



**HUHOT MONGOLIAN GRILL**

by Rich Belmont



In the 13th Century Genghis Khan was known as the Great Khan. He was the Supreme Ruler of Mongolia, one of the greatest empires the World has ever known. According to legend, after a long day of hunting Genghis Khan and his warriors would make camp and prepare their evening meal. They would prepare thin slices of meats, mix them up with whatever vegetables and spices were available, and proceed to grill them on their upturned shields over a flaming hot fire. This style of cooking became known as Mongolian BBQ.

HuHot Mongolian Grill has developed this cooking method into an art form. Their restaurants provide us with all-you-can-eat stir-fry prepared from fresh vegetables and a variety of meats and seafood.

HuHot Mongolian Grills, LLC is located in Missoula, MT. Their first restaurant opened in Missoula in 1999. Their first franchise opened in Omaha, NE in 2002. The company's CEO/Founder, Mr. Andy Vap, named his restaurant in honor of HOHHOT (pronounced who-Hot) the capital of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. He chose the name as a way of commemorating the tradition of Mongolian BBQ. Also because it is similar to a Hunan style of either mild or spicy cuisine cooked on a very hot grill.



That hot grill, by the way, is a 650,000 BTU multi-burner gas griddle weighing 2,200 pounds. The Grill Warriors (cooks) carefully monitor the cooking temperatures to ensure they are maintained between 550° to 750° F.

The Dubuque HuHot is owned by Restaurant's Inc. headquartered in Omaha, NE. This is a Professional Management Company whose family of restaurants includes Old Country Buffets, Stokes Grill and Bars, Twisted Fork Grill & Saloons, Smashburgers and Ryan's Bistros. They also own all of the HuHot Mongolian Grills in Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota and Iowa.

Running a restaurant is never easy. However, you can't help but notice the Dubuque HuHot operates very smoothly. This is largely due to the talent and experience of this restaurant's General Manager, Rita Lyster. She is eminently qualified having begun her career in food service 27 years ago at the Garden Gate Restaurant which was part of Dick's Supermarket. She went on to manage the Platteville Golf and Country Club and then the Platteville Pizza Hut. She next went to Naples, FL where she was General Manager of a Tijuana Flats, one of the stores of a fresh Tex Mex chain. Lucky for us Rita returned to Dubuque to be closer to her family. She was then appointed Assistant General Manager of the new HuHot at Kennedy Mall in Dubuque which officially opened



exactly 4 years ago in October, 2009. Rita was promoted to General Manager a couple of years later.

You can order beer, wine and sake from the bar. When you are seated you are given a card listing the fountain beverages available. These are all of the flavors dispensed by the new Coca Cola Free Style System. You may have used this at a few fast food restaurants where you serve yourself by pushing buttons on a touch screen. HuHot is the first chain to offer full-service on this system. The card lists 130 flavors you can choose from. However, you can ask for a combination of flavors such as requesting half ginger ale and half raspberry. So actually your total number of soda choices is 180!

**HuHot Mongolian Grill**  
555 JFK Road, Kennedy Mall, Dubuque, IA 52002  
563-513-3121 | www.HuHot.com

**HOURS:** Lunch: 7 days, 11 am – 4 pm  
Dinner: Sun – Thu, 4 pm – 9 p.m., Fri – Sat, 4–10 p.m.

**DINING STYLE:** Come as you are

**NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Crispy Eggrolls, Grill Meals, Cheesecake Rangoons, Sweet Victory S'mores

**LIQUOR SERVICE:** Beer, wine and sake only

**PRICE RANGE:** Lunch: \$4.49 - \$8.99, Dinner: \$8.79 - \$12.99

**PAYOPTIONS:** Cash, MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover, NO checks

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Front Door, Mall entrance & Restrooms

**KIDS POLICY:** Very Welcome, Menu, Booster, Highchairs

**CATERING:** No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No

**RESERVATIONS:** No **PARKING:** Mall Parking Lot

HuHot is all-you-can-eat so you can go back to the food bar as many times as you like. So I recommend you take your time and start out by ordering appetizers. Choose Crab Rangoon, pork and vegetable Eggrolls, chicken and vegetable Potstickers or a combination of these.



You can also order Egg Drop or HuHot & Sour soup and Asian, Garden or Chicken Teriyaki Salads. At lunch time the soup and salad are à la carte. Either a soup or salad is included with your dinner.



The Grill Meals are fun to play with. You proceed to the Food Bar, take a bowl and fill it with a variety of raw, thinly sliced meats, seafood and vegetables. You will find pork, chicken, beef and mild or hot sausage. Don't worry if some of the meats appear to be a little frozen. It's perfectly ok to cook frozen food as long as it is cooked thoroughly. The meats are so thin and the grill temperatures are so hot all the meats are well cooked. In fact the flavors are intense and sealed in since the entire cooking process is accomplished so quickly.

The seafood choices change according to season and availability. Right now you can add Crab, Alaska Pollock and Swai (pronounced sw-eye). You may not be familiar with this last one. It's actually a catfish that is native to the rivers of Southeast Asia. It looks like a shark and grows to 4 feet in length and just under 100 pounds in weight. Swai has a milder flavor and more delicate texture than US native channel catfish. You will also find shrimp on the food bar on Wednesday and Friday nights.

Now you can add some noodles to your bowl. There are Chinese noodles, Yakisoba and Pad Thai. Yakisoba are Japanese ramen-style noodles, and Pad Thai are made from soaked and dried rice noodles commonly sold with street food in Thailand.

Next you pile on the veggies. There are currently about 21 items to pick from. These include common ones like cabbage, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots, spinach, onions and green peppers. Also included are some more unusual ones such as water chestnuts, baby corn, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts and mandarin oranges.

Once your bowl is full of stuff it's time to move to the sauce bar. HuHot has 12 Signature Sauces plus a special sauce of the season. These



sauces are the reason HuHot stir-fry is so good! Each sauce has been carefully formulated to add a slightly different taste to your bowl of goodies. The best part is you get to not only choose your own sauce but you get to make it too. For example if you want Hot Sauce you add to your bowl 2 ladles of Kung Pau, 2 Szechuan, 1 Garlic and 1 Sweet chili oil. If you want to experience more Asian Flavor mix into your bowl 2 ladels of Hoisin sauce, 1 Thai peanut oil, 1 Ginger and 1 Sweet chili. There is even a special sauce for kids made from 2 ladles

of Sweet and Sour, 1 Teriyaki and 1 Lemon juice. By the way, I was informed it's always better to throw in a couple extra ladles of oils. When you have a bowl with 6 or 7 ladles of sauce there is no chance your meats and veggies will dry out on the super hot griddle.



Now that your bowl is overflowing hand it to the Grill Warrior. He will carefully pour the contents into a space on the griddle. Watch him expertly mixing all of your selections and sauces together. It only takes a few minutes to stir-grill your meal. Then he will plate it and hand you back the same contents of the bowl you gave him!

While you are eating take a look at the Mongolian themed murals adorning the walls. These were hand painted by talented Folklore Artist Laura Blaker. Laura was born in Chicago, graduated from the Colorado Institute of Art in Denver and now resides in Missoula, Montana. She is the contract muralist for HuHot. Laura attended a summer workshop at the Florence Academy of Art. For months she worried how she was going to come up with the money to go to Italy. Three months before her scheduled departure her husband, Don Kukla, won \$200,000 in the Montana lottery! Laura's beautiful artwork is available for purchase at [www.LauraBlakerFineArt.com](http://www.LauraBlakerFineArt.com).



Eating at HuHot is all about eating healthy: no preservatives, food additives or MSG are used. If you have problems with allergies tell your server and special precautions are taken. The griddle spaces are always cleaned after each use. If you have an allergy the grill warrior will cook your meal in an extra wide space so there is no chance of your choices touching another diner's order. In cases of severe allergies sauces are provided from the kitchen so there is no danger of cross contamination at the sauce bar.

You can also review the Allergy & Nutrition information on the HuHot website or ask to see the Allergy Book. This information will guide you in picking safe ingredients and mixing the sauces that are right for you.

Saving room for dessert can be difficult when your meals are all-you-can-eat. However, keep in mind the NY Cheesecake is wonderful; Khan's chocolate cake is decadent and my favorite: the cheesecake filled Rangoons are awesome. The kids will have fun making their own S'mores at your table with their own campfire!

HuHot Mongolian Grill is the kind of place you can't help going back to again and again. So be sure to sign up for their Loyalty Card so you can earn a point for every dollar spent on food. Every 100 points gets you a \$10 discount.

