## { 365 dining: kitchen buffet }



## KITCHEN BUFFET

## by Rich Belmont

Luck be a lady tonight. And your lady is very lucky when you take her to the Kitchen Buffet inside the Diamond Jo Casino! When you enter look beyond the soup and salad island and the first thing you will notice is the beautiful rotisserie





and the char-grill in the center of the serving line. Then you will see the display cooks preparing more than 60 entrées and side dishes right there behind the serving counter. For this is a live action all-you-can-eat buffet where at least one chef supervisor and ten display cooks are busy cooking small batches of food right where you serve yourself. The idea is simple: cook the food where you serve it and only enough to satisfy a few people at a time. Then keep cooking and replenishing the serving pans as needed to insure every single item is fresh and delicious. The concept is simple, yes, but the execution is anything but.

First, the Diamond Jo executives committed financial resources to install state of the art kitchen equipment along the serving tables. Then they had to staff the buffet with talented and experienced managers. Overseeing the operation is Diamond Jo Director of Food and Beverage Jeff Holder. Jeff owned and operated two Café Italia Restaurants and three Finney's Bar & Grilles. He has over 26 years experience in the food industry and has been a director at the Diamond Jo since 2008. Doug Cady is the Kitchen Manager and Buffet Chef and is the man responsible for implementing the live action small batch cooking concept.





Above: Katie Lang and Jeff Holder, Doug Cady

Doug has 18 years experience as a fine dining chef and was a chef in the Diamond Jo's Woodfire Grill for 3 years before taking on the challenge of introducing the fine dining experience to the buffet. Katie Lang is in charge of the front of the house and has been with the Diamond Jo for almost 14 years. She is the Food Service Manager and has held that position for the last 8 years.



from you server as often as you like.

- Bottled beer and wine by the glass are available for a small additional charge.
- If you prefer mixed drinks just ask you server to call a cocktail waitress to your table. · You can visit the Kitchen Buffet two or three days in a row and find a lot of different items. That's because there are three menu rotations so most of the food you choose on day one will not be on the tables again until day four.
- However, there are some standard items that are so popular they are available every day. These include fried chicken, mashed potatoes, catfish, baked ziti, meatballs and seared fish specialties to name a few.
- · You will notice each section has side dishes that are compatible with the entrees in that section.
- · If you are wise enough to have achieved senior citizens status be sure to ask for your senior discount.

## **Kitchen Buffet**

301 Bell Street, Dubuque, IA 52001 563-690-4755 • www.DiamondJo.com

HOURS: Lunch: Mon - Sat, 11 am -3 pm Dinner: Sun-Thu, 5-9 pm, Fri -Sat: 5 -10 pm,

Brunch: Sun, 10 am - 3 pm

Fritters, Pies and Cupcakes

**DINING STYLE:** Casual **NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Focaccia Bread, Baked Ziti, Italian Meatballs, Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Rotisserie Chicken, Brisket, Sweet & Sour Pork, Orange Chicken, Corn

LIQUOR SERVICE: Bottled beer and wine by the glass available.

Ask for cocktail waitress for mixed drinks. PRICE RANGE: Lunch: \$9.95 + tax;

Dinner: \$14.95 + tax; Brunch: \$12.95 + tax PAYMENT: Cash, Debit, All Credit, ATM, NO checks

**ACCESSIBILITY: First floor location and Restroom** 

PARKING: Grade level ramp access or valet parking

KIDS: Located in casino so kids are not allowed **CATERING:** No **RESERVATIONS:** No

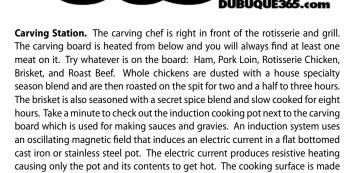
TAKE OUT: No **DELIVERY:** No

OK. So now we can talk about food! There are so many possibilities, where do we begin? Well, for starters there is the soup and salad island. There are always 3 soups; when I last visited there was chicken noodle, creamy potato & bacon, and vegetable barley. There are fresh fruits in season so right now you will find melons, oranges, strawberries and pineapple. Then there are several salads including cucumber.

potato, macaroni, compound salads like Caesar and mix-your-own greens.

After you have your soup and salads go up the counter and take a clean plate from any one of several locations. You can go to whichever section you like because there are no lines of people like you find in a cafeteria. However, most people do start at the right side of the serving counter.

Now you will begin to see the cooks in action right in front of you. There are six stations of culinary delights and starting from the right they are:



**American Heritage.** This station offers a plethora of American cuisine favorites. Here is where you find catfish, macaroni and cheese, green bean casserole, chuck wagon beans, fried chicken and mashed potatoes just to name a few. The fried chicken is my favorite food here. All purpose flour and corn flour are mixed with a house specialty spice blend. The fresh chicken parts are hand breaded and fried in a Henny Penny pressurized fryer in small batches. This means the pieces you choose are always hot and fresh. I always have mashed potatoes with my chicken because they are so good! Fresh Russet Burbanks are steamed and then mixed with butter and buttermilk.

of a glass ceramic material and remains cool. This type of cooking allows for

precise control and consistent heat.

Asian. Here you will see three woks in action. You can watch the cooks make all the sauces and cut all the meat and fish then stir- fry it up. You will find chicken, shrimp or plain fried rice. Perhaps you will be able to have Mongolian Beef and Broccoli, egg rolls, Chicken or Shrimp Chow Mein or the delicious Orange Chili Chicken fried with Mandarin oranges, garlic, orange juice and a little chili sauce. You will always find a Sweet and Sour dish with pork or shrimp or chicken. I prefer the chicken because it is dusted with rice flour before it is fried with chunks of pineapples, green peppers, carrots, pineapple juice and corn syrup. By now I am sure you get the fact that there is way more food than you can possibly eat and its all yours for a very reasonable set price. But if you think this is a good deal wait until you try the Sunday Brunch! In addition to all the regular lunch items you also get a complimentary glass of champagne or mimosa, a Belgium waffle and omelet to- order station, Eggs Benedict, scrambled eggs, hash browns, sausage and bacon, breakfast pizza and pastries.



As if there were not enough food choices already, the Kitchen Buffet always gives you reasons to keep coming back. There are many themed buffets during the year and several are fast approaching.

The Cinco de Mayo buffet is Saturday, May 5th. On that day you will feast on chicken enchiladas, smothered calabacitas, pulled pork carnitas, tamales, stuffed poblano peppers, chili Colorado, grilled steak fajitas and tacos, and rotisserie chicken with Veracruz sauce. Then enjoy an all -you- can- eat Prime Rib Brunch on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13th. Memorial Day, May 28th will be the beginning of the summer BBQ buffet featuring beef ribs,







the dough to enhance the chewy texture. There are usually three or four thin

crust pizzas fresh out of the ovens. If you don't see the type of pizza you like you

can request the cook make you one with whatever toppings you like. You won't

International. There is a different theme each day so it might be Italian or German

for example. You will always find pasta dishes because there is a pasta cooker behind

the counter. Check it out; it looks just like a deep fryer. You might find Chicken

Cacciatore or Chicken Marsala which are both excellent. So are the Corned Beef and

American Bounty. Here you will be impressed watching the cooks sear Tilapia

or Salmon on the flat top grill. Depending on the day you might find pork chops

either char-grilled or smothered with fresh mushrooms and onions in a cream

sauce. These are really good and so are the Meatloaf and Meatball Stroganoff.

The Chicken and Biscuits are one of my favorite dishes. I also load up with fresh

Cabbage, Bratwurst and Sauerkraut with roasted apples, Baked Ziti and Irish stew.

have to wait long; they bake in only 3 to 4 minutes.



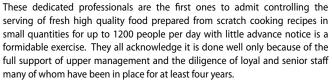




from twelve varieties of dessert. There are cream pies, fruit pies, cheesecake, brownies, cookies, fruit cobbler, bread pudding, a soft serve ice cream machine and a really large assortment of cup cakes. By the way, the most popular cup cake is red velvet with cream cheese frosting. Go ahead and have dessert because when you are at the Kitchen Buffet it's your lucky day!



pork on Friday and Saturday nights. But wait! Did I suggest you save room for dessert! Because there is a seventh station! You will choose



Indeed it is a beautiful sight to watch the cooks prepare for the start of the buffet. Five minutes before the buffet opens the serving tables are practically empty. As soon as diners start moving towards the line all of the food items are put in place as if by magic. There is no need to rush to be in line at the beginning of service. You will find fresh food waiting for you when you get to each station. Before I describe food I have a few suggestions:

- Arrive at the buffet really hungry. You will want to sample so many different things.  $\bullet$  Look over the entire buffet before you choose. Then you will be sure to have
- room for the items you really enjoy. • All non-alcoholic beverages are included in the price. You can request refills



green beans or steamed broccoli.





