



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 2, 2020

DeBlasio, Cuomo Continue Ban on NYC Indoor Restaurant Dining; New Jersey to Reopen

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, speaking in separate press conferences on August 31, said that indoor dining at restaurants in the city will not resume for the foreseeable future.



The same day that Cuomo and De Blasio made their statements, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced that restaurants and bars in the Garden State can resume indoor dining on September 4. Although the reopening in New Jersey will still be highly restricted, by being limited to operating at 25 percent capacity and having socially distanced tables, this “quarter-of-a-loaf-is-better-than-none” approach is still expected to entice New Yorkers to cross the Hudson River to dine.

Cuomo acknowledged during a conference call with reporters on Monday that New York City residents will travel across the river to be able to dine inside a restaurant for the first time in months, saying, “I understand that means people can go through the [Lincoln or Holland] tunnel and go over the George Washington Bridge. I am aware of that competitive disadvantage for New York City restaurants.”

Cuomo blamed the delay in allowing New York City restaurants to reopen on the perceived risk of a second wave of COVID-19 cases — combined with the upcoming flu season.

“I want as much economic activity as possible,” he said during a virtual news conference. “We also want to make sure the infection rate stays under control. That is the tension.”

DeBlasio said at his daily press briefing that reopening city restaurants to indoor dining depends on a “huge step forward” — like the development of a coronavirus vaccine.

The mayor was pessimistic that restaurant owners, workers, and patrons would be able to enjoy business as usual before the June 1, 2021, reopening date set in early August.

“We do expect — and pray for and expect — a vaccine in the spring that will allow us to get more back to normal,” he said, “but I will absolutely tell you, we’re going to keep looking for that situation where we can push down the virus enough where we would have more ability to address indoor dining.”

The New York City Hospitality Alliance, whose stated purpose is to “reduce regulatory burdens and represents the [restaurant] industry in the halls of government and the media,” criticized the city and state for the continued delay.

“With indoor dining resuming soon in New Jersey, New York City will be surrounded by indoor dining but locked out from participating at significant economic peril,” said Andrew Rigie, executive director of



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the Alliance. “The situation is at a boiling point and our government leaders must immediately develop a plan to reopen indoor dining across the five boroughs, like what’s been provided to restaurants throughout the rest of the state. Otherwise, our city’s economic crisis will reach a point it cannot come back from, with thousands of more restaurants permanently closing and likely more lawsuits filed against the government.”

Image: Thinkstock

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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