



Los Aztecas

2700 Dodge Street, Dubuque, IA, 563-584-0212

2345 NW Arterial, Dubuque, IA, 563-583-5026

975 Galena Square, Galena, IL, 815-777-9066

LosAztecasOnline.com

HOURS: Mon–Thurs: 11 am – 10 pm,

Fri–Sat: 11 am – 11 pm, Sun: 11 am – 9 pm

ATMOSPHERE: Casual, Mexican Hacienda

NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Fajitas, Chimichangas, Chilles Rellenos, Carne Asada, Chicken Salad, Pollo En Pipian, Chile Verde, Carnitas

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar. Margaritas, Mexican Beer

PRICES: Apps: \$2-\$7.50 Entrees: \$5.25 to \$13

RESERVATIONS: Two to Seventy-Five

PAYMENT: Cash, Local Checks Only, Debit /Credit

ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door and Restrooms

KIDS POLICY: Welcome, Kids menu, Coloring, High Chair, Booster, Fast Service, Under 10 Eat Free Sunday.

CATER/DELIV: No, **TAKE OUT:** Yes, **PARKING:** Lot



Los Aztecas

by Rich Belmont

This is a story about a Mexican Restaurant. Actually, it's about 3 of them: two in Dubuque, IA and one in Galena, IL. This column is also about the pursuit of the American Dream. It's an affirmation that the USA is still the land of opportunity.

In this story the dream started with five ambitious young men. They had no opportunities for a better life in their native Mexico. With nothing to lose they took a

chance and left their family and friends and immigrated to the United States. They did not want hand outs nor did they expect them. At first they labored under the hot sun on California farms. Then they heard they could get work taking care of horses in Kentucky. After moving there they learned their new jobs were only temporary so they found work in local restaurants. They started as dishwashers and busboys. Over time they gained experience in all facets of the business and eventually became managers.

Then a friend spoke of an opportunity to open a Mexican restaurant in a place called Dubuque. They didn't know where it was but they quickly decided to take another chance and check it out. So Hector, Manuel and Moses Moran, Jorge Perez and Lorenzo Dominguez came to Dubuque.



The five men combined their life savings and started Los Aztecas. The name is in honor of the Aztec people, the origin of their culture. And now they have over 15 years experience in Mexican cuisine. The three restaurants are designed to make you feel like you have gone to Mexico to visit friends on their hacienda. As soon as you enter you know you can expect the food to be delicious! It is heavily influenced by the cooking techniques of the Mexican State of Sonora where you find the use of red and green chili sauces and a large assortment of Tacos, Enchiladas and Tostadas. However, Hector is quick to point out the menu is carefully constructed to feature popular dishes from all over Mexico including the States of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Oaxaca.

The five owners added Omar Perez, Juan Martinez, Pedro Velazco and Oscar Najera, four experienced chefs, to their staff. These Masters of South of the Border flavors oversee the preparation of all the great meals and fine sauces in all three restaurants to insure quality and consistency.

Los Aztecas is a great place to have a good

time! On Friday or Saturday nights you might find a Mariachi Band playing your favorite Mexican songs: mine is La Cucaracha! Birthday parties are festive with singing waiters and Flan desserts. Kids are treated well too. They enjoy Mexican sodas, non alcoholic Margaritas and their own special meals including Tacos, Burritos, Enchiladas, Chicken Nuggets, Chicken Fingers and Fiesta Burgers. On Sundays children under 10 eat free all day!

As soon as you arrive a friendly waiter will ask for your drink order. Of course, frozen Margaritas are always popular. They are made fresh in house and you can choose from Original, Mango, Strawberry, Banana and Watermelon. Or you can order your Margaritas on the rocks with one of their 60 tequilas. In my opinion the orange flavored Margarita with Patrón Citrónge Liqueur and lime juice is the best!



Perhaps you would like to try a Michenada. This is a cross between a beer and a Bloody Mary. It's made with your choice of cerveza, Bloody Mary mix, Valentina Salsa hot sauce, fresh lime juice, spices, Worcestershire Sauce and the glass is rimmed with green salt.



There are also some very interesting Mexican cold drinks on the menu. The Jarritos are imported from Mexico and are fruit drinks with less carbonation than you are used to. They are one of the few sodas available in the USA sweetened with sugar cane instead of high fructose corn syrup. They come in many flavors: fruit punch, pineapple, lime, grapefruit, orange, lemon, strawberry and tamarind. The last one is the most popular soda in Mexico. You should try it! This flavor is derived from the fruit of the Tamarind Tree. The fruit has a hard brown shell with a fleshy, juicy pulp. It has a sweet and sour taste and is high in acid, sugar, vitamin B and calcium.

The Horchata is another refreshing Agua Frescas. It is made with rice, milk, vanilla, cinnamon and almonds.

When you go to a Mexican restaurant it is easy to overlook the appetizers. Don't miss out on these at Los Aztecas! The cheese dip is made from white American cheese and is great compliment to the usual Salsa. The Guacamole Dip is freshly made, the Avocado Slices are always ripe, and the Special Nachos are a wonderful starter for your party!



The Sopa Azteca is no ordinary chicken soup, either. It contains strips of chicken breast, onions, rice, Pico de Gallo and is



topped with Mexican cheese. This soup is a meal all by itself!

Some of the more popular entrees are Azteca Mixed Vegetables with chicken or shrimp; Chicken Salad in a crispy flour shell filled with grilled chicken, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, cheese and your choice of dressing; Chimichanga, a deep fried flour tortilla stuffed with shredded beef, chicken, shrimp or crabmeat. The Chiles Rellenos is two whole Poblano peppers containing Mexican cheese and sauce. The Carne Asada is a real treat for you beef eaters. This is a very large skirt steak marinated in lime juice and seasonings and then flame broiled. The Fajita Burrito Grande is either marinated strip steak, chicken or shrimp rolled into a flour tortilla burrito and covered with homemade Enchilada Sauce. Of course, many people order Fajitas. These are made with skirt steak, chicken, pork, shrimp, Chorizo sausage, scallops or crabmeat or any combination of these or without all of them if you prefer vegetarian. They are combined with red and green peppers and onions and served on a sizzling platter.

You should expect extraordinary dinners when visiting a hacienda. But perhaps you would like to be a little more adventurous, si? How about the Chile Verde: beef or pork tips cooked in Green Tomatillo Sauce. Or the Carnitas: deep fried pork chunks in Tomatillo Sauce. How about Pollo de Mole which is Chicken in Mole Sauce or Pollo en Pipian. The latter is white meat chicken strips cooked in a scrumptious Pipian Sauce.

These Sauces are all prepared on the premises. The Tomatillo Sauce is made from tomatillos (sort of a green tomato in a husk), onion, cilantro, lime juice, Jalapeno and Ancho peppers. This restaurant's version



of Mole consists of Ancho peppers, tomato sauce, peanuts, sesame seeds, a little chocolate, and several other ingredients roasted and ground into a paste then simmered in a broth until thick. The Enchilada Sauce is made with roasted Ancho Chiles, tomatoes, very hot Chiles de Arbol, toasted onion and garlic, oregano, cumin and a pinch of salt. And the Pipian is a blended sauce consisting of Jalapeno peppers, cashews, sesame seeds, capers and olive oil.

And you know me. I always say save room for dessert! The Flan is a special treat: it's made with fresh eggs, condensed milk, vanilla, caramel and special spices. The Fried Ice Cream is always a crowd pleaser. A scoop of vanilla is coated with corn flakes and coconut and then frozen. The coating keeps the ice cream from melting when deep fried.

And before I forget; notify your server if you need gluten free or vegetarian dishes or are lactose intolerant. You will have many delicious choices to select from.

All of these meals are meant to be enjoyed and are purposely a little sloppy. Don't be afraid to make a mess! That's why there are napkin dispensers on every table!

Hector speaks for all his staff when he says how grateful they are that so many Dubuques and Galenians have supported Los Aztecas. You have voted this Hospice of Dubuque's Best Place for Mexican Cuisine and Best Place for Margaritas the last seven consecutive years! Hector says "Bienvenidos amigos a Los Aztecas y Buen Provecho!"



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