



Fresh Take

by Rich Belmont

With the Christmas Holiday less than 3 weeks away who has time to make dinner? With concerts to attend, cookies to bake, parties to go to, shopping to do and visiting with friends and family few of us can even think of something to cook for supper!

Fortunately there is a way to put delicious, wholesome and satisfying dinners on the table without actually doing any work. They only require about 30 minutes of baking time and the only thinking necessary is in choosing which of the several meals available you will want to serve first.



Fresh Take, which opened in August, 2012, is a shop on Main Street in Dubuque specializing in ready to bake casseroles. Think of it as a casserole take-out place that gives you the option of taking home a complete, freshly made-that-day dinner. You get to provide your family with a wonderful meal that tastes like you made it yourself without having to buy groceries cook or wash dishes afterwards. It's a convenience we all need this time of year – seriously.

Fresh Take is owned by Jeff and Michelle Vogler who are both natives of Dubuque. Jeff graduated from Wahlert Catholic High School and Loras College and then embarked on a 9 year career as a corporate buyer. He was a Merchandise Planning Manager at Pier One Imports, Fort Worth, TX, an Associate Buyer at Sears in Chicago, IL and an Assistant Buyer at Macy's, Saint Louis, MO. Jeff really missed his family's casserole dinners and soon thought of an idea for opening a casserole restaurant or meals-to-go store.



When Michelle was offered a position as a Brand Manager at McGraw-Hill Companies back in Dubuque the couple moved back home. With Michelle's full support, Jeff seized the opportunity to open his dream business. After finding a location and purchasing the kitchen equipment he began his search for people who knew how to make all-in-one ready to bake meals. Jeff says he considers himself to be very lucky to have found his kitchen staff. Kate Fisher (foreground above) is Chef and has extensive cooking experience particularly with baking casseroles since she was formerly the Chef at I Luv Foods in Dubuque. The cook is Maria Smith (background above), a farm wife with years of practice preparing home cooked meals.



Everything at Fresh Take is made fresh daily from as many locally grown ingredients as possible. Some of their suppliers are Tri State Market, Fincel's Sweet Corn, and East Mill Bakeshop (pictured at right) and Catering all in East Dubuque, IL and Czipar's Apple Orchard in Dubuque.

Casseroles are available in 3 sizes (at right): Small sufficient for 2 people, Medium for 3 to 4 people and Large for up to 8 big eaters. They are packed with so many ingredients the Small size weighs approximately one and a half pounds, the Medium is another pound more and the Large can be up to a hefty seven pounds of food!

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At this time there are 9 dinners to entice your family with. Here are a few of your choices:



• Mexican Lasagna – This gluten-free meal contains layers of fresh corn tortillas, light and dark ground turkey, tomatoes, green bell peppers, Jalapeños, sour cream and Colby and jack cheese. It comes with fresh tomatoes and lettuce you add after baking.



• Chicken, Veggies and Rice – This is by far the most popular. White meat chicken is cooked with a delicate butter and flour roux and added to wild rice, broccoli, carrots and is topped with garlic bread crumbs and parmesan cheese.

Fresh Take

345 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001

563-845-0773 | www.FreshTakeToday.com

Facebook.com/FreshTakeToday

HOURS: Mon – Fri: 10 am – 7 pm, Sat – Sun: Closed

RECOMMENDATIONS: Chicken, Veggies & Rice; Reuben; Italian Lasagna; Spaghetti Casserole; Mexican Lasagna; Eggplant Parmesan

PRICES: \$7 - \$28

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, Visa, MasterCard

ACCESSIBILITY: Front door, Unisex Restroom.

CATERING: Yes TAKE OUT: Only

DELIVERY: \$25 Minimum Order Required

PARKING: On Street, Two Reserved Spaces on South Side of Building, City Lot South of Building, Curb Service

• Goulash – Made from Jeff's own recipe, fresh elbow macaroni noodles are blended with ground beef, vegetables, diced tomatoes and homemade tomato sauce.



• Reuben – Fresh Take's Signature Dish. Corned beef brisket is slow roasted for 8 hours. It is sliced and layered with a delicious marble rye bread supplied by East Mill Bakeshop, Swiss cheese, sauerkraut and Thousand Island dressing (pictured at right).

• Eggplant Parmesan (at right) – This one is perfect for vegetarians! Thick slices of eggplant are dipped in egg, breaded and baked (not fried) and covered with a home-made marinara sauce and a blend of part skim and whole milk mozzarella, provolone, parmesan and Romano cheeses.



• Italian-American Lasagna – My favorite! It's made with ground beef, mild Italian sausage, ricotta, mozzarella, parmesan and cottage cheese. Then it's piled on thick between 3 layers of lasagna noodles.

There are also Buffalo Chicken Casserole, Spaghetti Casserole and Turkey and Dressing choices for your dining pleasure.



Although there is always something available in the fridge dishes are prepared early each day. So it is best to call in and reserve your choices to insure the sizes and flavors you want are available. Call in on Thursdays and Fridays and order breakfast casseroles. You may also make special requests e.g. ground turkey instead of beef, no onions, etc. if you provide at least a 24 hour advance notice. The menu is changed frequently so call, or check the website or Facebook for updates.

Fresh Take is a one-stop shop. They have everything you need to make your dinner complete. There are 2 salads: Spring Greens complete with bacon, tomatoes and cheese and also Spinach Salad. The latter has slivered almonds, red onions, fresh strawberries and feta cheese. You have your choice of either Red Wine Vinaigrette or Creamy Garlic freshly made dressings supplied by East Mill Bakeshop and Catering.

There is always an assortment of breads, rolls, potato chips and cookies from East Mill as well. There is also a large assortment of sodas and popcorn from Freddie's Popcorn. Pick up a bottle of fine wine to compliment your dinner. Wines are supplied by local vintners Park Farm, Brush Creek and Stone Cliff Wineries.

So far I have been talking about dinner. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention you can get a delicious lunch between 11 am and 1:30 pm Monday through Friday. Each day the staff chooses two of their casseroles and bakes them so they are ready to eat (pictured above). The day's noon time meals are posted on the Fresh Take website and you can always call in advance and request your favorite.



Parking is available on the south side of the building. There are 2 reserved free parking spaces in the Capri parking lot or you can take advantage of curbside delivery. Simply call before you go and pick-up your order at the curb. Pay cash right there or use a credit card. A receipt is then sent to your e-mail address.

Casseroles are also sold at the Dubuque Winter Farmers' Market. So there you have it; a quick and easy way to serve up home-made meals without having to make them at home.

Come to think of it this is a great idea for Christmas presents too. You can get the Gift Card Special until Christmas. Buy \$50 in gift certificates available in small amounts and get \$10 free for yourself! Great meals, when you need them, and no cooking; what a way to say Happy Holidays!

