



HABITS COFFEE & MINI DONUT CO

BY DANNY FAIRCHILD

You have to give it up to people who know what they do well and use their powers for good. You have to give even MORE up to people who know what they do well, work hard to get even better at it... maybe even perfect it... and use their powers for even gooder. I think that's what we have here in Dubuque at Habits Coffee & Mini Donut Co.

I swear I can almost trace the evolution of these donuts. Scene opens on a couple of donut lovers hellbent on making their own like the heroes they are.

"These donuts are pretty good!"

"Yeah, the batter really makes them, doesn't it?"

"It does! But I think we can do better."

"A better batter? I'm in!"

"Okay! How do we get there?"

"Let's talk about texture. I like a nice almost crisp outside. That's the beauty of deep frying something. And fried donuts are infinitely better than cake donuts."

"Well, duh. Everyone knows that."

"So we should turn up the heat a bit. That'll give us the crispiness we're looking for."

"Let's do it."

[Donut making montage set to '80s arena rock]

"Oh no."

"Yeah. We got the good outer crispiness, but it isn't done in the middle."

"I know. Even with the hole in the middle, which is why the hole is there."

"Well if we cook them any longer, the outside will be burnt."

"Maybe donuts just weren't meant to have the crispy outsides."

"Are you giving up?"

"No. Are you?"

"No. Hmm."

"Hmm."

"I got it!"

"Whaddya got?"

"Remember that old John Belushi SNL sketch about little chocolate donuts being on his training table?"

"Heh. Yeah. So?"

"We'll make MINI donuts! That way we can get the crispiness we crave and they'll be done on the inside! Plus, who doesn't live just cramming a little donuts into their mouth?"

"I know one person who certainly does."

And he's writing about us right now!"

"Then let's not let him down!"

[Donut making montage set to '80s arena rock]

And that, my friends, is how Habits donuts came to be so freaking awesome. I think. Were I a responsible journalist, I could easily corroborate it, but I'm not, so I won't. Besides, it makes too much sense. Why else would they ONLY make mini donuts? If they made them larger, they would lose all the characteristics that make them Habits donuts.

You know what they're like? They're kind of like a funnel cake. But 'cept in donut form. It's fair season so right now you have tons of options to get your funnel cake fix, but if you're jonesing for them any other time of the year, or you don't want to deal with the hullabaloo of the fair, Habits is there waiting for you with some additional delicious tricks up their sleeve.

The donuts themselves are essentially exactly the same. It's what is added to them that gives them their whammy, though they have enough whammy all on their own. And the beauty is that due to the crispy outside, the toppings don't make the donut soggy. I went there to pick up some donuts to share with my coworkers, and when I got to the office, their integrity was uncompromised. And now I have so many work friends, it's annoying. That's a lie. I annoy them. But I asked the Habits team to give me a good smattering of their specialty donuts. I love

those little guys to pieces... even though I eat them whole. Let me tell you about that taste adventure.

The Mounds. This little beauty is what you'd expect from the name. Chocolate glazed and wearing so much coconut it's ridiculous (it's before Labor Day so it's okay to wear white.) If coconut is not for you (it's the texture, right? Eyeroll.) then this donut isn't for you either. The coconut is proudly on display here. One bite and you'll understand why the Mounds candy bar has been around for nearly a century. Seriously. 2020 is Mounds' 100th birthday.

The Lemon Curd. I love lemon flavored things. I'm surprised I'm still alive considering how often I had the urge to huff Pledge as a kid. Kids... don't huff Pledge. This specialty donut offering is vanilla glazed with a good dollop of lemon curd. Lemon curd is actually in the description. Not lemon custard or lemon pie filling. Lemon curd. Somebody has been watching The Great British Baking Show, methinks.

The Iowa Backroad. In a land where we measure distance by the amount of time it takes to get there, this donut's namesake isn't even an alternate route. A backroad in Iowa is where teenagers go to have sex. Dirty, clumsy, delicious, probably quick sex. So this donut is appropriately named. The vanilla glaze and Oreo crumbs make you feel like you're doing something naughty. Something naughty that you want to do again.

The Rainbow. I tried this during Pride Month, appropriately enough. One could argue that when you're stuffing donuts into your face, you can't really be proud of who you are. If one did argue that, one would be wrong. I was proud to partake of them. Get this: Vanilla glaze with Fruity Pebble sprinkles. The crunch factor is off the chain with this little beauty. You got the crispiness of the outer donut plus the ryce crispiness (spelled differently so as to avoid copyright infringement) of the fruity cereal. I couldn't get enough of this one. Can you



imagine anything better for breakfast? Cereal donuts, people! We live in a wonderful time. At least we do if you don't think too hard about it. But cereal-adorned donuts make it a little better.

The Happy Campers. What's better than cereal-sprinkled donuts? How about some more donuts? Wait, I spelled that wrong. How about s'more donuts? Now I got your attention. Chocolate glaze (duh) plus marshmallow glaze (duh) sprinkled with crushed graham crackers (duh). Did you know that graham crackers originated in the temperance movement? A preacher named Sylvester Graham invented them as part of a healthy life-style that involved minimizing pleasure and stimulation of all kinds. And I gots to say... he done screwed up. Because now his invention is on these extremely pleasurable and stimulating donuts. I bet he'd be very upset by this. Good.

The mystery donut. I should have asked what this was. It's not on the menu. They sprung this little surprise on me. Maybe I was a guinea pig for it. I'm fine with that. Anyway, it has nuts and a delightful strawberry drizzle on it. If you're the kind of evil person

who orders off the menu, then go for it. It's delicious. Otherwise, maybe you'll get lucky like I did. So nom.

You're going to go for the donuts, but you should get a coffee whilst you're there. Coffee tastes are very subjective and very vehement, so I'm not brave enough to say you're going to like their coffee. But you probably will. They offer your standard fare of iced and hot coffees, latte, chai. As far as dairy alternatives go, you're looking at almond milk and coconut milk. If flavored coffee drinks are your jam, you're looking at Monin and Ghirardelli syrups. So it's not like barista-level, but it goes well with donuts.

I neglected to scope out the bathrooms, I regret to report. But this cute little place is newly renovated, and I have no reason to believe they wouldn't renovate the bathrooms, too.

Habits used to just sell their donuts from a food truck when the food truck craze (bless it) was just getting popular. Now they've found their brick-and-mortar home. And their donuts will find a lovely home in your tummy.

Eat up, fools! ■



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