Restaurants, churches, clubs offer Lenten fare

BY MARY QUINLEY
CORRESPONDENT

If you're searching for a meatless meal during the Lenten season, you might want to head to a local pub or eatery, a neighborhood church, or a fraternal organization's meeting place to dine.

Here's a sampling of what's available:

RESTAURANTS/PUBS

■ **Hopo's Fish & Chips** - 28370 Joy, between Middlebelt and Inkster Roads, Livonia, (734) 427-2130. Open: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday; noon to 8 p.m. Sunday; closed Monday. A variety of fried, baked and broiled fish dinners, average price $7.95.

■ **Plymouth Fish Seafood Market & Restaurant** - 578 Starkweather, Old Village, Plymouth, (734) 455-2630. Open: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Shrimp, fish & chips, scallops, ocean perch and more than 20 other fish selections (prices vary). On Mondays, all-you-can-eat grilled or fried cod ($8.43).

■ **Page's Food & Spirits** - 23621 Farmington Road, one block south of Grand River, Farmington, (248) 477-0099. Open: 11 a.m. to midnight Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday-Saturday; 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday. All-you-can-eat fish & chips ($10.95); baked or broiled cod, sautéed lake perch and Friday fish specials.

■ **Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center** - 8768 North Territorial, Plymouth, (734) 453-7272. Open: 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Fridays. All-you-can-eat fish or pasta dinners ($8.75).

■ **Red Robin Restaurant** - 36350 Warren, Westland, (734) 421-4081. Open: 11 a.m. to midnight Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday. Fish & chips ($8.99), clam strips and fries ($7.99) and seafood pasta ($10.99).

■ **Johnson's Family Restaurant** - 42400 Ford., Canton, (734) 981-6877. Open: 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. All-you-can-eat fish & chips ($7.95, lighter appetite $4.95). Lenten specials feature grilled trout, salmon and fried clams.

■ **Senate Coney Island & Restaurant**, 34359 Plymouth, Livonia, (734) 422-5075. Open: 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. Fish & chips ($7.25), baked salmon ($8.45) Fridays only.

■ **All area Big Boy Restaurants** offer an all-you-can-eat seafood bar on Fridays beginning at 4 p.m. Buffet is $11.95 for adults and $6.95 for children under 10.

Locations include – 29661 Plymouth in Wonderland Mall, Livonia, (734) 425-5500; 33427 Plymouth, west of Farmington Road, Livonia, (734) 421-4349; 37123 Six Mile , east of Newburgh, Livonia, (734) 464-6670; 29548 Seven Mile, in the Livonia Mall Shopping Center, Livonia, (248) 477-8608; 44681 W. Ann Arbor, west of Sheldon Road, Plymouth, (734) 455-8070; 28340 Ford, Garden City, (734) 425-2360; 20788 Farmington, north of Eight Mile, Farmington, (248) 477-2590; 6360 N. Wayne, Westland, (734) 595-1700; 45250 Ford, Canton Township, (734) 459-5555.

CHURCHES

Unless otherwise noted, beginning March 7, dinners will be served at these locations on Fridays during Lent, including Good Friday, April 18.

■ **Our Lady of Good Counsel** – 47650 N. Territorial, Plymouth, (734) 453-0326. Serving: 5:30-7:30 p.m., excluding Good Friday. Fried and baked fish (adults $6.50, seniors $5.50, children $4).

■ **St. Edith** - 15089 Newburgh, Livonia, (734) 464-1222. Serving: 4:30-7:30 p.m. All-you-can-eat fried cod with salad bar, fries or macaroni-and-cheese and beverage ($6.95).

■ **St. Aidan** -17500 Farmington, Livonia (734) 425-5950. Serving: 5:30-7 p.m. on March 7, 14, 21 & 28. Buffet style dinners include baked cod, vegetables, potatoes, roll, dessert and beverage; adults $7, kids (5-10) $4, four years and younger, free.

■ **St. Raphael** – 31530 Beechwood, west of Merriman, two blocks north of Ford, Garden City, (734) 427-1533. Serving: 4:30-7 p.m. except on Good Friday 3-7 p.m. Fish, shrimp and fish-shrimp combo dinners ($7), fish sandwich plate ($5.75).

■ **St. Kenneth** – 14951 Haggerty, Plymouth Township, (734) 420-0288. Serving: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fish & chips ($5), fisherman's platter ($6), fried shrimp ($6.75), kids' dinners ($2.50). Dinners include salad, fries and beverage. Vegetable lasagna and clam chowder soup available.

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

■ **Monaghan Knights of Columbus** – 19801 Farmington, Livonia, (248) 476-8385. Serving: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5-8:30 p.m. every Friday throughout the year and Ash Wednesday. Fish & chips with coleslaw and roll ($7.25); broiled haddock, perch, shrimp and frog legs available.

■ **Elks Lodge** – 31117 Plymouth, one block east of Merriman, Livonia, (734) 425-2246. Serving: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m. Fish dinners ($7-$8.25), fish & chips ($5.50), fish sandwich ($4.25) and kids' fish dinner ($4.25).

Mary Quinley is a Livonia resident and writes about food and travel for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Big burritos featured at new Birmingham Qdoba

BY ELEANOR HEALD
CORRESPONDENT

A long-held belief is that food trends gravitate toward the middle of our nation from its coastlines. It smacks of truth since Mexican food is the favorite of those who eat out in California and more Mexican eateries have opened in Detroit's suburbs in the last year.

Yet it must be asked, are we eating more Mexican food or are there more franchisees willing to take on the nation's largest chain, Taco Bell?

Qdoba's interior is not the least reminiscent of a Taco Bell. In the Birmingham location, in addition to the standard Mexican mural, stainless-topped tables and blond wood-accented chairs, there are comfortable booths.

What's Qdoba?

"Qdoba is just a name; it sounds good; it has no meaning in Spanish," Operations Manager Patrick Higley said.

Qdoba Mexican Grills are now in 18 states. There are eight locations in Michigan, two in metro Detroit; the new Birmingham has a sister eatery in Royal Oak.

The first Qdoba Mexican Grill restaurant opened in Denver in 1995. It was an immediate success, with revenues of more than $1.5 million in the first year. The cost of opening the 1,300-square-foot store was only $180,000. Birmingham and Royal Oak General Manager Matt Barcey indicated that since then, locations have enlarged to 2,000 to 2,200 square feet with an average opening cost of $350,000.

Qdoba Mexican Grill

Where: 685 E. Maple Road, Birmingham (248) 593-3486 and 301 S. Main Street, Royal Oak (248) 336-9661.
Open: Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., until 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday, until 9 p.m. Sunday.
Food style: Mexican eat in and carry out.
Cost: Tacos and burritos $1.89-$5.79. Kids Meal $2.50.

SPECIALTIES

For the last few months, a sign on the front window of the new Qdoba in Birmingham read "Not just big burritos. Big flavors." That's a Qdoba trademarked description, but it delivers the message about Qdoba, which opened in Birmingham Tuesday, Feb. 25.

Most popular among Qdoba's clientele nationwide is the Chicken Burrito that's made with boneless, skinless thigh meat in a tortilla with the signature cilantro lime rice, black or pinto beans, a choice from among five salsas from mild to hot, cheese, sour cream or guacamole. Among the Signature Burritos, Chicken Pablano Pesto tops the list.

In addition to big burritos, customized by patrons who select from fresh ingredients at the display cooking area, there are other options. Tacos, taco salads, three-cheese nachos, five different salsas, homemade chips and guacamole, steaming hot three-cheese Queso and tortilla soup can be ordered to eat in or carry out.

Quesadillas debut with the Birmingham menu. Made in a 13-inch folded crispy flour tortilla with chicken or steak, pico de gallo, cheese, sour cream and guacamole then cut in four wedges, it's an ideal lunch to share. Cost is $4.89 for vegetarian, $5.69 for chicken and $5.99 for steak.

For those who are not into *big* burritos, no matter how great the flavor, the Chicken Taco Salad (hot grilled chicken on cool romaine lettuce, with black bean corn salsa, picante ranch dressing, pico de gallo and sour cream) in a crisp tortilla bowl is a less-filling option. But definitely not a grab and go item.

Another option for the taste of Mexican without high calories and carbs from a flour tortilla is the Naked Burrito, your choice of customized ingredients in a bowl without the tortilla wrap.

The Q-to-Go Hot Taco Bar for make-your-own tacos at $7.20 per person may be the perfect answer anytime there are 20 to 100 in a group. Order by phone at least 24 hours in advance of pick-up. Delivery is not possible, but the description of what's available to go is a good summary of selections available for eating in.

The Taco Bar comes complete with marinated and grilled lean, trimmed beef, kept hot in a chafing stand. There's also grilled chicken which was marinated in flavorful adobo sauce. It, too, is kept hot in a chafing stand.

Flour tortillas for soft tacos and corn taco shells for hard tacos are accompanied by three of the five Qdoba salsas. Pico de gallo is a mild salsa made with fresh tomatoes, red onion, jalapeno chiles, cilantro and lime juice.

Salsa Verde is a tangy green medium-spice salsa with tomatillos, jalapeno chiles, garlic and cilantro. Roasted Chile Corn is also mild.

Tomato Jalapeno is spicy red salsa with roasted tomatoes, cilantro and jalapeno chiles. Fiery Habanero explains itself.

Toppings include cheese, sour cream and lettuce. Homemade tortilla chips are accompanied by fresh guacamole. For dessert, chocolate chip cookies.

Standard and Custom Burrito Box Lunches are also available.

Thirsty? Qdoba serves Coke products, ice tea and trendy Jones sodas in many flavors.

RICK SMITH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Matt Barcey, Qdoba vice president, shows off their style of nachos.

Eleanor Heald is a Troy resident who writes about dining, food, wine and spirits for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864#.

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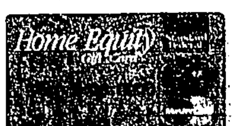

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