



# DOWNTOWN BBQ LLC FOOD TRUCK

BY BRYCE PARKS

We traveled up the road a piece to Platteville, WI to get some BBQ this week, because if there's something worth traveling up the road a piece for, it's BBQ. Like, real, old-fashioned slow-smoked BBQ. And we were not disappointed.

Downtown BBQ LLC is a food truck based out of Platteville that is usually set up these days for lunch in the parking lot of Heiser Ace Hardware (180 E. Main St.) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or until they run out of product for the day. So no regular dinner hours, but that's ok. That's what Pizzeria Uno is for! You can also find them at local festivals and special events (ah, remember when we could have festivals and special events?) And I imagine if you have a big enough event, they'll come to you with the truck and serve your hoards of hungry friends on site (we're looking at you, Libbie!)

The rolling smokehouse features Texas style BBQ with a host of specialty sides and sauces. IF you know a thing or two about Texas BBQ, you know that first and foremost, you usually don't need any sauce to make this meat taste amazing, and that was pretty much our assessment of the meat passing through the window on the side of the Downtown BBQ trailer.

Their usual day offering includes (assume the word smoked appears before every meat we list): brisket, pulled pork, chicken, brats, Texas sausage, baby back ribs, and jerk chicken. And many offerings contain a mix and match of these ingredients.

You can "load" a brat with pulled pork or brisket or load mac and cheese with the same. Same goes for a plate of beer cheese nachos. They have veggie nachos too, but I mean, come on, really? The Downtown Dud is any two meats in a cup or on a bun. You can also get an order of Jalapeño poppers.

Yes we said mac and cheese by the way. It's seems like baked mac even if it's not, the way I prefer it. So

it's more sticky that saucy, and a nice savory side to any pile of smoked meat. The portion size is fair and good for one Bryce. You can also pick up potato salad or a dill pickle mac (shell pasta) salad which are smaller in size compared to the mac and cheese, but the cost reflects the difference. Chips and brownies are also available as are cold beverages. Sorry, no alcohol. This is a BBQ truck, not a dream.

On our first trip, we got the sandwiches, brisket and pulled pork. Nothing fancy here. Just perfectly smoked meat on a traditional burger bun. For the sandwich, the brisket is sliced. If you get it in a cup instead, it's chopped. On the bun it needed a little sauce but that was because of the bun. When we had it in a cup on our second visit, it was chopped and as juicy as could be. Don't get those sauces anywhere near it. It's perfect.

The jerk chicken was much juicier than I honestly expected. Some people love jerk style. I'm not a lover, but I can say for sure that if you like the spice, they do a great tender juicy version at Downtown BBQ. And the photo of the jerk chicken nachos on their Facebook page looks kinda dreamy.

We got a ¼ rack of ribs on both trips, and both times it was great, tender, and moist. It's so easy to let baby backs dry out a bit, but that didn't happen. The Texas link had a nice snap to the casing with a kielbasa-like flavor to it, only smoked of course. I didn't ask how often they smoke, but if this meat wasn't fresh smoked everyday, then I say there's some kind of voodoo going on to keep the meat so moist. So we will just assume the meat you're eating was smoked very recently, likely just coming off the smoker before you eat it... as God intended.

It's to-go only, obviously, and there is no where nearby to sit down and eat it unless you cop a squat in a concrete parking lot and go at it. So you'll want to have a dining destination in mind. We didn't get

forks or napkins on our first visit which made the mac and cheese a bit of a challenge, but they did provide everything needed on the second visit. So maybe just be your advocate there and make sure the forks, napkins, and sauces are in the bag before you skedaddle.

As I said before, this meat mostly needs no sauce as it could be considered sacrilege to alter the flavor of the BBQ, but if you like sauce, make sure you ask for enough. They do have their own branded bottled sauces. The sauce cups don't have much sauce in them, but there is enough in each cup for a single sandwich. I guess it makes sense not to waste extra sauce. But look it over and see that you have enough of any of the three available sauces going away with you to sufficiently wet your sauce whistle. They'll give you more if you want it.

So why go to Platteville if there's good BBQ in Dubuque from Flatted Fifth in Dimensional Brewing or ribs at Catfish Charlies or the killer brisket and pulled pork that Pat Hickson whips up out at Burkey's in Key West? Well, if you love BBQ, you know that no two BBQs are the same. Two might both be amazing, but they are unique, like good beers or bands. Variety is the spice of life, and Downtown BBQ has their own way of doing things. If you are hankering for some honest to good ness Texas brisket but didn't think 14 hours ahead of time to smoke your own, well then a 25 minute cruise to Wisconsin really it's that bad. And hey, if you're reading this copy of *365ink* at one of our Platteville locations, then you're just being lazy if you don't go try it out right now. Assuming right now is between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on a weekday.

To keep up with where exactly Downtown BBQ will be on any give day or what special events they will be a part of, follow them on Facebook at [facebook.com/DowntownBBQPlatteville](https://www.facebook.com/DowntownBBQPlatteville). A sample of their menu is also available there so you can plan ahead to pick up lunch for the whole crew and take orders.



The menu for the day may be different (the Downtown Dud wasn't available the first time we visited but they had jerk chicken), but that just means you'll have to go back more than once to try it all! Find someone low on the work totem pole and send them off to get food for the rest of you. But also plan for a quick nap after lunch. We were only second in line on our last visit, but sometimes there can be a bit of a line, naturally. Like I said earlier, they will also do catering, and if you call in advance

you can pre-order bulk items to go for family reunions, holidays, or just basic quarantine BBQ hoarding purposes.

The prices are fair for the portion sizes. A person can get a sandwich, mac and cheese, another side and a beverage for about \$12. But if you're going all the way there, why not try a few things out? It is a cash-only business though, which is pretty inconvenient for the patron, so stop at an ATM on the way. And stop by *365ink* and drop off a loaded brat or two on the way back into Dubuque! ■

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[FACEBOOK.COM/DOWNTOWNBBQPLATTEVILLE](https://www.facebook.com/downtownbbqplatteville)

**Hours:** Tue-Fri: 11:30 AM-2 PM; Check Facebook for additional hours

Usually located in the Heiser Ace Hardware lot (180 E. Main St., Platteville, WI)

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