

{ 365ink dining: shot tower inn }



Shot Tower Inn

by Rich Belmont



Dubuque's Historical Shot Tower was built in 1856. It produced three tons of shot a day during the Civil War and was only used for four years. Now its namesake, the Shot Tower Inn has been around almost as long and is still going strong. Well, OK, I'm kidding about how long it has been at the corner of Fourth Street and Locust in Dubuque. Actually it's been in the same location since it was established in 1967. It's still serving the same delicious food from the same time tested recipes it started with 45 years



ago. Jim and Cori Kunnert took over the restaurant from Jim's Dad in 1999. They did some remodeling but made sure they kept the same atmosphere, the same famous sandwiches and pizza and even most of the same staff. As a case in point the managers are all long term employees. Steve Schramm has been at Shot Tower Inn for approximately 30 years, Tania Wiese has been a manager for 15 years and Mike Jannette has been with the Kunnert's for 13



years. Head Cook Roger Neumann ensures the food is consistently excellent and has been running the kitchen for 13 years. Some of the servers go way back too! For example, Josie Eigenberger and Janet Knepper know everything there is to know about the menu because they have been there 28 and 21 years respectively.

Shot Tower Inn is a fun place to visit. You can say it is really two restaurants in one. The family side is self service and has many large tables for party size groups. This side has the pizza counter and six video games for the kids to play in between pizza slices and sandwiches. The sports fan side has the full service bar and nine HDTV's to watch all the games. You can see the TV's from all of the tables and cozy booths. The Roof Garden for open air dining will reopen sometime in May and is a great place to meet friends. During the summer the Margarita Bar up there is very popular.

The Shot Tower Inn is also a museum. So it is a good idea to walk around and check out the early 20th century toys and games on display. There are really big wooden cars, a toy train set, models of NASCAR cars and a giant Mr. Peanut. (You young people won't know who Mr. Peanut is but you will get the idea when you see him). There is even a really old Penny-Farthing bicycle that probably dates back to the 1870's or 1880's. A Penny-Farthing is a bike also known as a High Wheeler with one large and one small wheel. The name was inspired by the image of a British Penny coin being trailed by a Farthing (or quarter penny) coin.



Over the years Jim has added a few things to his menu. However, he wisely understood when something is not broken you don't fix it. His customers keep coming back week after week and year after

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year because his original "core items" as he calls them have been prepared the same way from the beginning. The restaurant built its reputation on Italian Grinders, Meatball Sandwiches and Pizza. Only fresh ingredients are used. Mild and hot sausage, meatballs and pizza sauce are all made right on the premises. The pizza dough is made in the kitchen every day.



The Italian Grinder and the Italian Meatball Sandwiches are the biggest sellers. The Grinder is ground spicy sausage topped with melted mozzarella and likewise the Meatball is ground up spicy beef with Italian seasonings and covered with mozzarella cheese.



The burgers are juicy half pounders of Choice Black Angus beef. Many regulars order a half pounder with cheese and bacon. One of the tastiest burgers is the one topped with Swiss cheese and sautéed mushrooms. The build your own burger is fun to do because you can have it with your choice of any of the usual pizza toppings plus bacon, ham and even corned beef.

Shot Tower Inn

290 Locust Street, Dubuque, IA • 563-556-1061

HOURS: Mon – Thu, 11 a.m. – 11 p.m.

Fri – Sat, 11a.m. – Midnight, Sun, 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.

DINING STYLE: Casual NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Nachos Supreme, Garlic Bread with Bruschetta, Pizza, Italian Grinder, Italian Meatball, Philly Steak, French Dip, Wings, BBQ Ribs, Fried Chicken, Hot Beef and Mashed Potatoes.

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar, Happy Hour 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm
Mon – Fri, Gold Margaritas

PRICES: Lunch: \$4.95 to \$7.00, Dinner: \$8.50 to \$22.85

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, Amex

ACCESSIBILITY: 4th Street entrance and Restroom

KIDS POLICY: Welcome! Menu on Board, High Chairs and Boosters

CATERING: Yes TAKE OUT: Yes RESERVATIONS: No

DELIVERY: Yes PARKING: Private lot

When you don't feel like pizza and burgers there are ten other scrumptious sandwiches. There is a chicken club with bacon and Swiss cheese on a ciabatta bun, a really thick Pork Tenderloin and a Philly Steak with onions and peppers over sirloin steak and topped with melted cheddar and mozzarella. Seriously though, in my opinion the best sandwiches are either the Big Shot Roast Beef (right) with homemade gravy or the French Dip with mozzarella and roasted onions and au jus on the side. In either case, Angus Bottom Round is basted in a slow roaster with an awesome secret seasoning blend that is so good I am always tempted to order a second sandwich.



Pizzas are the heart of this landmark restaurant. They are all made from fresh ingredients and are available in 9, 12 and 14 inch sizes and in deep dish or thin crust versions. To begin with there is the Monday through Friday 7 inch thin crust pizza lunch special for only \$4.95. Add a dollar and you can make it a gourmet special and this, people, is a really good deal! The Gourmet Pizza Specials are as interesting as they are delicious. The House Special has spinach, tomatoes and cheese. My favorite is the Bianco (right) with olive oil, garlic, marinated tomatoes, oregano and mozzarella. If you want to try something different order the American Cheeseburger Pizza. It comes with ground beef, onions, pickles and cheddar cheese. Of course, there is a long list of standard pizzas to choose from for those of us who are less adventuresome.

There is also a whole assortment of snacks to enjoy while you are talking with friends or watching TV. There are Cheese Puffs, Chicken Fingers and Mini Tacos just to name a few. You can order a Combo Basket of your favorites. Or how about munching on a Nachos Supreme for a while? A huge pile of nachos are covered with tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, black olives and nacho cheese. A rather large helping of beef or chicken is mixed in just to keep it interesting. I especially like the Garlic Bread. You can order it with cheese or my favorite, with Bruschetta: tomatoes and onions seasoned with fresh basil, garlic and parmesan cheese.



The Chicken Wings are a real treat too! Large wings are fried in a Henny Penny fryer so they are cooked at low temperature under controlled low pressure. You get to choose from 9 flavors including BBQ, Hot, Bourbon, Caribbean, Chipotle, Sesame, Teriyaki, Zesty Orange or Sweet Chile. Every one of them is so good you might find you don't even need the ranch or bleu cheese dip that comes with them.



The dinner and pasta entrees are a pleasant surprise in what you might think is just a burger, wings and pizza place. The Burrito with homemade sauce is so good and eating the Baked Lasagna makes you think you are in an exclusive Italian restaurant. In my opinion, though, the truly great entrees are the Hot Beef, Fried Chicken and BBQ Ribs. The Hot Beef because of those slices of specially seasoned bottom round, the Fresh (never frozen) Chicken because of the hand breading and frying in the pressurized Henny Penny. And the BBQ Ribs: these Saint Louis Cut Ribs are naturally tender and have very little fat after they are baked for over seven hours and topped with Special House BBQ sauce.

Please don't forget the dessert either. There is Chocolate Cake, Sopapillas, Turtle Cheesecake and the number one all time favorite: The Shot Tower Fried Ice Cream. If you pass this one up you will be sorry because it's a rather large ball of vanilla ice cream covered with granola and doused with honey. Truly a fitting end to a great lunch or dinner!

