



Adobo's Mexican Grill (Revisited)

by Rich Belmont



There have been many changes at Adobos Mexican Grill since I first wrote about this restaurant on August 4, 2011 (click on Adobos at www.365InkDining.com).

Most importantly for us foodies Adobos now offers us the opportunity to grab a delicious super fast lunch. That's because the Burrito Express Bar is now open. You go through the line picking out the ingredients you want rolled into your flour tortilla. In just a few minutes you have a customized burrito you can eat in or take with you.



The owners of Adobos, Jaime Salazar and his wife Flor recognized there was a need for Dubuque people to be able to get a quick, mobile lunch. And what can be more satisfying than a fabulous burrito made just the way you like it. Jaime knows what people like. He is from San Luis Potosi, Mexico and was a student of culinary arts at Highland Community College in Elizabeth, IL. He now has over 18 years experience cooking for those of us who love Mexican food and reside here in the Tri-States.

You can order tacos, nachos and even a couple of salads from the Express Bar but the star of the show is definitely the Burrito.



We all know the burrito (bur-EE-toh) is a big roll of meat and veggies that is a meal in itself. Did you ever wonder how it got its name? Burro is the Spanish word for donkey. When you tack on "ito" or "ita" to any Spanish word it becomes "little" so therefore the word literally means "little donkey". According to the Burrito History written by Richard Foss, sometime during the late 19th century an unknown villager in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua rolled a flour tortilla (to-TEE-yuh) around some meat and named it a burrito. He probably thought it looked like the fat and cute newborn burros that are the offspring of the pack animals of the region. Even today burritos in Chihuahua are still simple meals with big tortillas wrapped around meat, a little sauce and maybe some onions and chopped chilies. They certainly are nothing like the huge burritos packed with all the toppings you get to choose at Adobos Mexican Grill.

For starters you pick the meat you want in your burrito. Or choose no meat if you prefer vegetarian. Your meat choices are:

Steak – grilled lowa top sirloin marinated in special seasonings for 24 hours.

Chicken – cubes of grilled chicken breast marinated in home-made Adobos sauce for 24 hours.

Barbacoa (bar-bah-COH-ah) - spicy shredded beef brisket slowly braised in chile ancho tamarindo sauce. Tamarind fruit pods are mixed with ancho peppers and spices for this sauce.

Carnitas (car-NEE-tahs) – shredded choice lowa boneless pork shoulder slow cooked in lime, rosemary and garlic for 3 to 4 hours.

Then you add any or all of the following delicious toppings: black beans, pinto beans, fajita vegetables (sautéed onions, red and green bell peppers), roasted jalapenos, corn, grated cheese and pico de gallo (PEE-co-DEE gal-o) (fresh, uncooked chopped onions, tomatoes and jalapeños).



You are not done yet because you still have to decide if you want to include three big flavor boosters: one of two rice toppings or melted cheese. The cheese is Queso Blanco (kay-so blon-co). This is a mild white cheese which is a cross between mozzarella and cottage cheese. Both kinds of rice are bursting with spices. The Spanish rice is pan fried with garlic, salt, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, onions and tomatoes. Tomato paste is added to provide the red color. The Lime Rice is pan fried in chicken stock, bay leaves, garlic, thyme, lime juice and S & P (cook's talk for salt and pepper).



Adobos Mexican Grill

756 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001
563-556-4407

HOURS: Express Burrito Bar: Mon – Sat: 11 am-5 pm

Dinner: Mon – Thu, 4-9 pm (10 p.m. on Fri-Sat) Sun: Closed

DINING STYLE: Come as You Are **NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Burritos, Tacos, Acapulco Crab Cake, Adobos

Soup, Cheese Dip, Carne Asada, Carnitas Dinner, Fajitas al Carbon,

Fajitas Diablos, Enchiladas Supreme, Quesadilla Relleno, Sopapilla

LIQUOR SERVICE: Basic Bar, Bottled Beer, Margaritas and Daiquiris

PRICES: Lunch: \$6.99, Dinner: \$6.99 to \$14.99

PAY OPTIONS: Cash, Checks, Debit, Visa, MasterCard, Discover

KIDS POLICY: Menu, High Chair & Booster

RESERVATIONS: Yes **CATERING:** Yes **TAKE OUT:** Yes

DELIVERY: No **PARKING:** On Street



Now before your server rolls up your burrito don't forget to add a salsa (sauce). There are six of these to choose from. They range from the mild Sweet Tomato Red and Green Tomatillo to the hot Chipotle (chee-POTE-lay) and really hot El Diablo (dee-ah-blo). In Spanish El Diablo means "the devil" and anytime you see it associated with Mexican cuisine you can count on the so named sauce or entrée being spicy hot. In this case it's a fiery, hot yellow sauce made from Pequin (also known as Bird Peppers) that are orange and red and pack a lot of heat and are blended with onions and roasted garlic.

When you walk into Adobos you will immediately notice some of the other new changes besides the burrito bar. Jaime prefers all fresh ingredients if he can get them. During the summer he uses fresh produce and eggs he buys at the Dubuque Farmer's Market. As a way of acknowledging this he commissioned a talented artist from Galena to paint the vegetables you see on the walls. She is Betsy Kaage and if you need some artistry in your life you can contact her at BetsyKaage@gmail.com.



The other change is awesome and you have to look up to see it! You see, Adobos is located inside a historic building. It was constructed in 1850 and is known as the Walker Shoe Building. Its owners Jerry Murdock and his son, Toben, decided to restore this building to its original glory. Tin ceilings were a cost effective way to replicate the intricately designed plaster ceilings of Europe and were popular in prestigious American buildings in the mid-nineteenth century. The tinplate in the Walker Shoe Building only covered part of the ceiling. It had been painted over and was in total disrepair. Garry

Prohaska of Landmark Restoration in Platteville and Adam Johnson, Architect of Galena were brought in to oversee the restoration.



They contacted Brian Greer's Tin Ceilings in Petersburg, Ontario (www.TinCeiling.com) who was able to duplicate the ceiling pattern for the rest of the ceiling. Josh Schwendinger of JRS Building & Contractors in Lancaster was hired to install the new ceiling. Larry

Droessler & Sons Building Restoration of Platteville powder blasted the old ceiling and repainted the entire ceiling with copper metallic paint. All these companies are experts in their respective professions. The quality of their work is apparent in the beautiful restoration you can't help but notice when you enter Adobos.



What has not changed is the friendly staff. Jacinto Perez and Estefannie Mendez are in the kitchen. Brandon and Angelia McAuliffe, Melissa Perez and Allison Pfohl are usually in the front of the house.



The exceptional classic Mexican dinners have not changed either. There is still a full assortment of Seafood Specialties, Vegetarian Specials, Quesadillas (keh-sah-DEE-yahs), Steak & Chicken dinners, Fajitas (fah-HEE-tuhs) and Enchiladas (en-chuh-LAH-dahs).



On a recent visit my tasting team sampled several house specialties. These included Acapulco Crab Cakes, breaded and served with homemade chipotle ranch dressing; Crabmeat Chimichanga, flour tortilla deep fried with beans and topped with guacamole and Adobos house cheese; my favorite Carne Asada, tender skirt steak grilled with onions and served with rice, beans, tortillas and guacamole salad; and Bryce Park's favorite, the Carnitas Dinner. This last one is seasoned pork slow cooked 4 to 5 hours. It is sliced into chunks and deep fried until crisp, then served with Tomatillo sauce, rice beans and flour tortillas.

In the Summer months, you won't want to miss the Breakfast Burrito from Adobos at the Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings. These are so good! Jaime takes a large flour tortilla and stuffs it with scrambled eggs, your choice of bacon, ham, sausage or homemade chorizo, and peppers, onions, tomatoes and seasoned fried potatoes.

Visit Adobos Mexican Grill for a really fast lunch. In the evening relax with a Margarita, Daiquiri or one of 9 Mexican beers while you savor a delightful Mexican dinner.

Congratulations to Adobos on the reopening of your beautiful location!

BURRITOS TO GO & MUCH MORE!

ADOBOS MEXICAN GRILL

756 Main Street, Dubuque
563-556-4407

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Fri - Sat, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

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