



In the Chef's Corner

DiOGi's

BY MAGGIE MATSKO **DiOGi's** is known in West Virginia for its variety of authentic Latin dishes and the friendly service offered to both human and canine customers.

Located in Fayetteville, the restaurant is open for lunch and dinner for visitors from near and far to experience the lively menu and laid-back atmosphere.

DiOGi's uses only the best local produce, a choice that makes every dish special. To start off the dining experience, the menu offers appetizers like the Chipotle Black Bean Dip, a queso dip with black beans and chipotle peppers, and DiOGi's Shrimp, which is seasoned and dredged in rice and corn flour, deep-fried and served with chipotle-honey dipping sauce.

When it comes to the entrees, DiOGi's is known for its famous carnitas: tender, slightly sweet chunks of pork slowly cooked then marinated and deep-fried and topped with deep-fried onions. Another main course favorite is the Pollo Loco, strips of grilled chicken breast and locally produced chorizo topped with cheese, salsa verde, red onions and cilantro. Burgers, wings and ribs are also on the menu for those looking for traditional favorites with a Latin twist.

To top off the main course, guests are encouraged to try DiOGi's Salvadorian Bread Pudding. It is served traditionally or deep-fried with warm caramel bourbon sauce and sweet lachera cream.

At DiOGi's, both the ingredients and décor are produced locally. All the tables in the restaurant are made from local barn wood, and the wood on the walls comes from old homes torn down in the Fayetteville area, as well as from New River Gorge timber. While dining, guests are able to browse art pieces from local artists that cover the walls.

"I guess I have always enjoyed being different," DiOGi's Owner Barbara Aguilar says of the eclectic décor and unique menu. "I have never wanted to be inside the box, just outside of it enough to generate curiosity and delight—in this case, culinary delight. Previously, I had opened three restaurants in Philadelphia and one in New Jersey, and these establishments all served typical Mexican fare. Then I made the trip home to offer something unique to the area."

Part of the uniqueness she was striving for came as an opportunity to serve her customers' four-legged friends. DiOGi's is known for being one of the only dog-friendly restaurants in the state.



Owner
Barbara
Aguilar and
Head Chef
Jeremy
Ferreebe

"Dogs are my favorite people with four legs," says Aguilar. "Many people come to Fayetteville for climbing, biking or rafting and have their furry kids with them. Since only service dogs are allowed inside restaurants, I thought it would be great to have tables outside so people can eat and have their dogs with them." With permission from their owners, each canine guest receives its own complimentary doggie taco and a bowl of water.

Another unique aspect about the restaurant is the Cinco de Mayo celebration held each May. In addition to food and drink specials and live music, there is a burrito eating contest for entertainment.

"My favorite part of the Cinco de Mayo Gigandous Burrito Eating Contest is all of the pre-contest bragging on how easy it will be to take down a five-pound burrito," says Aguilar. "To date, only one person has eaten the entire five-pound burrito, and that was in our very first contest, so the challenge will continue."

DiOGi's is located at 312 North Court Street in Fayetteville and is open Sunday through Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, visit the restaurant's Web site at www.diogismexicangrill.com.

Photography by Tracy Toler

Smoked Wings

- 1 gallon Frank's RedHot Sauce
- 1 lb butter
- ½ cup fresh minced garlic
- ¼ cup lemon-pepper
- 1 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1 can chipotle peppers
- ¼ cup parsley flakes



Combine the ingredients and cook over medium heat until butter is melted. Marinate the raw chicken wings in the wing sauce for a couple of hours. Place on a smoker at 200-250 F for two to three hours, turning when needed.



Pollo Loco

- 1 cup chorizo
- ½ chicken breast, cut into strips
- White American cheese, melted
- Diced onions
- Fresh cilantro



Fry the chorizo and chicken breast strips. Place on a plate and drizzle melted white American cheese on top. Add salsa verde, diced onions and fresh cilantro. Can be served over rice or mashed potatoes.

Salsa Verde

- 1 oz fresh cilantro leaves
- 12 oz canned tomatillos
- 3 oz tomatillo juice from the can
- 1 oz canned pickled jalapeños
- 1 oz jalapeño juice from the can
- 1 tsp granulated garlic
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup diced onion

Place all the ingredients in the blender and blend until smooth.





Ahi Tuna Tacos



Ahi tuna steaks – your choice of size
Flour or corn tortillas
Fresh avocado

Sear the tuna steaks on the grill or in a pan and place in the center of a lightly warmed tortilla. Top with the wasabi cabbage, wasabi mayonnaise and fresh avocado, if desired.

Wasabi Cabbage

5 lbs red cabbage, thinly shredded
5 lbs green cabbage, thinly shredded
4 oz granulated garlic
1½ oz black pepper
4½ oz salt
8 oz red wine vinegar
1½ cups wasabi oil

Mix the ingredients together well and refrigerate overnight.

Wasabi Mayonnaise

2 oz wasabi oil
5 oz wasabi powder
5 limes, juiced
2 lbs mayonnaise
1 lb sour cream

Mix the ingredients together well. ■