



## MYRA'S DIONYSUS

121 Calhoun St., University Heights ■ 513-961-1578 ■ [www.myrasrestaurant.com](http://www.myrasrestaurant.com)

# a local treasure

RODNEY WILSON | CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

For almost 30 years, UC students and teachers, Clifton bohemians and lovers of good food have been sitting down at Myra's to enjoy a meal.

But Myra Griffin never set out to create a local treasure. When the doors of her Victorian townhouse first opened in January 1977, she wanted independence. "I was a teacher and I decided I'd like to be my own boss," she explains, adding, "and there weren't any gyros in Cincinnati."

Since then, Myra's has managed to retain the simple pleasures that made it distinct three decades ago. The intimate dining room is as comfortable as it has ever been, offering respite from bustling campus life, noisy construction sites and hazardous traffic. In favorable weather, the back patio is open, transporting diners away from the city that lies just over the fence.

Myra's menu has changed to enhance the original, eclectic vision. "We've branched out into a lot of ethnic foods," Griffin says, "particularly soups from a lot of different places around the world, because vegetarianism is the mode for most other countries beside the U.S."

Myra's vegetarian-friendly menu is a global culinary tour, from Middle Eastern baba ganouj (baked eggplant with tahini and garlic) to Indonesian gado gado (peanut and ginger sauce served over brown rice and topped with raisins and sunflower seeds). And, of course, there's the Greek staple that started it all — the gyro.

Griffin's friendly staff of workers must have changed countless times over the years, but the communal work atmosphere has stayed the same. "I still run it the same way," she says, "with people working here doing all the different jobs."

Keeping Myra's original charm hasn't been easy lately. The area the eatery has called home for decades has undergone a massive — and messy — face-lift, a transition that's not been easy on existing businesses.

"The last five years have been extremely difficult," Griffin says. "They've taken all the parking away and everything is still torn down."

"But, I'll probably just keep doing everything the same way," she adds, pointing to her clientele as the heart of Myra's. "I have a good base of customers — if they can just get here."

"We really value our customers who keep coming back. People who went to school 20 years ago still come back and say, 'You got me through CCM, I ate there every day.' I get a kick out of that."

**HOURS:** Open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday.



Zachary Utz and Rachel Markowitz dine out at Myra's Dionysus in University Heights.

DAVID SORCHER | CIN WEEKLY



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Try savory baked tofu with spicy sesame noodles, rainbow salad and cherry almond cheesecake.



For nearly three decades, Myra's Dionysus has been a staple in University Heights.

### MENU SAMPLER

**SOUP:** Thai pumpkin, a vegetarian soup with coconut milk and cilantro (\$1.75/cup, \$3.50/bowl)

**SANDWICH:** Falafel sandwich — spiced garbanzo patties in pita bread garnished with tomato, onion, pickle, romaine and tahini lemon sauce (\$4)

**ENTRÉE:** Imam Bialdi, a Turkish dish of eggplant and tomato served over brown rice or pasta and seasoned with allspice and currants (\$6.75)

**DESSERT:** Baklava, a flaky, sweet Greek pastry (\$1.50)