



WINGS WITH BUFFALO SAUCE



SEARED AHI TUNA SALAD



BACON WRAPPED MEATLOAF

COPPER KETTLE

BY BRYCE PARKS

Owner Chris Staver was raised in Belmont, WI and pretty much grew up in Red's Supper Club owned by his grandparents. He was making onion rings and cleaning catfish when he was very young. From then on he always found himself working in restaurants all over the Tri-States. He just always knew the hospitality business was his destiny.

The Copper Kettle building itself was originally a neighborhood grocery that was converted to a restaurant. It was located right across the street from the Dubuque Brewing and Malting Company and faced a huge copper brewing kettle. At one time, Copper Kettle was known for its outstanding food. So Chris decided to restore Copper Kettle to its former glory. After buying the building, he spent several months remodeling it so it would reflect the neighborhood's history. Not only did the venue retain historical treatments like tin walls and ceilings but the original outdoor sign still hangs now, indoors above the opening into the kitchen. The brewing theme is inspired by the venerable and massive Dubuque Brewing and Malting across the street. In the early 19th century, it was one of the most modern breweries in the United States. Also on display are some of the brewery's artifacts Chris is collecting. Don't forget to see the copper finish on the bar top and look up at the old fashioned belt driven ceiling fans, too.

The new Copper Kettle opened this month, eight years ago, and remains an anchor hotspot in the north end neighborhood, serving professionally prepared, made from scratch, quality meals. The menu started off much smaller than it is now, focusing on doing some simple but fantastic offerings alongside some quirky things you don't see everyday. Though still not huge, the menu these days has grown to include some of *365ink's* favorite dishes in the Tri-State area. No doubt this is due to the steadfast skills of Chef Kat Thomas who has been making magic in the kitchen here for nearly as long as the current iteration has been open. Her talent with flavors is as commendable as her consistency in keeping things great every visit. Copper Kettle takes great pride in surprising you with unexpected delights. Some of those items are offered up in the Starters section of the menu, so we'll go there first.

Copper Kettle's version of the Scotch Egg is a trademark. This British picnic food derivation uses

a soft boiled egg inside herbed country sausage and covered with breadcrumbs, then deep fried. It is served with a spread made from Dusseldorf and Dijon mustard and mayonnaise. You don't see Prince Edward island Blue Mussels on a menu very often. Probably never before in Dubuque. They're served with white wine and cream with fresh bread.

You'll also find delicious versions of recognizable favorites like onion rings, fried cheese curds, buffalo chicken bites (and a cauliflower version too), smoked pork or pulled chicken nachos as well as a BBQ chicken flatbread. It seems like everyone's got a flatbread these days. Probably because they're delicious.

I didn't include chicken wings in that list. That's because the wings at Copper Kettle would be disrespected by sticking them in some bulleted list of appetizers. For eight years, the buttermilk fried wings at Copper Kettle have probably been the best chicken wings in Dubuque. Try them and tell me I'm wrong. They just simply stand out. The flavor, juiciness, and size all make them stand out, and that's before you even put a sauce on them. If a wing can stand alone and win a flavor contest before you sauce it, you know you are onto something. And with a choice of six common sauces, you can't go wrong, but for our money the traditional buffalo is the best. Somehow the smooth heat has a buttery quality to it that makes six of them at a time just never enough.

We admit to being addicted to the seared tuna dished at Copper Kettle. The first is the salad version. The very generous portion of lightly seared tuna, cut into thick strips leaving them warm with a raw center, is the perfect vehicle for the chile vinaigrette that tops the pile of mixed artisan greens, cucumber, carrot, scallion, and crunchy wontons. We also think that the fried Feta cheese on the Greek Salad are like little drops of cheese love disguised in a healthy salad with Kalamata olives, cucumber, grape tomatoes, and an herb and wine vinaigrette. You can add chicken, salmon, or gyro meat as well. I'll say that the salads are kind of pricey but delicious. I usually need a starter to make the meal fill me up. Luckily for me... CHICKEN WINGS TO THE RESCUE. I should take a moment to note that the house balsamic vinaigrette that I get on my side salads

may be my favorite dressing in the land. It's creamy and a mix of sweet and savory and works perfectly.

We have lunch there so often instead of dinner, we have not had many of the entrées, but the ones we have had were everything that was promised. Maybe it's a just a fish thing, but the three fish offering are all just what you're hoping they'll be when you order. The Walnut Crusted Salmon is flaky and delicious. The Fish and Chips, especially when you get the white truffle Parmesan fries, is a battered church fundraiser fish lover's dream. I mean, they can broil it too, but the fried version is just so decadently tasty. I mentioned the seared tuna salad. Even that takes a back seat to the Seared Tuna Bowl, which simply features the medium rare ahi tuna served over white rice and a seasonal vegetable, usually zucchini. The sesame soy chile sauce they drizzle over this dish is the clincher. I usually ask for an extra side if it because it's so tasty.

I felt bad that I couldn't tell you about more entrées, so I put down my laptop screen, and we just went there for lunch again to round out not only our bellies, but our first-hand knowledge of the entrée offerings. The bacon-wrapped meatloaf we had today was a perfect fit for a cold, breezy day. Two slices of savory meatloaf with a huge pile of mashed potatoes and a mushroom gravy with a side of sautéed zucchini which I think is mostly there to make me feel better about having just eaten a mountain of meat and potatoes. The scallops (6) and Parmesan risotto served with bacon, roasted red pepper, and roasted garlic were a smooth smoky treat which also paired well with the fall weather. If these examples are an indicator of things to expect here in flavor town, then just go by these incredible sounding dish names and dig in... Pepper Crusted Ribeye Steak, Pretzel Crusted Pork Chop, and Butternut Squash Ravioli. Yum!

I almost feel bad relegating the great burgers this far down in the column, but what can you say about burgers other than they're done right or they are boring? The burgers at Copper Kettle are not boring, my friend, and can be "upgraded" to bison or a vegan patty if you like. I seem to be stuck on the mushroom swiss burger with sautéed crimini mushrooms.



SCALLOPS AND RISOTTO

If I'm feeling frisky, I'll add bacon and a fried egg because I can. You had me at caramelized onions.

Back on my fish kick: *365ink* did a review of all the fish tacos we could find in Dubuque, and the Cajun seasoned tilapia tacos here with cilantro pesto and pico de gallo were the winner for the best non-deep fried ones in town. Just get 'em. And at \$9.95, they're a deal.

I've long said that the BLT is great as it is, and when people try to make it funny with cheese or weird bread

or funky aioli, they just mess it up. This BLT is not messed up, and I'll give them the pass on the sourdough because it's delicious. My favorite part, and every restaurant should follow their lead, is the option to put more bacon on it for \$2.95 is written right there on the menu. BRILLIANT! Who wouldn't want a little more bacon on their BLT, especially when they've found such a good bacon to feature? And as I say that out of one side of my mouth, the other side has to admit that the occasional lunch special they run, the Hangover BLT that adds pepper jack cheese and a fried egg to the mix could never be called a bad idea. So I may stand corrected... by myself.

Other sandwiches include a gyro, pulled pork, grilled or fried chicken, and steak tacos. I've seen friends get them all, and I've never seen any left on the plate. You figure it out.

One thing that we can say for sure about Copper Kettle is that the great quality of food has always been consistent. They simply do it right, and by our experience have never faltered for that goal. When I want to take someone out to lunch or dinner, especially out of town guests and they don't want me to fuss over them with a "fancy" dinner at one of the restaurants in Dubuque thought of as fitting in the category, I bring them to Copper Kettle, where they get the four star food but don't have to dress up first. The only problem with the whole place is that I have to do a special rain dance and wave my hands just right in front of the sink in the bathroom to get that darned motion-detecting faucet to turn on. ■



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WHOLE GRAINS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

BY HY-VEE NUTRITIONISTS MEGAN HORSTMAN (ASBURY) AND AMY CORDINGLEY (LOCUST)

September is National Whole Grains Month and National Family Meals Month. What a great time to "Build a Better Breakfast" and incorporate whole grains for the whole family.

Whole grains are just like the name sounds—the entire grain, with all three parts (endosperm, germ and bran) together. There are many different types of grains. Each type of grain can be found in a whole grain form. Examples of whole grains include oats, whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice. Sometimes you will also see grains in the refined form. This includes grains such as a white bread, white rice, and white pasta. Refined grains are not whole because they typically only have one part (the endosperm) out of all three parts that were there originally.

Whole grains offer slow-digesting complex carbs that help keep us satisfied and focused through the day.

Whole grains are beneficial as they provide fiber, which can help manage blood sugar, promote digestive health and regularity, and help manage cholesterol. Whole grains also include the nutrients found in all three parts of the grain, such as B vitamins, which are key for staying energized through the day.

Always getting tired part way through the day? Whole grains can help play a role in staying fueled and energized for success. It's recommended to make at least half of your grains for the day whole grains. Dietitian tip: Aim to include whole grains with breakfast to start the day headed toward that goal. Most people are familiar with oats and oatmeal as breakfast choices. Those are great, convenient choices for your

busy mornings! Some people are surprised to find out that quinoa counts as a whole grain and that it can be a fun and versatile option to include with breakfast. It can be convenient, too, if you select a make-ahead style recipe that's ready to go. Try this Slow Cooker Banana Bread Quinoa if you're looking for a fun, make-ahead whole-grain breakfast choice for the whole family. ■

SLOW COOKER BANANA BREAD QUINOA

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dry quinoa, rinsed
- 1 cup Hy-Vee unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 1 cup water
- 3 tbsp packed Hy-Vee brown sugar
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- Desired toppers, such as: sliced bananas, chopped walnuts, chocolate chips, and/or brown sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. Pour quinoa, almond milk, water, brown sugar and mashed bananas into a 4- to-6-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours. Add additional liquid or sugar to taste.
2. If desired, serve hot quinoa with sliced bananas, chopped walnuts, chocolate chips and/or brown sugar.

Recipe source: hy-vee.com/recipes-ideas/recipes/slow-cooker-banana-bread-quinoa



The information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.