



**Ayalas Mex-American Steakhouse**

301 N. Main Street, Galena, IL 61036

815-776-9925 • www.AyalasGalena.com

**HOURS:** Lunch: Wed – Fri, 11 am – 2:30 pm, Mon-Tue: Closed  
Dinner: Sun, Mon, Wed, Thurs, 5-10 pm, Fri - Sat, 4:30 pm-10 pm  
Brunch: Sun 8 am – 2:30pm (starting Apr 15th)

**ATMOSPHERE:** Business Casual, **NOISE LEVEL:** Moderate

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Italian Ribeye Sandwich, Caprese Salad, Porterhouse, Prime Ribeye, Pork Osso Buco, Chicken Cordon Blue, Ulysses S. Seaford, Carnitas, Carne Asada, Chilean Salmon, Red Snapper with Tomatillo Sauce

**LIQUOR SERVICE:** Full Bar; Many Mexican Beers, Margaritas

**PRICE RANGE:** \$1.75 - \$23.00

**RESERVATIONS:** Any Number; Highly Recommended

**PAYMENT:** Cash, Debit, MC, Visa, Discover, Local Checks Only

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Front Door; Ramp to Restrooms

**KIDS POLICY:** Children's Menu; High Chair; Booster

**CATERING:** Yes, **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** Downtown Galena Only

**PARKING:** On Street



**AYALAS MEX-AMERICAN STEAKHOUSE**  
by Rich Belmont

There are already six Mexican Restaurants in Dubuque and two in Galena. So do we really need another one? Well, the answer is yes, absolutely!

Ayalas is not a typical Mexican restaurant. It is actually three eateries in one: Steakhouse, American Fine Dining and Authentic Mexican Cuisine – the way it's done in Veracruz, Mexico.

Juan Dorantes, the Executive Chef and Owner, was born in Veracruz and grew up on his Grandma Ayala's delicious style of cooking. He learned how she blended fresh ingredients from the market to create her many wonderful dishes. Juan has paid homage to his grandma by naming his restaurant after her.



Ayalas is on Main Street in Galena, IL. It occupies the space that was once the Logan House, then Café Italia and most recently Char Obrien's. Juan had his eye on this location for a long time. He and his Head Chef Louis Jackson were both chefs at Fried Green Tomatoes for many years. When Juan became Head Chef at L.May Eatery he invited Louis to join him as his Sous Chef. When the Galena location became available they decided it was time to seize the opportunity and fulfill their dream of having their own place. Chef Juan had already perfected numerous recipes and Chef Louis, who is from Chicago, had years of experience as a private chef. He had also been sharing kitchens with Juan for over 12 years. Together they are an awesome team.

At this time Ayalas is open for lunch Wednesday through Sunday. There are so many items to choose from. The Caprese Salad consists of fresh mozzarella, basil, beefsteak tomatoes drizzled with Juan's own Balsamic Glaze and extra virgin olive oil. The Tortas are Mexican style sandwiches. You have your choice of beef, chicken, ham or pork with pepper jack and mozzarella, avocados, tomato and lettuce on grilled telera bread. The telera is a soft and



Juan (far right) poses with his lady, Dulce and their two young sons Dan and Juan, Jr. Also pictured is Louis (2nd from left) and more of the great staff of Ayalas.

savory style of the bolillo which is itself a variation of a baguette. The Tacos (pictured at the bottom of the page) make for a delicious, inexpensive lunch. They are only \$1.75 and you can make a meal out of a couple of these, perhaps with a side of rice or beans. Sample beef (secina), grilled pork (Pastor), chicken (Pollo), pulled pork (Carnitas), shrimp (Camaron) or beef tongue (Lengua). They are served on corn tortillas with fresh cilantro and onion.

The Chicken Chimichanga is very good. The chicken is seared with butter and can be ordered baked instead of fried. The tortilla is stuffed with rice, beans, onions, sour cream, black olives, tomatoes and cheese.

My favorite lunch is the Italian Ribeye Sandwich served on the telera roll with a fresh spinach and roasted red pepper artichoke cream sauce.

When you visit for dinner be sure to try one of the Mexican beers. The bar stocks Sol, Dos Equis, Corona, Bohemia, Victoria, Negra Modelo and Tecate. Perhaps you are adventurous and wish to try the house special margaritas. You can experiment by starting with basic tequila and gradually working up to the finest one. The usual order of better tasting margaritas goes like this: The first one is made with Jose Cuervo Especial, then Cazadores, Patron, Tres Generaciones Reposado and finally the finest tequila they stock, Don Julio Anejo. And by the way, Reposado means the tequila is aged and Anejo means aged even longer. All these margaritas are made with Agave nectar which is sweeter than sugar and a healthier alternative.



For appetizers have some fresh oysters or the shrimp cocktail. The shrimp are served with a special sauce made with fresh avocado, tomatoes, horseradish, white wine, extra virgin olive oil and cilantro. And just look at that bruschetta below!



The Steakhouse entrées are three excellent beef choices. They are Choice Grade, hand cut and bathed in a special marinade for more than a week. The marinade itself is a work of art. It consists of Worcestershire, balsamic vinegar, lemon pepper, garlic, extra virgin olive oil and red wine. It's difficult to select just one. The Porterhouse is broiled just the way you like it. So are the Prime Ribeye and the Filet. You can order any of these plain or with either a feta or blue cheese sauce.

One of the outstanding American entrées is the Osso Buco, a slow roasted, bone in pork shank braised with a red wine demi glaze. You might want to experience this dish the way Mexicans do. So ask your server to skip the demi glaze and order the Mole sauce instead. This is another one of Juan's specialties. It has 35 ingredients including chocolate, Ancho Chiles, basil, pumpkin seed and Chipotle peppers cooked for an hour and a half in a chicken base.

Other American entrées include the Pecan Crusted pan seared Chilean Salmon served with a white wine and lemon butter cream sauce. Also the Lobster Lasagna Rolls made from lobster tail meat, ricotta and parmesan cheese covered with a smoked Serrano pepper sauce. And the Chicken Cordon Blue (pictured above). For this one the Chef flattens out two chicken breasts, rolls them in bread crumbs, stuffs them with Swiss cheese and center cut ham and covers them with a Chipotle cream sauce.



The Mexican selections taste just the way they do in Veracruz. First you start off with fresh baked corn tortilla chips and salsa. Here again Juan has developed his own special dip. He takes pickles, onion, fresh jalapeños, pico de gallo tomatoes, salt, cayenne pepper, white wine and olive oil and blends it all together. Serving at room temperature enhances the individual flavors of this enticing sauce.

My favorite Mexican dish is the Carnitas. Slow roasted pork butt is braised for 4 hours with green peppers and onions in



olive oil. The meat just pulls apart and is bursting with flavor. Then there is Huachinango. This is Red Snapper over rice with olives and peppers covered with sauce made from fresh tomatillos (similar to green tomatoes) sautéed with onions, cilantro, garlic and special seasonings. Carne Asada is a very popular dish. Flank steak is marinated for over a week. It is sliced thin and grilled with red and green peppers. Many diners request this entree to be served Carne Asada Tampiqueña. This is the only combination plate found throughout Mexico today. The steak is accompanied with enchiladas and grilled jalapenos and is covered with your choice of cheese and salsa.

You can even have pizza if you are so inclined. There are four Flatbreads prepared from homemade thin crusts. Try something a little different and order the Mexican Flatbread. It has beef, red sauce, jalapeños, onions, tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and is garnished with Mexican cheese and cilantro.

For those of you on a budget you should know all the lunch items can be ordered for dinner. Or you can make a dinner out of a couple of side dishes or a salad. The Tacos also make great appetizers or side dishes as well.



With dinners this good you should finish with dessert! Recently the dessert tray included brownies with vanilla ice cream, Tiramisu, seven layer chocolate cake, Raspberry layer cake and an ice cream sundae. The servers making the presentation here are April, Mitch and Alfonso.

Once you have dined at Ayalas you will want to return often. You will certainly have enough to eat and enjoy yourself immensely. The dedicated staff makes sure you leave with what the Mexicans say is a "Panza llena, corazón contento." That is to say Full Belly, Happy Heart!