

A Taste of Maryland Heights

chihuahua's stays true to its mexican roots



Owner Ramiro Flores stands in Chihuahua's main dining room, which is decorated with photos, rugs and other memorabilia from Mexico. Chihuahua's has something for everyone: great lunch deals for a quick weekday meal, an extensive kids' menu for family dining, and a number of happy hour specials for those looking for a fiesta.

Who knew that delicious, authentic Mexican food was so close to home?

You've probably driven by Chihuahua's Bar and Grill and not even realized it. Located in a small strip mall at the corner of Dorsett and McKelvey Roads, it's easy to miss. But once you've had a taste of their wonderful house specialties, generous portions and friendly service, you won't be able to forget it.

I met my resident reviewer, Shelley Hays, at Chihuahua's on a drizzly Thursday afternoon. We arrived at around 12:30, so the lunch crowd was gradually starting to thin out of the small restaurant.

Our server, Manuel, greeted us and quickly brought our drink orders. Throughout the meal, his playful and attentive demeanor made our experience all the more extraordinary. He was very familiar with the menu, offering detailed descriptions of items we had questions about and even describing where certain dishes fit into Mexican culture.

We decided that the chips and spicy salsa automatically brought to each table

would suffice as an appetizer and pressed straight on to the main menu. Chihuahua's offers a long list of lunch specials priced from \$5.50 - \$6.50, including various combinations of tacos, enchiladas, quesadillas, chimichangas, tamales and burritos. All combinations are served with a side order of rice and beans.

Several unusual dishes on the menu caught my eye, and the "Caldo D'Pollo" sounded perfect for a rainy day: "Mexican chicken soup with chunks of chicken, tomato, rice and veggies." A shrimp version is also available. But Manuel warned me that the soup is extremely spicy, and as something of a coward when it comes to fiery foods, I opted instead for the lunch-sized portion of their chicken fajitas. When the sizzling platter arrived, I wondered what the dinner portion looked like, because I had before me enough food for at least two hearty meals. The sautéed chicken, onions and bell peppers came with a foil-wrapped packet of soft flour tortillas and a plate filled with lettuce, pico de gallo, guacamole, sour cream and rice. I was particularly impressed by their Mexican-

style rice. While the rice at most Mexican restaurants is a salty dish heavy with tomato paste, Chihuahua's rice was light and fluffy. It resembled jasmine rice in texture, flavored only with finely diced tomato and a bit of fresh cilantro. The refreshing change really made the dish stand out.

My co-reviewer, Shelly, picked one of the house specialties recommended by Manuel, the "Regional Tacos Mexican Style." The menu described them as being "served with all the typical ingredients of Mexico," and Manuel assured us that they were indeed true to the way native Mexicans prepare them. The tacos come in an order of four, filled with either pork (Shelly's choice) or carne asada (chopped steak). The tacos consisted of four soft flour tortillas served "open face," filled with the tender cooked pork and dotted with fresh cilantro. Guacamole and a spicy salsa verde accompanied the dish. The plate came garnished with lime wedges, which Manuel later suggested she use to flavor her meat. She called the tacos "delicious — especially after Manuel told me to sprinkle the meat with lime and add some green sauce and guacamole."

We left with a box full of leftovers, smiles and promises to return. Their fast, friendly service, excellent food, and reasonable prices have earned Chihuahua's a well-deserved place among local restaurant standouts.

Chihuahua's Bar and Grill

1932 McKelvey Road
Maryland Heights, MO 63043
Phone: (314) 317-9404

Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Friday - Saturday: 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Smoking Policy:

Chihuahua's has separate rooms for smoking and nonsmoking, connected by an open doorway. The smoking area is in the same room as the bar.