

## BEST BITES |

**SEA BOAT**

I'm actually a little nervous to write this. Impulsive popularity tends to make good things go bad. Yet, at the same time I am driven by the fact that credit must be given where credit is due, and Sea Boat definitely deserves the credit.

Sea Boat, a non-descript corner establishment on the northeast side of Champaign, does fried food, and they do it well. Very well.

I think I just devoured the best fish sandwich I've ever tasted. The sandwich (aka The Delicious Sea Boat) comes standard with lettuce, tomatoes and their homemade tartar sauce—smooth with a hint of sweetness that's a far cry from the sharp and tangy flavor the sauce is most commonly associated with. You can also add pickles, raw onions and American cheese. I ordered the works and didn't go wrong.

The two large fillets of whiting fish are fried to perfection—not too greasy, crispy around the edges and dripping with juices when bitten into. This alone would make for a satisfying meal. But take into consideration the union the toppings make with the fish, the hot with the cold, and satisfaction becomes rewarding. The steam from the fish melts the cheese, which then blends with the tartar sauce and sinks into the fish. This is further complemented by the tomato which, too, has cooked from the heat of the fish and evolved into a milder, softer flavor, while the pickles and raw onions are there to provide a cool contrast of crunch. The bread itself is nothing special, just store-bought buns, but this, too, I'm sure was planned—not wanting to compete with the flavors bursting from what's inside.

Sea Boat is open Tuesday through Saturday for delivery or carry out and is located at 1114 N. Market St., Champaign.

—Sarah Marx Feldner