

# DONUT BOY

BY RICH BELMONT

In your travels around Dubuque you most certainly have gone right by Donut Boy. It's right off the intersection of Asbury and University and it's open daily from 5 AM to Noon except Christmas Day.

The space Donut Boy occupies is in a building constructed in 1952. That space has been a donut shop now for 63 years.



Donut Boy is owned by Ed Gau (pronounced Gou rhymes with cow). Ed was the local sales representative for Keebler Company, the largest cookie and cracker manufacturer in the US. In 1995 he decided to go into his own business so he purchased Donut Boy from Mary Jo Schutte. She had

operated it for eight years after having purchased it from her father, Don Schutte.

Visiting this donut shop is sort of a time-honored Dubuque tradition.

When you first walk in you notice it is set up cafeteria style with long tables. Unless you are a regular everybody won't know your name but you will soon find out they would surely like to talk to you. And if you hang around for awhile and have some donuts you will see many little kids coming in with their moms or babysitters. That's because the Carnegie-Stout Library has a program called Every Hero has a

Story where kids who achieve reading goals are given coupons for free donuts at Donut Boy.

I am amused when I hear the moms tell their children to pick out the donut of their choice. Hey, even I cannot choose just one donut! At any given time there are at least 26 raised donut varieties, 15 cake donuts and more than 7 flavors of Danish just waiting to be eaten.

Here are some terms you should know in order to be considered a donut expert:

**Rings** - these are raised donuts popped out of a machine called a donut depositor right into the fryer in the shape of a ring with a hole in the center.

**Donut Holes** - these are not the part of the donut removed from the center hole! They are globs of dough fried separately and they are really good. They come in plain, glazed and crunchy. The crunchy ones are the best.

**Cake Donuts** - they have the consistency of cake and might be topped with chocolate, sprinkles, caramel or be filled with custard, cream or raspberry jelly. I have always liked plain or chocolate cake donuts but Donut Boy has enlightened me. My new found favorites are cherry and blueberry.

**Long Johns** - bar shaped, yeast-risen, usually filled and often covered with glaze, icing or chocolate. (Fun fact: in some parts of the US Long Johns are not filled and the filled ones are called éclairs. When I was a kid I thought this meant they were filled with eggs!)

**Bismarks** - round donuts filled with cream or jelly.

**Persians** - made from yeast dough coiled with layers of cinnamon and usually finished with a plain sugar glaze. The most popular Persian is the cinnamon roll but Donut Boy also has a delicious version finished with caramel and almonds.

**Crispi** - these are baked like a flaky pie crust.



**Danish** - a multi-layered laminated sweet pastry filled with a topping before baking. At Donut Boy the fillings you might find available are blueberry, apricot, cream cheese, custard, apple, cherry or lemon. (Fun Fact: because of the name most people assume this pastry originated in Denmark. Actually the first recipes for these came from Austria).



John Small is the chief baker and donut maker. He will be 75 years old this February. He started his career at the Trausch Baking Company at 1130 Iowa Street in Dubuque in 1959. He had 3 different jobs and worked 80 hours a week. He started by frying cake donuts. He used ten 100

pound bags of donut mix per day and he did that for 30 years.

Somehow he found the time to raise eight kids and now has 30 grandchildren and around 18 great grandchildren. He says he is not sure how many: there are too many to count!

John went to Donut Boy 28 years ago when it was still owned by Don Schutte. At this time John is assisted by Dave Moore. He is a fast and efficient baker just like John. They have to be: on most days Donut Boy produces 600 dozen donuts (7,200) and on some Fridays and Saturdays they make 1000 dozen donuts. That's 12,000 donuts in a single day!

Now you might be thinking why so many donuts? They can't be selling that many in their store. Well, the fact is they supply donuts to most local convenience stores, the area hospitals and many churches and businesses. The drivers pick up the donuts at midnight and deliver them from 1-7 AM every day. Some of them are shipped to Maquoketa, Anamosa and even as far away as Cedar Rapids. Ed is proud to say in his 20 years of running Donut Boy the company has never failed to make a single delivery.

I asked Ed and John how they are able to provide scrumptious donuts in such a variety of flavors consistently each and every day. This is what they told me:

**The Donut Mix** - the mix is a high quality, more expensive flour. It is never frozen and it is made to Donut Boy's exclusive specifications. This premium mix help the donuts stay softer and fresher longer than store-bought donuts.

**The Vegetable Shortening** - In baking the term "shortening" is used to mean any fat. Vegetable shortening is a fat made from vegetable oil. Vegetable oil is converted into vegetable shortening and is solid at room temperature, white in color and has a neutral flavor. A few years ago food scientists were able to develop a vegetable shortening with zero trans-fatty acids. Donut Boy only uses zero trans-fat donut fry shortening because it provides less absorption while ensuring superior glaze retention and is virtually flavorless and odorless resulting in scrumptious donuts.

**The Oil Replacement** - the shortening melts into oil in the fryer. National donut manufacturers keep adding shortening to their fryers and never replace it. At Donut Boy the oil is completely replaced twice a week.

**The Process** - the dough is mixed in small batches and the donuts are fried throughout the day. The raised donuts are extruded onto a screen in the oil 24 at a time. Cake rings, long johns and Bismarks are cut from dough run through a sheeter, also called a cutter press. Apple fritters, Persians and twists are made by hand. All donuts are fried. Danish, muffins, Crispis and cookies are baked.

**The Time Cycle** - Because of the large volume produced fresh donuts are made all day long. They are never sold if they are more than 12 hours old. They are simply not allowed to go stale and Donut Boy will not sell day-old or longer donuts.



**The People** - Donut Boy is fortunate to have an energetic, proficient and reliable staff. When you enter the store you will see one counter person—usually Linda or Connie Jo. But in the back in addition to the three donut makers there are approximately 17 other personnel. They include frosters who put on the icing and fill the Bismarks in three shifts seven days a week and the delivery drivers who travel their routes in the middle of the night.

So the next time you are going by that crazy intersection at Asbury and University stop in to Donut Boy for some fantastic donuts. If you are like me you won't be able to have just one. And by the way you can call in advance and order your favorites so you won't be disappointed if they are out of them already. While you are at it you might as well order some cookies for dessert. They make several kinds including M & M, chocolate chip, oatmeal, peanut butter and sugar cookies.



## DONUT BOY

1646 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001  
563-556-1467

**Hours:** 5 AM–Noon; Closed Christmas Day

**Dining Style:** Come as you are

**Noise Level:** Friendly conversation

**Recommendations:** Raised Donuts, Cake Donuts, Danish Donut Holes, Raisin Donut, Cherry & Blueberry Donuts, Long Johns, Cookies

**Liquor Service:** None

**Prices:** Donuts: \$.99 each–\$9.99/dozen

Cookies: \$4.99/dozen

**Pay Options:** Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards except AMEX

**Accessibility:** Front door

**Kids Policy:** No Special Menu, High Chairs: Yes

**Reservations:** No • **Catering:** No • **Take Out:** Yes

**Delivery:** Yes • **Parking:** Private Lot



↑ Donut depositor



↑ Frying process



↑ Drip tray