

BAGGER DAVE'S

Fun diner offers cure for the common burger

What a sweet little discovery we made upon a visit to Bagger Dave's restaurant in Berkeley. Here, the accent is on local, local, local and fresh, fresh, fresh (you won't find a freezer in the place).

Upon entering the eatery, one immediately takes in sepia-toned photo murals of Berkeley's days gone by. There are walls covered with images of the old fire station and the original downtown theater. A cozy motif features high ceilings, and wood accents and booths, while a sweet little train chugs along a track near the ceiling, making its way around the restaurant and through a hole in the wall to the bar side.

Pure fun is what we all thought upon entering, and that amused mood stayed with us as we slid into our booth and received do-it-yourself burger order pads. Here, ground beef rules — burgers come in whatever rendition



from it. That fresh basil scent and the melted cheese, blended with the mashed avocado concoction was pure heaven.

BAGGER DAVE'S 2972 Coolidge Highway, Berkeley (248) 543-DAVE

★★★★★

HOURS: 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-midnight, Friday-Saturday; noon-1 p.m., Sunday.

PRICES: Burgers vary from \$3.39-6.99 and come with one or two patties. Toppings and sauces range from \$.30-\$1. Shakes are \$3.19. Chili is \$2.59-3.99; and sandwiches are \$3.79-4.49.

CREDIT CARDS: All major.

LIQUOR: Bottled beer and wine.

NONSMOKING: 100 percent

PARKING: Adjacent lot

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: Yes

RESERVATIONS: Not necessary

★★★★★ Outstanding

★★★★ Very good

★★★ Good

I decided to deck my burger (I chose turkey instead of ground beef) with all my favorite things in life: basil, mozzarella cheese and guacamole. Sound weird? Far

(\$6.29).

Besides our burgers, we also dove into cute little bags of freshly made Belgian-style (crisp on the outside, soft on the inside, and completely fresh) French fries and sweet potato fries, both cooked in peanut oil. Delicious! I dipped mine in a chipotle sauce to give them some kick. Other dipping sauces are offered.

The beverage list features a host of options, as well as bottled beer and wine. With 58 milk shake varieties, there's plenty for ice cream lovers.

Our waitress was friendly, fast and efficient, as were others that we noted, moving quickly from table to table atop checkered, linoleum flooring.

The restaurant, owned by T. Michael Ansley, a franchisee of Buffalo Wild Wings, has been so popular that another location is slated to open this month in Ann Arbor, according to our waitress. On this particular Sunday evening, the crowd was mostly families and couples, with a good amount of young kids and toddlers. Besides burgers, they dined on turkey black-bean chili



Oakland Press photos/DOUG BAUMAN
Clockwise from bottom: Turkey burger and sweet potato fries with chipotle sauce, turkey and black bean chili and a chocolate shake are served at Bagger Dave's in Berkeley (above left).

(\$3.99), Cobb salads (\$6.29) and bacon lettuce and tomato sandwiches (\$4.49).

We noted parents telling their kids that if they were well behaved and ate their food, they would be treated to some Gummi bears and chocolate squares at checkout.

Indeed, little crates full of candy near the cash register enticed the tykes at meal's end.

We wanted something chocolaty, too, to cap our experience. And just like that, our waitress brought us a fistful of Tootsie Rolls for dessert, compliments of the house. Sweet!

To prevent restaurants from giving special service, The Oakland Press dining reviewer is anonymous. Each review is generally based on a single visit.

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