



**Ramona Sunny Bakery & Delicatessen**

by Rich Belmont



There is an intriguing little bakery and delicatessen right next to Galena's oldest home, the Dowling House, on Diagonal Street in Galena, IL. It is called Ramona Sunny and is simply named after its owners, Ramona and Sunny Botezatu (Bow-tee-za-too). They came to this country more than 30 years ago from Transylvania in the central region of Romania.

You remember Transylvania, don't you? In Dracula, Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, Count Dracula lived in Castle Bran in Transylvania. He was a vampire and his name, interesting enough means Son of Dragon.



Ramona and Sunny worked together as Dental Technicians and as you can imagine they did not get to meet many people in a dental laboratory. So somehow they came to the conclusion they could develop stimulating friendships by opening a bakery and delicatessen. They chose Galena for its location because the historic city reminded them of their hometown of Brasov in Romania.

Incidentally, Brasov is only 47 kilometers from Castle Bran. So when you visit Ramona Sunny see if you can find the drawing of the castle hanging on the wall.

When Ramona and Sunny purchased their building they completely renovated it. They replaced all the plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning and had the original interior stone walls tuck pointed. They designed and added 10 beautiful brick archways, opened up a hallway and installed a brand new commercial kitchen in the utility room. The original porch was enclosed and transformed into part of the dining area.

The remodeling was such a masterful accomplishment Ramona and Sunny were the recipients of the 2012 Number One Galena Historic Preservation Award presented to them by the Galena Historic Preservation Commission!

The bakery and deli is open for breakfast and lunch and also encourages visitors to sit and relax during the day with coffee and fresh baked pastries. Delicious omelets and delectable sandwiches are served all day as well.



Emphasis is placed on food quality and healthy choices. The soups are vegetarian and so are some of the sandwiches like the Marinated Soy Burger and the Fire Roasted Red Pepper Hummus Sandwich.

The spreads and pastry fillings are homemade. The sweets are made with small amounts of natural sugar. No artificial sweeteners or high fructose corn syrup is used. Only unbleached flour is used in the breads and pastries.

Patience is a virtue in this restaurant. If you stand at the counter you can see the omelets and sandwiches are prepared to your order with personalized care as if Ramona and Sunny were cooking for you in their own home.

Many people just visit the bakery for coffee and pastries. The coffee is roasted right in Galena at Isabella Imports on Main Street. The Turkish coffee also comes from Isabella and is a specialty of the house. Finely ground coffee beans are boiled in a copper pot where the grounds are allowed to settle to the bottom. In Romania Turkish coffee is called Cafea Turcească and the pot is called an ibric.

Ramona serves her Turkish coffee with a dash of Cardamom, a truly exotic spice that needs to be savored slowly. It is made from the seeds inside pods that are the fruit of a perennial herb related to ginger. It is called the "Queen of Spices" and is the 3rd most expensive spice after saffron and vanilla. Cardamom tastes a little like a combination of ginger and cinnamon with a hint of lemon and mint.



**Ramona Sunny Bakery & Delicatessen**  
215 Diagonal Street, Galena, IL 61036  
815-777-4364 / Facebook.com/RamonaSunnyBakery  
**HOURS:** Tue – Sat: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sun: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Mon: Closed  
**DINING STYLE:** Casual, Counter Service  
**NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational  
**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Turkish Coffee, All Pastries, Omelettes, Mushroom Soup, Meech, Hummus, Reuben, Italian Beef, Mediterranean Grilled Chicken Breast  
**LIQUOR SERVICE:** None **PRICES:** \$2.75 - \$10.95  
**PAY OPTIONS:** Cash, Debit, Visa, MasterCard, Local Checks  
**ACCESSIBILITY:** Ramp to Front Door & Restrooms  
**KIDS POLICY:** No Menu, No High Chair, No Booster  
**RESERVATIONS:** No **CATERING:** No  
**TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No  
**PARKING:** On Diagonal Street or Bench Street



Photo by Larissa Distler

There are 13 pastries and you will find each one has a flavor all its own and you will not be able to pick just one as your favorite. They are all addictive. Take the Walnut Roll for example. A ground walnut filling is spread onto a light dough and rolled into a tube. The Horn is filled with a delicious blend of plums, apricots and walnuts. The Sweet Cheese Pastry is filled with a blend of ricotta and another fresh cheese. There is also a Cheese and Apricot Trigano and a Raspberry Walnut Trigano. Both of these are triangles of phyllo dough stuffed with delicious fruit fillings. For chocolate lovers like me the Dark Chocolate Brownie is simply awesome and for something really different the Kahlúa



Cupcake is made with real Kahlúa Liqueur and is simply indescribable. The ovens are always in use in the bakery. You will usually find 5 just-baked breads in the bread case. They are: Mini baguette, Sourdough, Rye with Caraway Seeds, White Unbleached Flour and Multi-Grain. Homemade soups are always simmering, too. When I visited I could have ordered Tomato with Pasta or Mushroom. I chose the Mushroom Soup and I was very pleased. It is made with grilled portabellas and sparkles with earthy, mushroom flavor.

I also enjoyed the Omelet with Kale and Feta Cheese. The kale adds a certain body to the cheese and is carefully folded into an egg batter that is neither runny nor overcooked. It is served with roasted red peppers and oil cured Moroccan olives. I will be going back for the French Omelet prepared with Balkan Aged Sheep's cheese.



The menu board boasts 8 exceptional sandwiches. They are all made just the way you would expect from a delicatessen. The Tuna Spread is homemade with cheese and onion. The Italian Beef is cooked in juice bursting with beefy flavor and served on a fresh baked mini baguette (above) with your choice of mild or hot giardiniera. There is a Ham & cheese with Hormel Natural Choice Ham containing no preservatives. It is served with Swiss and American Cheese, red pepper, lettuce and tomato. There is also a Reuben (below) made from hand sliced corned beef, sauerkraut and 1000 Island dressing.



Because Ramona and Sunny are from Romania they offer us an opportunity to enjoy Central European cuisine. This is why I like to order the more unusual sandwiches. For example Meech (at right) is a Romanian grilled sausage made from 80% beef and 20% lamb. Then there is the Mediterranean Grilled Chicken Breast that has been soaked in a special marinade of olive oil, lemon, lime and several secret spices. Even the Hummus sandwich is impressive. The hummus is made from mashed chickpeas, olive oil, lemon juice, salt and garlic and Tahini. This last ingredient is a sesame seed paste. Ramona blends the hummus with fire roasted red peppers.

Don't forget to check out the deli case for some old world delicacies to take home. You will find Bosanski Kulen beef smoked sausage and Suha Govedina hickory smoked dried beef. Both of these items are made by Bosnians in Franklin Park, IL. Also available are Kashkaval Vitosha cow's milk cheese and Balkan sheep's milk cheese imported from Bulgaria. You will want to take home some special deli treats baked by Ramona too! Try her Mini Burek feta cheese in phyllo dough rolls and the very popular Feta Cheese and Spinach phyllo dough rolls.



We do not know if Dracula of Transylvania really was a vampire. But thanks to Ramona and Sunny we now know a little about the flavors of Romanian Cuisine so we can be pretty sure he ate very well!