



EL BURRO BANDIDO ADOBOS MEXICAN GRILL

BY RICH BELMONT

El Burro Bandido is Spanish for The Bandit Donkey and just like the faithful pack animal who transports cargo across treacherous terrain this donkey carries burritos and tacos from Adobos Mexican Grill out into the streets of Dubuque.

El Burro Bandido is a 27 foot long food truck built by Chameleon Concessions in Minneapolis for its owners, Jaime and Flor Salazar. It is a full kitchen on wheels complete with stove, flat top grill, steam tables, refrigerator, 3 prep sinks, a handwashing sink and a food preparation table. Like all commercial kitchens it has been inspected and licensed by the City of Dubuque.

This is only the second summer season El Burro Bandido has been on the road. But it is quickly gaining a reputation for serving excellent, authentic Mexican cuisine.

This is not surprising since Jaime Salazar is an exceptionally talented and experienced chef. Jaime is from San Luis Potosi, Mexico. He was a student of culinary arts at Highland Community College in Elizabeth, IL. He has been cooking in local restaurants for over 21 years. He has been a chef at Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque, the now closed Flying Horse in Galena and his own Adobos Mexican Grill in Dubuque.



The Bandit Donkey requires a lot of preparation before it goes out on the road. Before each trip these procedures are followed:

1. Fresh water is loaded from an approved potable water hose used only for this purpose.
2. Waste water (called greywater) is drained into an environmentally safe disposal system.
3. Propane tanks are checked. They are refilled after every 25 hours of operation.
4. All food must be loaded since no food is ever left on the truck overnight.

The food truck has several routine missions and the menu varies for each:

- Road Stops – Burritos, Burrito Bowls (same fillings in the burrito but without the tortilla), Taco Salad, Sides of Queso (cheese) and Guacamole
- Dubuque Farmer's Market – Breakfast Burritos, Breakfast Nachos
- Festivals – Burritos, Burrito Bowls, Taco Salads, Nachos
- Private Parties – Menu can be anything. Nachos and Burritos can be served off the truck or an assortment of meats, topping and fillings can be served buffet style



Obviously, the burrito is the name of the game on this truck. We all know the burrito (burr-ee-toh) is a big tortilla wrap of meat, vegetables, beans and rice that is a whole meal by itself. But 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 called it a burrito. He probably thought it looked like plump and cute newborn burros or perhaps it reminded him of the bedroll donkeys always carried.



JAMES (FLOR AND JAIME'S SON), FLOR AND JAIME SALAZAR



Burritos are composed of four essential components: tortilla, fillings, toppings and salsas (sauces). First a 12 inch flour tortilla is lightly toasted. Then you choose the fillings, toppings and sauce you want in your custom made burrito.

The fillings are:

- Bistec (bis-teck) – grilled Iowa top sirloin marinated in special seasonings
- Carne Molida (car-nee mo-LEE-da) – seasoned ground beef
- Pollo (pol-yo) – cubes of grilled chicken breast marinated in homemade Adobos sauce for 24 hours
- Carnitas (car-nee-tahs) – shredded choice Iowa boneless pork shoulder marinated in Adobos seasonings
- Barbacoa (bar-bah-coh-ah) – the Spanish word for barbecue. Spicy shredded beef slowly braised and simmered for 24 hours in chile ancho tamerindo sauce
- Vegetariana (ve-ge-tar-ee-anna) - Add any fillings and toppings and skip the meat!

After choosing your filling then you add any or all of the following toppings:

- Frijoles Negros (FREE-hol-es nay-gros) - dry black beans simmered for 5 hours
- Frijoles Pintos (FREE-hol-es pin-toes) - dry pinto beans simmered for 5 hours
- Roasted Jalapeños
- Corn
- Grated Cheese
- Fajita Vegetables (fah-HEE-ta) sautéed onions, red and green bell peppers
- Pico de Gallo (pee-co dee gal-o) fresh uncooked chopped onions, tomatoes and jalapeños
- Queso Blanco (kay-so blon-co) a mild white cheese which is a cross between mozzarella and cottage cheese
- Spanish Rice – pan fried with garlic, salt, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, onions and tomatoes. Tomato paste is added to provide the red color.
- Lime Rice – pan fried in chicken stock, bay leaves, garlic, thyme, lime juice and S & P (cook's talk for salt and pepper).

Then add the salsa! The sauces available on the truck are:

- Sweet Tomato Red – mild blend of tomatoes and spices
- El Diablo (ell dee-ah-blo) – Pippin also known as Bird Peppers are ground and mixed with onions and roasted garlic. El Diablo is the Spanish word for "the devil" and he is always very hot!

These burritos are the same as the ones you get in Adobos Mexican Grill, However, every Wednesday during the summer the truck can be found at the John G. Bergfeld Recreation Area, 7600 Chavenelle Drive in Dubuque. This is the pond and walking path located between Hodge Company and Medline Industries.



CATERING WITH LUIS SALAZAR (JAIME'S BROTHER)



On Saturday mornings El Burro Bandido is parked at the Dubuque Farmer's Market. There is usually a long line of people waiting for their delicious Breakfast Burritos. The ingredients are all cooked to order but not to worry, the line goes fast.

The Breakfast Burrito is a flour tortilla filled with scrambled eggs, seasoned potatoes, peppers, onions, tomatoes, queso blanco white cheese and your choice of sausage, bacon or chorizo and either mild or hot sauces. Jaime sells 200 of these burritos every Saturday!

New this year, Saturday Breakfast Nachos will be on the menu. Scrambled eggs, peppers, onions, tomatoes, Queso cheese and your choice of bacon, sausage, or chorizo and mild or hot sauce are piled on a large quantity of tortilla chips. Jalapeños are optional.

El Burro Bandido has become a familiar sight around Dubuque and the surrounding area. That's because it is catering private parties all over the place. It is currently doing approximately 20 events per month sometimes two on the same day.

Last week the Bandit Donkey catered a wedding for 200 guests. It was held at Oak Hill Farm Country Weddings located on the historic Stagecoach Trail in Apple River, IL.

A typical menu for an event like this is a buffet with choice of two of the following meats: Bistec, Pollo, Carnitas, and Barbacoa. Accompaniments are fajitas, rice and beans, salad, guacamole, sour cream, cheese, pico de gallo and tortillas.

If you haven't seen Jamie's and Flor's Food Truck yet you will soon. The Bandit Donkey is always on the move!



EL BURRO BANDIDO

DUBUQUE FARMERS MARKET (SATURDAY)
BERGFELD RECREATION AREA (WEDNESDAY)
FESTIVALS & PRIVATE PARTIES
563-556-4407
ADOBOSMEXICANGRILL
FACEBOOK.COM/ADOBOSMEXICANGRILL

Hours: Farmers Market: Saturday: 7 AM–Noon
Bergfeld Recreation Area: Wednesday: 11 AM–1:30 PM
Recommendations: Burritos, Breakfast Burritos, Breakfast Nachos, Burrito Bowls, Taco Bowls, Taco Salad
Prices: \$6–\$9 • **Pay Options:** Cash only
Catering: Yes • **Take Out:** Only