



PRIME RIB



STEAK AND LOBSTER



BAC-O-RINGS



OLD-FASHIONEDS FLIGHT

Louisburg Junction Supper Club

Story by Danny Fairchild
Photos by Louisburg Junction

I'm going to say something that could potentially lose me all my street cred as a dining columnist. But I beg you to hear me out. Please let me get my edgelord troll tendencies out of the way by writing what seems like an unflattering comparison, but then please also give me the chance to explain so we can part as friends. I know I'm asking a lot and I thank you.

Supper clubs are like fast food restaurants.

Oof. Yup, that's the knee-jerk reaction I was hoping to avoid. Even though I gave you ample warning and your judgment goes against our agreement

to hear me out, I still apologize. I mean, that was harsh, right? I empathize, but I also stand by what I said. Now, if you'll allow me, I'll explain. But I'll also understand if you flip straight to Angela's advice column right now.

First of all, please know that supper clubs are in my DNA. My dad owned one in the late 70s, early 80s in my birthplace of Ida Grove, IA called The Cozy Nook. I call his old carving station knife "Roastbane" and refer to it as "my father's sword" and I display it alongside my other sword, which is a gladius. My earliest memories waft with the aroma of broasted chicken and prime rib.

So don't go thinking I disrespect supper clubs. I'm here today because a supper club was finally doing well enough for the owners to have a second kid.

Then how can I compare something wonderful like supper clubs to something low and common like fast food? Probably because I try not to be a classist jerk like you, but I understand where this is coming from. Supper clubs mean quality. Fast food does not.

I'm not talking about quality. I'm talking about how supper clubs make you feel. Fast food restaurants are comforting because you can get the

exact same food no matter where you go. If you like the Big Mac here in Dubuque, IA, you'll also like the Big Mac in Winnemucca, NV. By ordering at one location, you can now make an informed decision at any location, nationwide.

Supper clubs are similar in this respect. When you make plans to eat at a supper club you've never eaten before, you KNOW they're going to have delicious chicken and/or steak dinners, a few nice seafood options, and plenty of opportunity to fill up before you even get your food, be it crackers and cheese spread/braunschweiger, or a helluva soup and salad bar. Oh, and good cocktails, too. It's a comfort thing. Just like fast food, you know what you're in for.

That's not to say that supper clubs are unremarkable. They're remarkable as hell, for the most part. That's certainly true of Louisburg Junction Supper Club. And yes, they got your supper club staples. They have to. Nobody will believe you're a supper club, otherwise. The remarkable comes from Louisburg Junction's clever Wisconsin twists. Yes, I, a life-long Iowa boy, just used "clever" and "Wisconsin" in the same sentence. Whatever. They still can't drive.

In fact, if one goes to their website like any food columnist, "Wisconsin Tradition" are among the first words you see. After

the menu tabs, before even their logo. As an Iowa boy, I realize that I'm not qualified to say what is and isn't "Wisconsin Tradition." But let me lay down some facts, and you can judge for yourself. Or at least see why I don't question the claim.

THE WISCONSIN TRADITION: Old-Fashioneds. The cocktail known as the old-fashioned has been a Wisconsin fixture way before Don Draper repopularized it. I don't need to describe it to ANYBODY in the Tri-States. There's a large faction in Wisconsin that make them with brandy instead of whiskey, and I'm not here to dump on that. Not today. But you know what you're getting when you get a supper club old-fashioned. If you've tasted it before, I'm sure you're tasting it now in your head. Ready for the Louisville Junction twist? Here it is: You like old-fashioned, eh? Pretty good cocktail? How would you like a FLIGHT of old-fashioned? Oh, yeah. Instead of choosing different varieties of beer to be served on a paddle or other platform, you're choosing from a number of different varieties of old-fashioned. And here's the thing: This is a board of three full-sized cocktails. Not samples. Don't be a hero. Share safely.

Oh, what's that? You prefer the ice cream drinks at supper clubs to cocktails?

A grasshopper or a nice pink squirrel, perhaps? Ice cream and booze, amirite? Yesiam. Well how would you like a FLIGHT of ice cream drinks. You can see where I'm going with this. Louisville Junction takes flights higher. See what I did there?

THE WISCONSIN TRADITION: Cheese curds, onion rings, and other fried apps. Cheese curds are allowed to be different in terms of batter. It doesn't matter what kind of batter because they're all good on fried cheese. As long as you offer cheese curds, your Wisconsin supper club is up to code. The cheese curds at Louisville Junction are good cheese curds. You're going to get what you want. The twist? Oh, you like onion rings, eh? You like that golden batter around those sweet rings of fried heaven? Well what if I said you could have some damn fine onion rings like the ones you're thinking of now, but you could ALSO have Bac-o-rings? Bac-o-rings are exactly what you're probably picturing, though you've likely never pictured it before. It's an onion ring. But instead of batter, the rings are wrapped in maple bacon. Sooo good. And

the toothpick in each one to help keep structural integrity also makes for a nice place to grab them when they're hot.

Yeah, yeah. I'm getting to the entrées. But let's talk about the stuff that's going to ruin your appetite before you even GET your entrée. No braunschweiger was to be had when I was there. This seems to be a ham salad establishment, instead of braunschweiger. No diss on ham salad, mind you. And Louisville Junction had me going through many a package of crackers with theirs. I just really like braunschweiger, is all. The salad bar itself is pretty basic. Iceberg lettuce, the usual lineup of dressings with ranch, french et. al. A few salad embellishments, a few pasta salads. But the soups are amazing. I had beef noodle soup, and oh how I've missed those nice thick, short noodles.

The entrées! If you're still hungry by this time, your resolve is incredible. All the classics are there. And while every supper club has their own ways of doing things, if you're looking for supper club cuisine, prepare to get that itch scratched

GOOOOOD! The pork filet is an awesome center-cut butterfly chop served with either applesauce or BBQ sauce. I'd go for the classic pork-chops-and-applesauce combo, but it was Ann's to order, and I'm the last person to say no to pork and BBQ sauce. Pork chops and applesauce has been a favorite flavor combo of mine since I saw that one episode of *The Brady Bunch*.

The steaks and prime rib were done to perfection and succulent. Like you'd expect from a supper club. BUT! Ever notice how the seafood is kind of hit or miss at a supper club? Makes sense, considering our geography. So I ordered the scallops as a test. I didn't even tell them I was going to write a column. I often don't. 'Cuz who cares? The scallops, which you can get baked OR fried, came to me perfectly done. Not rubbery and overcooked. Not chewy and undercooked. Perfectly, melt-in-your-mouth-who-needs-teeth-anyway done. They were beautiful, even the next day because, yes... I filled up on all that other stuff, first.

That's just Wisconsin tradition. ■



Louisburg Junction Supper Club

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Hours: Thu-Sun: 4-9 PM; Mon-Wed: Closed

DANNY FAIRCHILD

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Fermentation and Your Gut Health—What You Need to Know

By Hy-Vee Nutritionist Megan Dalsing

The human body is home to a vast array of microbes, with around 90% to 95% of them residing in our gut, especially the colon. While this may sound unsettling, the truth is that these microbes play a crucial role in our overall health and well-being. In fact, a healthy gut microbiome has been linked to everything from proper immune function to improved digestion and nutrient absorption. An abnormal microbiota has been linked to a variety of health conditions, including antibiotic-associated diarrhea, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and obesity, allergies, inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, auto-immune diseases, colon cancer, depression, and anxiety. So what exactly are these gut microbes, and how can we ensure that they stay healthy and balanced?

One important factor in maintaining a healthy gut is including foods that contain probiotics and prebiotics. Probiotics are live microorganisms that can benefit health when given in adequate amounts and can also help support the bacteria that live in our gut. They have been shown to improve immune function, aid digestion, and even reduce the risk of certain infections. Some of the best sources of probiotics include yogurt, kefir, kombucha, and other fermented foods.

Prebiotics, on the other hand, are foods that feed the beneficial microbes in our gut and help them thrive. Prebiotics can help improve digestive function, support the immune system, and can help regulate appetite and glucose metabolism. Foods that are high in prebiotics include onions, garlic, bananas, chicory root, and Jerusalem artichokes.

Another important factor in maintaining a healthy gut is the consumption of fermented foods. Fermented foods are those that are made through the growth of certain microbes and enzymatic conversions of food components. These foods can be a source of live, active microbes, and can also improve the taste, texture, and digestibility of food. Some fermented foods include yogurt, kefir, most cheeses, miso, tempeh, kimchi, fermented vegetables, and kombucha. It is important to note that not all fermented foods are probiotic foods. Only some fermented foods contain microbes that meet the strict criteria to be called a "probiotic." Furthermore, some foods that undergo fermentation are further processed, such as through pasteurization, baking or filtering, which can eliminate the live microbes.

To maintain a healthy gut microbiome, it is important to consume a variety of probiotic and prebiotic-containing foods, as well as fermented foods. This can improve your overall health and well-being, and may even reduce the risk of certain diseases. The next time you reach for a snack, consider choosing something beneficial for your gut-health. ■



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