



PHILLY STEAKS & FRIES JEAN'S JAPANESE

BY RICH BELMONT

This may come as a surprise to some of you but the Kennedy Mall in Dubuque really does have a Food Court. And what's more surprising is the food is really good!

Philly Steaks & Fries and Jean's Japanese are both owned by Cesar Hernandez. He has made it his business to ensure mall workers and mall shoppers have access to quality, fresh, made to order food. So lunch or dinner at the Mall is not fast food. You do have to wait a few minutes while your order is prepared fresh on the griddle. In the case of Jean's Japanese you can watch the cook prepare your teriyaki while you are waiting.

Cesar is a first generation Mexican American. His father is from Mexico City and his mother is from Michoacán, Mexico. He was born and raised in Elgin, IL. He started working in restaurants when he was 17. He worked in several including Frullati Café & Bakery in the Spring Hill Mall, West Dundee, IL. After a few years Cesar decided to get involved in Auntie Anne's Hand-Rolled Soft Pretzels. He learned every aspect of Food Court restaurants and operations at Auntie Anne's in Janesville, WI where he worked for 5 years. He did so well there he was given the opportunity to open his own Auntie Anne's franchise in the Kennedy Mall. He has owned the Dubuque location since Nov. 2015.

Many of his customers kept asking him when he was going to serve lunches and dinners so he opened Jean's Japanese in May 2016 and Philly Steaks & Fries in Nov. 2016.

Cesar has two passions, the first is to offer his customers quality, freshly prepared food. Just like Auntie Anne's prepares fresh dough daily for hand-rolled pretzels his cheese steaks and teriyaki are prepared only after an order is placed. Cesar is shown at Auntie Anne's with his son, Cesar Javier (Ha-vee-air) Hernandez.

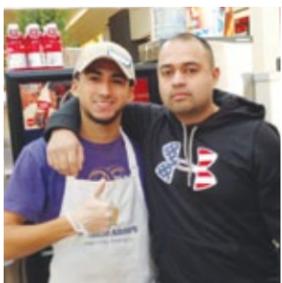
Cesar's second passion is to provide jobs to talented and hard-working people. He currently has eight employees and is in the process of hiring two more. Sarah Pelletier is the Area Manager. She has been with Cesar for six years and oversees the operations of all three stores in the Kennedy Mall and a fourth Philly Steaks & Fries location in Cedar Rapids.

The Manager of Philly Steaks & Fries is Carmen Carrette. She gained food service experience at Wendy's Restaurant, Mrs. Field's Cookies and Auntie Anne's Pretzels.

Roman Perry is the Manager of Jean's Japanese. He was previously a cook in Little Caesars Pizza and also at HuHot Mongolian Grill.

There are several Philly Cheese Steaks to choose from. The beefsteak is high quality Angus Choice Grade beef and you can order your steak in the following combinations:

- Original Cheddar Philly – grilled onions and cheddar cheese
- Philly Cheesesteak – grilled onions and white American cheese
- Bacon Cheesesteak – bacon, provolone cheese and white American cheese



CESAR JAVIER HERNANDEZ (LEFT) AND OWNER CESAR HERNANDEZ (RIGHT)



PHILLY STEAKS & FRIES MANAGER, CARMEN CARRETTE



PHILLY DELUXE

- Pepperoni Cheesesteak – pepperoni, onions, green peppers and provolone
- Mushroom Cheesesteak – mushrooms and white American cheese
- BBQ Cheddar Steak – onions, cheddar cheese and BBQ sauce
- Philly Deluxe – onions, green peppers, mushrooms and white American cheese



For the record an authentic Philadelphia Cheesesteak is made with chopped steak topped with Cheez Whiz cheese spread. American or provolone cheese are common substitutions. Many sandwich shops in Philadelphia also sell Cheesesteak Hoagies

containing other ingredients such as lettuce, tomatoes, grilled onions, mushrooms and even ketchup or mayonnaise.

Since all the steaks are made to order you can customize your sandwich to be just the way you want it. For example the Original Cheddar Philly contains cheddar cheese but many customers order Cheez Whiz instead so it conforms to the authentic Philly version. The Philly Cheesesteak is supplied with White American Cheese but I prefer mine with provolone instead.

There are also several Philadelphia Style Chicken sandwiches prepared with high quality chicken breast meat in the following combinations:

- Philly Chicken – grilled onion, white American cheese
- Philly Chicken Deluxe – onions, green peppers, mushrooms, white American cheese
- Chicken Buffalo – onions, provolone, buffalo sauce and ranch dressing
- Chicken Teriyaki – onions, provolone and teriyaki sauce
- Chicken Cordon Blue – ham and white American cheese

(Fun Fact: American cheese can be orange, yellow or white. Originally it was only a white cheese but later versions became yellow due to the addition of annatto, a sweet and slightly nutty seasoning. American white does not contain the annatto but it is more expensive...go figure).

The restaurant's name notwithstanding there are a variety of other sandwiches to choose from at Philly Steaks & Fries.

The Italian Deluxe is made with turkey, ham, pepperoni and provolone. There is a sandwich called Ultimate Club made with turkey, ham, bacon and cheddar cheese. And the Veggie Delight made with grilled onions, green peppers, mushrooms, provolone and American cheese is perfect for those desiring a meatless lunch or dinner.



AREA MANAGER, SARAH PELLETIER



JEAN'S JAPANESE MANAGER, ROMAN PERRY



BEEF AND SHRIMP TERIYAKI WITH FRIED RICE

There are surprisingly tasty Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and even Gyros sliced from a vertical rotisserie. I also recommend the Chicken Strips and Chicken Wings served with your choice of BBQ, ranch or Hot Sauce for dipping.

Jean's Japanese is all about Teriyaki (teh-ree-yah-kee). This Japanese term actually describes a cooking technique but over time has become a reference to meat that has been marinated in teriyaki sauce then broiled or grilled.



Teriyaki sauce has four main ingredients: soy sauce, sake, sugar and ginger. It is a very basic Asian seasoning and marinade. It is often customized with other ingredients and this is why Jean's Japanese offers exceptional Teriyaki.

Other secret seasonings have been added to the four main ingredients in order to provide a unique flavor.

Choose your Teriyaki with either, beef, chicken or shrimp or any combination thereof. They are stir-fried with vegetables and served with either steamed or fried rice. The fried rice is simply cooked with soy sauce and the vegetables are a mix of carrots, broccoli and cabbage.

The Shrimp Teriyaki is not only scrumptious but is also a great bargain. A nice size medium shrimp averaging 45 per pound are used in this dish.

There are side dishes of noodles, egg rolls and crab rangoons that are so tasty they should not be overlooked.

So now may I suggest the next time you go shopping at the Kennedy Mall you make sure you go there hungry. Because Philly Cheese Steak and Jean's Japanese are serving up some great meals not usually found in ordinary Food Courts!

PHILLY STEAKS & FRIES JEAN'S JAPANESE

KENNEDY MALL, 555 JFK RD, DUBUQUE, IA 52002
779-537-8480

Hours: Mon-Sat: 10 AM-9 PM; Sun: 11 AM-6 PM

Dining Style: Food Court, Come as you are

Recommendations: Philly Steaks & Fries: Original Cheddar Philly, Philly Cheesesteak, Bacon Cheesesteak Philly Deluxe, Philly Chicken, Gyros, Double Cheeseburger and Fries, Veggie Deluxe, Chicken Strips, Chicken Wings
Jean's Japanese: Chicken or Beef or Shrimp Teriyaki with Steamed or Fried Rice, Noodles, Crab Rangoons

Liquor Service: None

Prices: \$2.79 to \$10.49

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, Kennedy Mall Gift Cards, NO Checks

Accessibility: All Mall Entrances and Rest Rooms

Kids Policy: No Specific Menu, Hot Dogs, Chicken Strips and French Fries are big hits with kids, Booster Seat Available

Reservations: No • **Catering:** No • **Take Out:** Yes

Delivery: No • **Parking:** Kennedy Mall Parking Lot