



BEST BITES |

SUPPER AT THE APPLE DUMPLING

Finding a place like the Apple Dumpling affirms the romanticized notion of small-town America I had before moving to CU. This is where lunch is called dinner, dinner is called supper and the waitresses call you "honey." Located on a quiet country road outside of Urbana, nestled within a small neighborhood taking advantage of the brief break in cornfields, the Apple Dumpling is a find. This is where you go when you want to escape, whatever it is you need escaping from, when you want to hide out. When you feel alone in the world, they'll fill that void. When you're homesick, this is the closest thing to being there. Welcoming country charm, hominess and comfort. All this from a restaurant found in the middle of nowhere. And the food's good, too.

The supper menu only offers three entrée choices, but with their fried chicken as an option, they would have done just fine with only one. When you order it the waitress will warn you that it takes 15 minutes to cook, since it's prepared per order, but I'll tell you right now, it's well worth the wait. There's nothing else to say about the chicken other than it's amazing. Fried in such a way that the skin balloons up around the chicken, an air pocket is created between the two resulting in a deliciously crispy skin and a perfectly cooked, juicy chicken. Order the meal on Thursday and you can get their green beans that have been cooking all day with ham. When served, large pieces of the ham still remain. Also found on the plate is their homemade mashed potatoes and chicken gravy. Choice of roll or biscuit is part of the deal as well. The biscuits are nice, but unfortunately for them, outdone by the apple butter you can top them with. So far, the apple butter at the Apple Dumpling is the best I've ever tasted—strong, dark and cinnamon. I wanted to take some home with me ... and did.

After all this, who'd have room for dessert, but with their signature dish taunting you, how can you refuse? The apple dumpling is an apple filled with cinnamon and sugar, wrapped in dough, and baked. Hot out of the oven and topped with vanilla ice cream, this is the perfect way to end a meal.

2014 N. High Cross Road, Urbana
Tuesday-Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Closed Mondays

—Sarah Marx Feldner