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# You Won't Believe What's In This Greenville, South Carolina, Convenience Store



FishEye Studios/Off The Grid Greenville

**Nestled between the Cheerios and the chewing gum is one of the best-kept secrets in town.**

**VALERIE FRASER LUESSE**

What do you expect to find in a typical Southern quick-stop? Probably coolers filled with Cokes, beer, and water; racks of chips, candy, and breath mints; first aid supplies and laundry detergent; motor oil and maps. There might be a rack of hot dogs turning on a spit or some do-it-yourself nachos with a questionable cheese sauce served from a hand-pumped dispenser. In your finer establishments, some decent-looking fried chicken will be warming behind a glass counter.

Not entirely true at Greenville's Drop-In Store. Granted, they'll sell you some emergency milk or flashlight batteries. But there's more here than the usual convenience items. Not only does this thriving little store offer wine and craft beer, but it has yet another trick up its sleeve.

To find it, follow the crowd (and your nose) to the back of the store, where co-owner Maria Gomes serves her unique marriage of Indian and Portuguese food, home-cooked daily. Diners enjoy it family style, right in the middle of one of the store aisles. It's a Brazilian-style "bodega" in the back of a store that Gomes and her husband, Roland, have owned in Greenville's North Main neighborhood for almost 40 years.

On a typical day, the menu might include Brazilian Feijoada (that's a black bean stew), Spicy Shrimp Tacos, Carnitas, the Goan Burger (Gomes's home state is Goa, India), and a less-exotic order of 2 hotdogs with fries for an affordable five bucks. This place is homey, with the occasional Gomes family photo here and there, and a sign on the wall that reads, "Complaints will be heard on the second Tuesday of next week."

There's room for only a few tables, so it's cozy at the Drop-In. No reservations and no pretense—just freshly made foods prepared by someone who loves feeding customers. As you enjoy your beer on tap and tacos or a burger, you can chat with fellow diners, even if you've never seen them before. Think of this little spot as the *Cheers* of convenience stores—a place where everybody knows your name or will at least make an effort to learn it while you savor some amazing food together.