrote about Florida's [Healthy Bites Grill](#) back in 2002, we even went so far as to wonder if it might become the next McDonald's. While HBG doesn't appear to be winning that coveted title, New York's [Zen Burger](#) is a new contender that has gotten off to a flying start. Zen Burger aims to revolutionize the fast food world with natural, wholesome vegetarian foods that have the look, feel, texture and taste of meats without the negative effects on health and the environment. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, the restaurant specializes in meatless comfort foods that mimic those sold in traditional fast-food environments, such as the ZenSausage breakfast sandwich, ZenBeef burgers, crispy ZenChicken sandwich, ZenTuna sandwich, ZenHotDog, ZenChicken tenders, ZenShrimp and French fries. The midtown Manhattan eatery, which just opened a few weeks ago, even recreates the ambience—if you can call it that—of the big fast-food chains, with bright lighting and a 1970s colour scheme heavy on the oranges and greens. Also available at Zen Burger are organic soups and chili, organic salads, non-dairy ice cream, organic teas and coffees, and natural sodas, as well as kids' meals complete with tiny toy. Pricing for a standard meal is about USD 7. Zen Burger was founded by James Tu, owner of Zen Palate restaurants, and reportedly the plan is to take the chain nationwide, with the next restaurant slated to open in Hollywood in the middle of this year, according to Midtown Lunch. While vegetarians make up a still-small but rapidly growing part of the U.S. population, "flexitarians"—or those who eat a vegetarian diet some of the time, but not always—are a much larger group, and Zen Burger's real target, Tu told [TheStreet.com](#). "The key is the taste," Tu said. "Ideally, I don't want people to know what they are eating is vegetarian." Appealing to serious and sometime vegetarians alike, it's hard to imagine anything but a warm reception to this concept around the globe. One to get in on early? Contact: 465 Lexington Ave, New York Spotted by: Anand Gupta

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