



ZORO'S GYROS

BY RICH BELMONT

All great cities have little counter service eateries where busy people can stop in and get reasonably priced, delicious, fast lunches and dinners. One of the best of these places is Zoro's Gyros located at the corner of Central Avenue and 14th Street in Dubuque. This really good Greek-American restaurant is a great place for Gyros, Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Salads, BLT's, Italian Beef, Chicken, Philly Cheese and Grilled Cheese sandwiches. You can eat-in or get take-out. If you choose to eat in the surroundings are comfortable and there is even free Wi-Fi.



Zoro's is owned by Manushaqe and Stefano Sulaj. Manushaqe Sulaj (pronounced Manu-shock Sul-eye) was born in Albania and moved to Greece with her family when she was 16. Her name is Albanian for Michele but everyone

calls her by a nickname: Chachi (pronounced Cha-chee). She immigrated to Chicago in 1996 and worked in restaurants. Chachi speaks English, Greek and Albanian.

She met her husband Stefano (just call him Steve) in Chicago. He is from Northern Italy and has now been married to Chachi for 22 years. Steve is an excellent short order cook and is proficient in several languages including English, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Albanian.

Chachi has always dreamed of owning and operating her own restaurant so she and Steve started searching for a small restaurant they could purchase. They consider themselves very lucky they were informed Zoro's in Dubuque was for sale. They say they are so fortunate to have found Dubuque where the people were friendly and inviting and they would have a safe place to raise their two sons: Faz, age 20 and Sajmir, 14.

They took over Zoro's and opened on March 1, 2010. In July and August of this year, 2016, they did some extensive remodeling and purchased some new kitchen equipment.

The dining area is a pleasant space divided into two rooms. On one side a flat screen TV is usually on CNN. In the other room the TV is usually on Fox News. Sometimes patrons ask for ESPN or another channel in order to watch sporting events or other favorite programs.



I'll bet you can tell what the house specialty is at Zoro's Gyros. And yes, they are outstanding! Gyros is a Greek dish made of meat pressed into the shape of an upside down cone. The cone can be made from pork, chicken, beef, veal, lamb or any combination thereof. At Zoro's only high quality cones consisting of 20% beef and 80% lamb are used. The cones are roasted on a vertical rotisserie. When the meat is ready for serving it is sliced vertically into thin, crisp shavings. Then it is served on pita bread with tomato, onion and Tzatziki sauce. (Fun Fact: Gyros is a Greek word pronounced yeer-os. It means "turn" because the cones are turning on the rotisserie. It is also a singular word: the plural is actually Gyri (yeer-ree). In this country people call one sandwich Gyro (yeer-row) because an "s" on the end of the word usually means more than one. You can be forgiven for asking for one Gyro but would be correct if you asked for a Gyros).



SLICING MEAT ON THE VERTICAL ROTISSERIE



At Zoro's the Tzatziki (zat-ZEE-Key) is home made. There are many versions of Tzatziki but in my opinion Steve's simple recipe is the best. It is made with strained Greek yogurt, cumpers and garlic. At Zoro's the Tzatziki is served on the Gyros. I prefer to order it on the side because I find a little goes a long way.

There is also a Chicken Gyros on the menu which is quite good. Chunks of chicken breast are grilled with Greek spices and served on pita bread.



As much as I enjoy the Gyros I have to admit I frequently order the excellent Italian Beef. It is also a specialty of the house and it is every bit as good as the Italian Beef sandwiches I get in Chicago. Sirloin Ball Tips are roasted in house in Italian seasonings. This cut of beef is terrific when it is sliced thin and marinated in an au jus.

Zoro's slices the roasts every day so there is just enough for the day's sales. The au jus is made in-house according to Steve's own recipe. The beef is served on a fresh roll with Giardiniera.



If you are a burger fan you won't go wrong by getting your burger fix satisfied here. Quarter pound burgers are cooked on a flat top. You can order your favorite with cheese and other toppings. Or you might try one of the Zoro's special burgers:

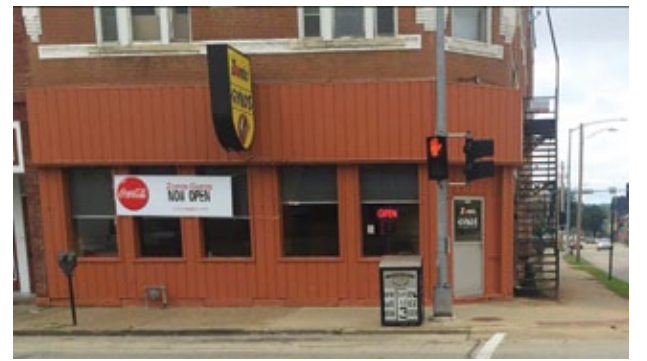
Chicago Burger – grilled onions, green bell peppers, American cheese and lettuce, tomato and pickles.

Pepperjack Burger – bacon, pepper jack cheese and lettuce, tomato and pickles.

Greek Burger – Gyros meat and American cheese on a beef patty with onions, tomato and Tzatziki.



GYROS SALAD



The Salads are healthy and are a satisfying meal by themselves. There are three to choose from: Greek, Gyros and Chicken Breast.



For those of you who like to order chicken it's available in so many ways: Chicken Gyros, Chicken Salad, Chicken Wings, Chicken Tenders, Grilled Chicken Breast, Crispy Fried Chicken Breast, or Chicken Philly Sandwich.



I also highly recommend you save room for Chachi's scrumptious Baklava (BACK-la-va)! This sweet pastry has evolved for centuries starting with the Assyrians and then the Babylonians. It became known to the western world after it reached Constantinople the capitol city of the Ottoman Empire. The current practice of stretching dough into thin sheets probably originated in the kitchens of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey.

Chachi's version of Baklava is made with layers of filo or the Greek phyllo (FEE-low) paper thin sheets of dough with pecans, sugar, honey and other secret ingredients. She bakes it slowly for one and a half hours then covers it with a honey syrup. (Fun Fact: for centuries only wealthy people could afford to eat Baklava. It was used to enhance romance because it was said to contain aphrodisiacs: cinnamon for women and cardamom for men. I cannot attest to the veracity of this claim, all I know is Chachi's Baklava is fabulous!)

Give Zoro's Gyros a try the next time you need a fast unbeatable meal deal. Save money when you order Lunch Specials available from 11 am to 2 pm Monday through Friday. Each day three different menu items are available at reduced prices.



CRISPY FRIED CHICKEN BREAST

ZORO'S GYROS

1400 CENTRAL AVENUE, DUBUQUE, IA 52001
563-557-5071
FACEBOOK.COM/ZOROSGYROSDUBUQUE

Hours: Mon-Sat: 10:30 AM-9 PM; Sun: 11 AM-7 PM

Dining Style: Come as you are

Noise Level: Conversational

Recommendations: Gyros, Italian Beef, Hamburgers, Chicken Philly, Crispy Chicken Sandwich, Beef Philly, Chicken Gyros, Gyros Salad, Baklava

Liquor Service: None

Prices: \$4.99 to \$8.99

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, MasterCard, Visa, Discover, AMEX

Accessibility: One step at front door

Kids Policy: Menu, Highchair, Booster

Reservations: Yes • **Catering:** No

Take Out: Yes • **Delivery:** No • **Parking:** On Street