



Europa Café
by Rich Belmont



Kris Queck, this review is for you! If my mail is any indication you started something when you contacted me to tell me Europa Café is your favorite restaurant in Dubuque. Many people have subsequently alerted me to the delightful European style cuisine awaiting us near the corner of Northwest Arterial and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Julia and Alex are from Odessa, Ukraine, a seaport city of over 1 million people situated on the Black Sea. They opened their little restaurant in June, 2012 in order to provide the local citizenry with a few tastes of their home country. Alex had previously operated three restaurants in Ukraine. He knew from experience the people in and around Dubuque would enjoy healthy, authentic European and Ukrainian specialties prepared with all natural ingredients and no artificial, frozen or pre-packaged components.



Julia and Alex have taken a small out-of-the way space in a strip mall and transformed it into a cozy, modern full-service café. The décor is interesting and worth checking out. On one wall there is a large picture of Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic along the Vltava River. On the opposite wall is an attractive gallery of pictures from the Ukraine.



Europa Café is one of those places you find out about from friends. Then quickly realize you have to keep going back again and again until you have tried everything on the menu. Take the soups, for example. There are several on the menu and two or three of them are available daily. So far my tasting team has enjoyed the Ukrainian Borscht and the Gift of the Sea. The Borscht is vegetable soup made with red beets, shredded cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes and pieces of chicken. The Seafood soup contains large chunks of fresh crabmeat, shrimp and fish in a light cream base.



There are at least 5 salads to choose from. They are never wilted or droopy because they are cut fresh to order. The Signature Salad is called Europa. Romaine lettuce, fresh apples and blueberries, dried cranberries and blue cheese are topped with roasted chicken and mango-pineapple dressing.

The 365ink Team is slowly tasting its way through all the sandwiches. The Italian Sunrise is the best seller. It has roasted, hand-cut chicken breast, tomatoes and mozzarella slathered in a rich pesto sauce. The pesto is a delicious blend of basil, olive oil, lemon, garlic, and parmesan cheese. Then there is the Columbus consisting of grilled chicken and homemade marinated red bell peppers.

For you connoisseurs of fresh mushrooms there are two



sandwiches for you. The Portabella Bella is a wonderful pairing of highly prized portabellas with sautéed sun-dried tomatoes and sweet onions served on toasted multi-grain bread and topped with mayo and pine nuts. The other sandwich has button mushrooms and Vidalia onions sautéed with rosemary and white wine and then mixed with a creamy gourmet white sauce. This sauce is a Ukrainian style of béchamel combining half and half, flour, butter and oregano.

Europa Café

4031 Pennsylvania Ave., Dubuque
563-845-0778 www.EuropaCafeofDBQ.com
[Facebook.com/EuropaCafeofDBQ](https://www.facebook.com/EuropaCafeofDBQ)

HOURS: Lunch: Mon – Sat: 11 am – 3 pm
Dinner: Mon – Sat: 5 pm – 9 pm, Sun: Closed

DINING STYLE: Casual

NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Europa Salad, Italian Sunrise, Columbus, Classic Hamburger, Chicken Kiev, Chicken Roulettes, Mama Mia Meatballs, Merry Ravioli, Borscht Soup, Vienna Apple Strudel, Fresh Fruit Compote

LIQUOR SERVICE: Beer & Wine only

PRICE RANGE: \$3.50 - \$10.99

PAY OPTIONS: Cash, Checks, Debit, All Credit, no AMEX

ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door & Restrooms

KIDS POLICY: Kids menu, High Chairs

RESERVATIONS: Recommended for 6 or more

CATERING: No TAKE OUT: Yes

DELIVERY: No PARKING: Strip Mall Lot



If you are a burger lover like me you will definitely go for the Ukrainian Classic Burger (above). It's a mixture of specially seasoned ground beef and pork covered with American cheese (or choose your own cheese like provolone or blue) and bacon, lettuce and tomato. Then when you feel you need some beef but you are already over your weekly burger limit it's time to try the Cowboy Beef. For this sandwich top round is slow roasted for 8 hours. Then it is thin sliced and smothered in homemade barbecue sauce (below).



Nighttime is when we like to visit Europa Café and sample all the finely crafted entrées. The Chicken Kiev is the national dish of Ukraine. A perfectly roasted chicken breast is stuffed with herbed butter and roasted in breadcrumbs (above). The Mama Mia certainly appeals to this Italian foodie. I found the Penne Rigate (right) cooked to the tooth and covered with just the right amount of marinara sauce. There was a more than generous number of savory meatballs owing to an expert infusion of an Italian spice



blend. The pasta was tossed with parmesan, mozzarella and provolone cheese. I also found the Chicken Roulettes (above) to be most satisfying. Chicken breasts are stuffed with mozzarella and wrapped with applewood bacon. The Veggie Pork dish was an adventure in unusual flavor pairing. A pork tenderloin filet is topped with tomatoes, marinated roasted peppers and mozzarella (below).

Sandwiches and entrées are served with your choice of a side dish. You choose from a list including Mashed Potatoes; Mashed Potatoes with Bacon and Parmesan Cheese; Rice with Vegetables (carrots, peas and corn); Pasta Salad; or Steamed Vegetables.

Alex and Julia have many more recipes to keep you coming back for more of their enticing dinners. Just after the Independence Day Holiday they will be adding several new entrées to their menu. You can expect to be enjoying Grilled Chicken Pasta, Shrimp Pasta, and Ukrainian Stew. You will also have the opportunity to savor Meat Pierogi topped with crunchy bacon; Pork Chops with Mushroom Gravy and Mashed Potatoes; and Stuffed Shells with Italian Sausage and Mozzarella.

Since the restaurant only has 12 tables it helps if you make a reservation for parties of 6 or more. Take-out is big business here too. There is a new special deal of \$5 off on Take-out orders over \$50.



Before I forget I should state the beverages are exceptional. Lavazza Italian coffee is brewed from freshly ground whole beans and bottled water. I particularly like the Espresso Macchiato which is deep roasted, very strong espresso with a dash of milk. The cappuccino and lattes are all excellent. Krisina loves the fresh fruit compote (right).

And of course I won't forget to mention the awesome desserts! Europa Café's signature dessert is Vienna Apple Strudel (below). This delectable pastry is baked daily from a centuries-old Bavarian recipe with fresh apples, cranberries and nuts and is served with a dollop of vanilla ice cream. If you prefer to drink your ice cream you will love the Pink Panthera better known as La Panthera Rosa or Pink Panther or perhaps you know it by its more generic name – Strawberry Milkshake.



Other desserts are chef's choice and might include a Fruit Tart or German Chocolate Cake. On my last visit my team enjoyed both a Strawberry and a Blueberry Cheesecake and

the soon to be famous Traditional Ukrainian Fresh Fruit Compote with cherries, peaches, apples, strawberries and raspberries.

There is still more to write about Europa Café. But it's really better you go there and see for yourself the difference really fresh food makes. After all, their motto is: "Eat Fresh - Be Healthy!"

