



Pizzeria Uno

by Rich Belmont

Because I write about restaurants I am frequently asked where I like to eat. When I mention one of my favorite pizza places is Pizzeria Uno in Platteville, WI the next question is always "isn't that a chain restaurant?" The answer is "absolutely not". Many people assume it's one of the original Pizzeria Uno pizza parlors started in Chicago. While it is independently owned and not a franchise, there is a connection.



The original Pizzeria Uno was established in 1943 on the corner of Ohio and Wabash in downtown Chicago. It quickly became popular because it offered a deep dish crust pizza and a recipe combining authentic Italian spices and quality tomatoes with a lot of cheese. That restaurant evolved into a chain now called Uno Chicago Grill and in some places Uno Express.

A man named Tom Kelly worked at the original Pizzeria Uno and in 1976 he purchased the Old Eagles Club in Platteville and the rights to the Pizzeria Uno name in the State of Wisconsin. He created a replica of the original making sure he used the same recipes and baked the pizzas in the same way. For example, the pan style pizzas are still a deep crust with the cheese placed in the crust and then copious quantities of other ingredients are added before the sauce is added over the top. These pizzas are famous for the Uno Special a La Mode. A layer of shredded mozzarella and provolone cheese blend is baked over the top of your favorite pizza for a rich, stuffed pizza taste.

John and Karen Utley purchased Pizzeria Uno on April 1, 1994. They have been running it for over 19 years already. John had previously owned the Hoist House, a Platteville bar. When he first started courting Karen one of his first dates was at the pizzeria. He still remembers ordering a pan style white crust Deluxe a La Mode fresh mushroom pizza. It was the best pizza he and Karen had ever eaten up till then so buying the place was their destiny!

Right from the start the Utleys had two major goals. First make sure the quality and the taste of the food remained as good as it was when the restaurant opened in 1976. And second insure all their guests were treated to exceptional service. Obviously, John and Karen have achieved these objectives. Their Manager, Wayne Spreeman, oversees the food preparation. The pizza dough and the sauces are all made in-house. All the cheeses are from Wisconsin and all the meat (except pepperoni) are supplied by Weber Meats in Cuba City, WI. Friendly and efficient customer service is provided by a staff of dedicated and highly motivated college students.

Pizzeria Uno is well known for its version of the Long Island Iced Tea. Their secret recipe of vodka, rum, triple sec and a few other ingredients offers a wonderful prelude to a delicious dinner. There are several flavors including the original Long Island Iced Tea, Strawberry Blond, Lemonade, Long Beach with cranberry juice, and Fourth of July with Blue Curacao.



On a recent visit my 365ink Tasting Team enjoyed several of these libations. Since one of the team members does not drink alcohol she enjoyed 1919 Root Beer on tap. Another team member is having a baby in less than 3 months so she enjoyed a non-alcoholic daiquiri. A truly satisfying drink was the unusual Orangutan that tastes like Sweet Tarts and was invented by our talented and creative server, Brooke Nichols. Some of these concoctions are pictured next to a cheese shaker to give you an idea of how big they are.



Sipping this huge drink takes a while so it's a good idea to enjoy some appetizers. Leo's Way Nachos is a good choice. The tortilla chips are covered with taco beef, diced tomatoes, shredded cheese and jalapeño peppers with either hot or mild sauce. Another great app is Garlic Bread with butter and Romano cheese.

Pizzeria Uno

175 W. Highway 151, Platteville, WI 53818
608-348-8667 (Unos) or 608-348-7808
www.PizzeriaUno.net
facebook.com/PizzeriaUnoInPlattville

HOURS: Mon – Sun, 4 p.m. – 11 p.m.

DINING STYLE: Casual

NOISE LEVEL: Main restaurant: Conversational
Annex and Back Bar: Loud

RECOMMENDATIONS: Long Island Iced Teas, Leo's Way Nachos, Garlic Bread, Cheeseburger Pizza, Meaty Mouthful Pizza, Skinny Crust Pizza, Italian Beef, Mostaccioli, Ice Cream Drinks, Hot Fudge Chewy Crunchy Caramel Cake

LIQUOR SERVICE: Premium Bar

PRICE RANGE: \$4 - \$22

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Check, Debit, Major Credit

ACCESSIBILITY: Door on East Side / Restrooms

KIDS POLICY: High Chairs and Boosters

RESERVATIONS: Yes

CATERING: No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No

PARKING: Large Private Lot

Of course a pizzeria is a place to eat pizza, right? They come in several versions and flavors. First you choose white or whole wheat crust. Then you decide on pan style or skinny (thin) crust. Next you choose from a list of 21 toppings or order from the list of 12 specialty pizzas.



Finally, you decide to add A La Mode or not. This cheese blend top layer is best on pan style pizzas and is ordered on about 90% of them.

The most popular pizza is the Deluxe. It is loaded with cheese, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms, green peppers, onions and green olives. The second biggest seller is the Veggie Pizza with cheese, onions, green peppers, fresh mushrooms, green and black olives and tomatoes. Most of the Veggie Pizzas are ordered on wheat crust. I wonder why that is!

My tasting team really enjoyed the Meaty Mouthful Pizza. This comes with 7 meats: Italian sausage meat and sliced sausage links, ground beef, meatballs, pepperoni, Canadian bacon and bacon bites. One of my crew wanted a Taco Pizza and another wanted a BLT. They just ordered a half and half so they were both happy. The All American and the

Delicious Cheeseburger are just like hamburgers with cheddar and Monterey jack cheese only on a crust instead of some huge bun. The cheeseburger one even has lettuce, onions, tomatoes and dill pickles! My favorite pizza is the skinny crust with canned mushrooms and Weber Meat's Italian sausage. The cracker-like crust is delightfully crunchy and does not overpower the toppings.



Of course, a self-respecting Pizzeria must have pasta, too. You can choose spaghetti, vegetable lasagna or my favorite, mostaccioli. Next time I order it I will be sure to add meatballs or Italian sausage links, or maybe both!



There is a variety of sandwiches to eat when you don't feel like pizza. The 10 sandwiches on the menu are all good. However, the Italian Sausage, the Meatball and the Uno Burger loose ground beef are particularly delicious. My favorite is the Italian Beef Sandwich which is outstanding! Garlic Bread is stuffed with thinly sliced and marinated Top Round Beef and served with an impressive au jus. Those in the know always order this sandwich with mozzarella, green peppers and onions.

Monday is Mexican Monday. There are super size Tacos and Burritos. Tuesday is called Tater Tuesday. If you like spuds you have to eat here on Tuesday. Giant Markon First Crop potatoes are stuffed with your favorite baked potato fillings. There is a Taco Tater, a BBQ Beef Tater, Italian Tater, Cheeseburger, BBQ Chicken and for a real uncommon tater, the Tuna with cheddar and tomatoes. Friday is the only day Fettuccini is served. The pasta is tossed with heavy cream and garlic butter. You can dress it up with diced chicken, shrimp or crab if you like.



After you have had dinner here you will be so full. Hopefully, you saved room for dessert. There is Turtle Pie, Peanut Butter and Chocolate Pie, Hot Fudge Cake and the thoroughly decadent Hot Fudge Chewy Crunchy Caramel Cake. This last one was recommended by our waitress, Brooke, and she certainly knew what she was talking about. Then again, the blended ice cream drinks are all too good to pass up. There are so many so it's hard to choose just one. Neil, a member of my team, enjoyed his Butterscotch Royale tremendously.

By now, you have figured out Pizzeria Uno is all about good food. But it's also an entertainment hot spot. Next to the restaurant is the Annex. It's a fun bar with great drinks and loud music. And behind that is the Back Bar. It's an outside, open-air bar so smoking is permitted and there is live music on week-ends.

Plan on having a good time with no worries. Pizzeria Uno has a service called the Good Plan Van. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 5 pm to 2:30 am the van can pick you up or take you home. It's not unusual to see 50 or 60 cars left in the parking lot after a night of raucous revelry.

Pizzeria Uno hasn't changed much in 37 years. It was, and still is, a great place to eat, drink and be merry!