

Pita Pit serves up healthy alternative for nocturnal diners

The Pita Pit, open as late as 4 a.m. during the week, combines healthy offerings with late-night deliveries

Ali Shaughnessy
Senior News Reporter

"When I'm writing a paper at three in the morning, pizza only takes me so far," University student Eric Reese said. His solution? The Pita Pit.

The Pita Pit, at 1087 Willamette St., opened in Eugene almost two years ago and offered a new combination to students and community members: Health food and late-night delivery.

A pita is round flat bread that can be opened into a pocket for filling. Mediterranean in origin, people can fill pitas with anything from falafel, a vegetarian filling made from spiced chickpeas, to chicken Caesar salad.

"The Pita Pit is a great alternative to pizza and burgers," said John Dowell, who became the shop's owner last June. "It's a fresh fast food alternative."

Dowell said he prides himself on the quality of food that The Pita Pit has to offer. The Pita Pit stocks up on fresh food three times a week, Dowell said. Only the lettuce is pre-cut, and workers do the rest of the slicing and dicing to ensure the food's quality and freshness.

Dowell said the most popular pitas are chicken and falafel, but his personal favorite is the Philly steak.

"The pitas are built the way you

want them to be, from the sauces to the cheese," Dowell said.

Dowell added that The Pita Pit draws its clientele because of its flexible hours. Open at 11 a.m. everyday, The Pita Pit doesn't close until 4 a.m. on Monday through Wednesday, 3 a.m. on Thursday to Saturday and 2 a.m. on Sunday.

Reese said it was the late hours that first caught his attention. One night, he was watching movies with his roommate. When Reese suggested they order a pizza, his roommate told him about The Pita Pit.

"I was shocked to find out there was a place other than Pizza Hut or Dominos still open and still delivering," he said.

Dowell said that while The Pita Pit can't deliver to all of Eugene, he hopes to expand and open another shop within a couple of years. The Pita Pit delivers to the campus area, he added. It also makes an appearance every Wednesday in the Marketplace Cafe, located in the EMU food court.

Senior Spanish major Carrie Elbon, who has been working day shifts at The Pita Pit for the past two years, said she still loved the food.

"I've eaten a pita every day I've worked there," she said. "I haven't gotten sick of it yet." Elbon added that she loves working at The Pita Pit because Dowell works around students' schedules.

Dowell said academics are very important to him and he does all he can to make sure students have

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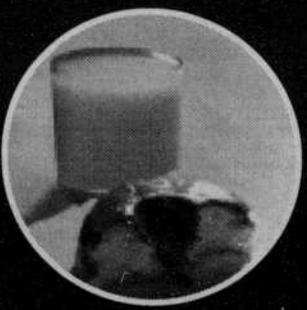
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