

WEST DUBUQUE TAP

REVISITED
BY RICH BELMONT

When I wrote about West Dubuque Tap in September 2011 I said I had driven by it thousands of times before I ever went inside. Now I can say since then I have eaten there thousands of times. Well ok, not thousands but at least a couple hundred times. Any why not? The food is excellent, the little place with only 10 tables is inviting and the prices are way too low.



This is still the same family business started by the late Donna Ginter who passed away in May, 2013. Her daughters Genny and Kathy Ginter are the co-owners. They grew up in this restaurant and have been here for over 35 years now. Not a lot has changed. The

food still tastes like it was prepared in your mom's kitchen. You still get more than you can eat and you will still leave wondering how they manage to put out so many great meals in a kitchen that has only 7 feet by 15 feet of space!



The menu is full of tasty and imaginative items. Some of them are traditional favorites and some are unique new culinary delights. These new items can be attributed to Genny and Kathy's years of experience and also to the expertise of Genny's daughter, Bobbie Konzen, who started cooking when

she was 13 and has been in the kitchen for over 27 years now. Even the service is fast and efficient because of experienced staff like Marybeth Stelpflug. She has been in the restaurant for six years. So even when you are in a hurry tell the staff and they will send you on your way in less than 30 minutes.



West Dubuque Tap serves burgers all day every day. They are a third of a pound fresh ground chuck hand formed and cooked on a griddle. You can top yours with mushrooms, green olives, bacon, jalapeños, egg, American or Swiss cheese and lettuce, tomato, onion and pickle. My favorite is the olive burger with melted Swiss cheese draped over a generous pile of green olives. The cheese is made locally by Zimmerman's Cheese in South Wayne, WI.

I always order the basket in order to get a huge pile of fresh homemade French fries. They still have a young man who comes in every day just to hand cut Idaho Russets.



↑ Award-winning Bacon Wrapped Jalapeños



Another great burger is the West Dubuque Super Burger with mushrooms, bacon, lettuce, tomato, onions and American cheese.

Remember I said there were new unique menu items? Well two of them are burgers:

West Dubuque Baconator Cheeseburger – this is a bacon lover's dream come true. The patty is hand formed half ground beef and half ground bacon. And if that's not enough bacon you can have two strips of bacon placed on top.



O.M.G. West Dubuque Burger- The O.M.G. stands for oh my god how am I going to eat this thing? Two third-pound patties are stuffed into a bun with 4 strips of bacon, lettuce, tomato, onion slices, American and Swiss cheese. And if that's not enough there are a couple of onion rings on top of the bun!

There are other fabulous new unique menu items I found to be not only delicious but addictive:



Cheese Straws – they call these straws but they are just like French fries only made from unbreaded cheese instead of potato. This was judged the best appetizer of Taste of Dubuque 2014. The cheese in Queso Blanco. The name is Spanish for "white cheese" and is a mild unaged cheese made from cow's milk. It is commonly used in several Latin American countries and Mexico.



Bacon Wrapped Cheese – chunks of Queso Blanco are wrapped in bacon and deep fried. This one took first place award at the 2014 Dubuque Baconfest.

West Dubuque is one of the best places to go for lunch. There is a Daily Lunch Special that is a different dinner each day Monday through Friday and is available 11 am to 2 pm. These specials are a full meal including vegetable and dessert and there is no way you can eat these and still be hungry. Recent specials were Spaghetti and Meat Sauce and Chicken Sandwich with potato puffs. On Friday the special is always Hot Beef and Mashed Potatoes except during lent.



↑ Chicken Sandwich with potato puffs

There is also a Nightly Special Monday through Saturday from 4 pm to 9 pm. These are the same dinners every week. On Monday there is Hamburger Steak with Grilled Onions. Taco Tuesday is your choice of hard shell or tortilla. By the way, the Fish Tacos are awesome! Wednesday is French Dip night served on French roll with a side of au jus. Thursday is Spaghetti night with homemade meat sauce and Friday choose Fried or Baked Icelandic Cod or Whole Catfish.

The Saturday Night Specials are outstanding. The Open Face 6 oz. Ribeye Sandwich is hand-cut in house. Fried Chicken is also a Saturday dinner special. The chicken is served with choice of potato, salad, roll and dessert. The regular 3 pieces are breast, leg and thigh. When you request all white meat you get two breasts and a wing.

There are other dinners on the menu in addition to the Nightly Specials. They include 3 piece Chicken, House Steak (chef's choice of either ribeye or sirloin), Fried Cod, Hamburger Steak or Shrimp Tenders. (Fun Fact: these are shrimp with no tails). There is also a Butterfly Shrimp dinner. By the way, when a cook butterflys a piece of thick meat or seafood he uses a sharp knife to slit the meat halfway through the thickness almost cutting it through. The meat is then unfolded into what looks like a butterfly shape and then it is placed flat in a pan or broiler so it cooks evenly without drying out.



West Dubuque Tap is also one of the best places in the city for breakfast. It is served 6 am to 11 am Monday through Saturday and 8 am to noon on Sunday. I always order the West Dubuque Breakfast consisting of two eggs cooked to order with bacon or sausage links or patties and hash browns. The Magic Muffin is the most popular breakfast. It is a monster of a sandwich! An egg, cheese, hash browns and two sausage patties are all jammed into an English muffin. This sandwich (if you can call it that) is so popular it is now available all day.

Breakfast time also presents an opportunity to try another one of these new and unique items. That would be the Cranberry Wild Rice French Toast. Now wild rice bread may sound a little weird but wait until you taste it. It gives French toast a nutty flavor and a chewy texture that is really good!



Do you recall I said West Dubuque Tap's Specials include dessert? Kathy is an expert baker and you never know what she going to include with your lunch. I recently had pumpkin pie, apple pie and chocolate cake.

Of course, you can always choose your dessert from the snack size candy bar vending machine. They were only 25 cents four years ago and they still are today!

WEST DUBUQUE TAP

1701 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001

563-556-9647

Hours: Bar: Mon-Sat 6 AM-2 AM; Sun 8 AM-Noon; Breakfast: Mon-Sat 6AM-11 AM; Sun 8 AM-Noon; Lunch/Dinner: Mon-Sat 11 AM-9 PM

Dining Style: Come as you are

Noise Level: Loud during Ball Games

Recommendations: Magic Muffin, West Dubuque Special Breakfast, All Hamburgers, Pork Tenderloin, French Fries, All Lunch Specials, Reuben, Sirloin Steak, Friday Hot Beef & Mashed Potatoes Daily Special

Liquor Service: Full Bar

Prices: Breakfast: \$3.50-\$9.00;

Lunch: \$4.50-\$14.25; Dinner: \$4.50-\$13.50

Pay Options: Cash, Check, MasterCard and Visa

Accessibility: Ramp to Front Door

Kids Policy: No Menu; High Chairs and Boosters available

Reservations: No • **Catering:** No

Take Out: Yes • **Delivery:** No

Parking: On Street – Asbury Road and Cherry Street