

# Gone Toxic

Toxic Wings and Fries offers healthier fast food options

BY WILLIAM KENNEDY



Like it or not, football season is upon us like a fullback in tight pants. For many, football means parties and parties mean food. If you need a fresh catering option for your next tailgate (or couch-gate), consider the meanest-named new restaurant in Eugene: Toxic Wings and Fries on River Road.

“Peppers are classified as toxic,” says owner and founder Brandon Ingram. “We’re the only animal that eats them.” Ingram’s son thought of the name and Ingram says when he heard it, the business logo immediately came to mind. “I saw that skull, I saw that ‘X.’”

“X is the most masculine, marketable letter in the English language,” Ingram says, admitting he knew a restaurant named Toxic would be controversial. “That’s what got us so busy before we even opened,” he says with a smile.

Toxic’s menu is simple: wings, fries and burgers. Ingram says his wings are hand-rubbed. “We have our own rub,” Ingram explains, “and then I smoke them in mesquite and hickory. I do that for about an hour.”

Ingram says his process renders off excess fat and cooks the wings about 80 percent, finishing them off in the fryer. “We fry them in rice-bran oil,” Ingram adds, continuing, “It’s got no taste at all, so you actually taste the product.” Ingram says rice-bran oil fights cholesterol and has antioxidants, making Toxic’s “fast-like food” menu as healthy as possible.

Ingram also prepares boneless chicken wings. “They’re really popular,” Ingram says. He takes fresh chicken breast, hand-cuts it and, instead of using batter, adds flour to his rub. “No gristle, no fat, just nice white meat,” he says.

To go with the wings, Toxic offers a broad menu of unique, rich and flavorful sauces: tangy Carolina, apricot chipotle and the delicious chili maple lime — delicious because, well, *chili, maple and lime* — on a chicken wing.

Toxic’s 16 sauces range in heat from mild (teriyaki) to “toxic sauce.” There are even a few off-menu sauce options for the extra-adventurous eater called “A Ghost” and “Toxic Lava.”

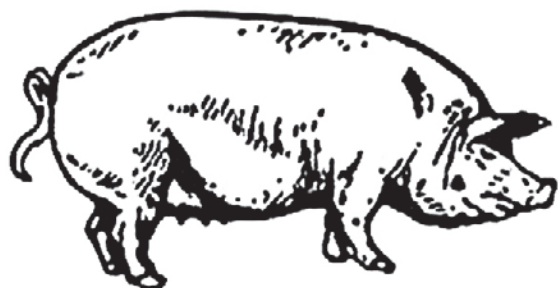
“We serve the sauces on the side,” instead of tossed with the wings, “because we want you to taste the rub.” Ingram says his wings start with a good foundation and the sauce is an accent.

But Toxic is more than a wings joint. Ingram says he actually sells more burgers than chicken wings — which seems appropriate, given Toxic’s ’50s diner with a rock ‘n’ roll attitude décor.

Ingram says his buns are baked daily at Reality Kitchen and his beef is sourced from a Junction City farm. And despite the meat-heavy menu, Ingram stresses that Toxic is the only place in Eugene to get the vegetarian “hemp burger” and that he also offers salads.

Ingram also takes pride in the fact his fries and wings are each cooked in their own fryer, meaning Toxic’s fries are truly vegan and the bone-in wings are gluten free. Ingram’s business has been brisk and is only increasing. He takes special orders for large parties, but asks for at least 24-hour notice. A Toxic Wings and Fries website is coming soon.

*Toxic Wings and Fries is open 11:30 am to 8 pm Monday through Saturday at 943 River Rd.*



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