

{ 365 dining: sunshine family restaurant }



Sunshine Family Restaurant

by Rich Belmont

The food is not fancy but you get a lot of it for very little money. And you know what? Everything on the menu is really good. This is kind of amazing considering there are over 200 meals on that menu!



Now many of you already know about this great little restaurant at the corner of 4th Street and Central Avenue in Dubuque. After all, it has been serving good food since 1890. Back then it was called Jungles and Bade. Through the ensuing years it was bought and sold several times and had many names including Never Sleep, Arcade, Queen and Al's Lunch Room. From 1942 to 1972 it was called Karigan's and then it was known as Sfikas from 1972 to 2004.



In that year it was renamed Sunshine Family Restaurant when its current owner, Zoro Saliu (pronounced Sah-lew) took it over. This was a landmark event because Zoro was already an expert at running a family style restaurant. He had been operating the Sunrise Restaurant near General Mitchell Airport, Milwaukee, WI for many years.

Zoro's concept is deceptively simple. Quality food served quickly and inexpensively. It takes a well trained and dedicated staff to accomplish this. Everything is home made in house. There are no cans, bags or boxes in this kitchen. The beef is roasted right here. So are the smoked, bone-in hams, turkeys and chickens. There are no shortcuts and care is taken to maintain consistency. I asked Zoro, his wife Kandi, and son Sanit how they are able to serve over 200 delicious menu items so quickly. They all agree it takes experience, preparation, practice and pride. These are all necessary requirements when a restaurant offers everything on the menu any time from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm seven days a week.



Choose breakfast from over 55 items. Eggs are always served just the way you like. You can have them accompanied by ham, bacon or sausage and with or without hash browns or country potatoes. The pancakes are larger than the plates and the French toast is battered and toasted just enough to be crunchy.

The stars of the breakfast menu are the six skillet. These consist of huge piles of hash browns, meat and vegetables topped with two eggs any style. One of my favorites is the Meat Lover's Skillet with an unbelievably large quantity of diced ham, bacon and sausage over the hash browns topped with shredded cheese and eggs. I also love to order 2 eggs, sausage links, potatoes and toast and sometimes I must have the surprisingly fluffy four egg and ham omelet. Every so



often I cannot resist the Butt Steak with 3 eggs, potatoes and toast which is a hearty meal and only a couple of dollars more.

Next comes lunch which is served quickly. Seriously, if you are on a tight schedule you can be in and out of this restaurant in less than 30 minutes. Be sure to leave some time for making decisions, though, because you will have to pick one of over 79 lunches. All the sandwiches include a cup of soup, lettuce, tomato and pickle. Say the magic word "Deluxe" and you also get French fries. There are all kinds of sandwiches from Burgers, to Pita Melts to Steak, Chicken, Roast Beef, Fish, Tuna Salad and Chicken Salad sandwiches. I recommend the BLT or Combination Club sandwich. It's so big it will take you a few minutes to figure out how



Sunshine Family Restaurant

401 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA, 563-582-3090

Sunshine Family Restaurant West

1575 Kennedy Road, Dubuque, IA, 563-557-3000

HOURS: 6:00 am – 9:00 pm Every Day

DINING STYLE: Family Diner

NOISE LEVEL: Moderate

RECOMMENDATIONS: Steak and Eggs, Short Stack, Meat Lover's Skillet, Eggs to Order with Bacon or Sausage, Hot Roast Beef, Combination Club Sandwich, Fried Chicken, Friday Fish Fry, Spaghetti and Meatballs.

LIQUOR SERVICE: None

PRICE RANGE: *Breakfast:* \$1.95 - \$7.50

Lunch: \$2.95 - \$7.25, *Dinner:* \$6.95 - \$9.95

RESERVATIONS: Up to 55

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, All Major Credit Cards except Amex, No Checks

ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door and Rest Rooms

KIDS POLICY: Friendly, Menu, High Chairs & Boosters

CATERING: Yes, **TAKE OUT:** Yes, **DELIVERY:** No

PARKING: Private Lots



to eat it. The Open Face Sandwiches are all excellent. My favorite is the Hot Roast Beef. It's made with freshly roasted and thin sliced beef covered with homemade gravy and served with mashed potatoes.



If you are thinking there are an overwhelming number of choices you needn't worry. All of the servers are professional and knowledgeable. I was recently guided through the lunch menu by Brenda Halfhill. At dinner Sara Soto was very helpful and patiently explained numerous entrees. I was impressed by both these waitresses' knowledge of food preparation, off-menu specials, and prices.



All Dinner Specialties are served with soup or salad, choice of potato, vegetable, roll and dessert. Some of the most popular are Roast Sirloin, Chicken Fried Steak, Whole Fried Catfish and Chopped Steak with Grilled Onions. Also in demand are my favorites, Fried Chicken, which is hand dipped in an in house secret batter, and Spaghetti and Meatballs with homemade meat sauce. There are also daily dinner specials like Lasagna, Breaded or Grilled Pork Tenderloin and Chicken Fried Steak with sausage gravy. These specials include choice of soup or salad, vegetable, roll and dessert.



Wait, there's more! Every night there is a different off-menu special too. Monday is all you can eat spaghetti and meat sauce. Tuesday is Smothered Chop Steak night. Wednesday is Beer Battered Chicken Strips and so on. On Friday and Saturday nights the special is top Sirloin Tips and Noodles. Friday is also the night for all you can eat Milwaukee Style Friday Fish Fry.



Senior citizens over age 60 are especially welcome at Sunshine Restaurant. There is a whole list of Senior Lunch and Dinner Specials that are ridiculously low priced.

Now with all this wonderful food at such reasonable prices you might be thinking this place must be crowded. And you would be right! There is usually a waiting list on week-ends and you might have to wait a few minutes for a table. However, the Saliu family has just fixed this problem. You will be happy to know that as of Tuesday, October 11, 2011 there is a Sunshine Family Restaurant West on John F. Kennedy Road! The new location has a similar menu with comparable prices and the same helpful staff. So now you have two locations to experience Zoro's hospitality where his motto is "Good Food, Good Service – Good Prices!"

