

## At Long Beach Tavern, food and setting are well-worn

Review and photos by  
**THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA**  
MOUTH@COASTWEEKEND.COM  
FACEBOOK.COM/MOUTHOFTHECOLUMBIA

Besides the flat-screen TVs and the locally brewed IPAs on tap, there is little inside the Long Beach Tavern to assure you that we are indeed in 2017 and not 1970.

Part of that is the look, part is the food.

But before we get to the eats, it's worth setting the scene.

The ceiling is painted black. The carpet is dark. The walls are wood, and the booths are coated in black vinyl. There's a fireplace and all kinds of vintage beer-marketing paraphernalia. Over classic rock or sports you'll hear pool balls clacking and regulars jawing.

And indeed, the Long Beach Tavern (aka the LBT) is a local stronghold. Considering the location — smack dab in the tourist center of Long Beach — that's saying something. While much of the town is tourist-first, LBT maintains working-class roots. Heavy-duty work pants and steel-toed boots might as well be a dress code.

While those workers come after the whistle blows and fill up on big, carb-y portions, eating is an ancillary concern. And, to be sure: There are drink deals to be had. Cans of beer start as low as \$1.75.

Whether you're up for a can of Milwaukee's Best is another question. But hey: It's a striking deal, especially in a tourist town.

Now, to the food. First, it's

served late. After most of Long Beach shuts down, the LBT is still cooking. In addition to the usual dive necessities — prepressed, frozen burger patties, fries and tots, chicken strips and wings — there's pizza and a slew of daily specials, like taco Tuesday (two tacos for a buck), wing Wednesday, pasta Friday and so on.

I stuck mostly to the regular menu. And since it was the banner out front touting the LBT's chowder taking First Place at the Razor Clam Festival that lured me in, I began with a cup (\$6.95, \$8.95 for a bowl).

Tasting it, I was a bit miffed. It was very much akin to the indistinct chowder we coasties are all too familiar with: salty, creamy, buttery and one-note. There was no depth, no developed flavor, and the clams were on the gummy side. It felt like a tourist trap.

At \$9.95 (with chips; fries, onion rings, tots or a salad are \$2.50 extra), the Halibut Fish

Sandwich was a squarer value. Obviously at that price we're talking about machined, long-frozen, probably pre-breaded fish (the same as they use in the fish and chips). The sandwich was stacked absurdly, the center a thin, teetering tower of tomatoes, then red onions with pickles inside, then the thick rectangle of beer-battered

halibut, covered with a slice of American cheese. Apart from the presentation, which I had to mush down to get in my mouth, there's nothing particularly special to mention. Nothing offensive, either. It did the job.

### LONG BEACH TAVERN

Rating: ★★

305 Pacific Ave.

Long Beach, Washington  
98631

360-642-3235

Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. every day

Price: \$ – some good values, some questionable

Service: Local friendly

Vegetarian / Vegan Options: Thin

Drinks: Full bar

#### KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

- ★ Poor
- ★★ Below average
- ★★★ Worth returning
- ★★★★ Very good
- ★★★★★ Excellent, best in region



Seafood chowder

The pizza was passable. The crust was medium-thick and that doughiness was quite filling. There are two tiers of pizza. From the top (“Gourmet”) category, I had The Captain — essentially the classic “combination.” From the sauce to the cheese to the toppings, it was totally forgettable — a horse with no name. It was \$25.95 for a 14-inch pie, and I felt a wisp of the tourist economy creeping in again.

I did try one daily special, the



Halibut Fish Sandwich



Turkey Pesto Swiss Avocado Melt with fries

Avocado Pesto Turkey Sandwich. It was a lot like a club sandwich, only with two slices of bread and the addition of unremarkable pesto oils. The turkey was deli meat cut paper thin. It had no body. Indeed,

of the dishes I tried, if the Halibut Sandwich was the one I'd order again, Avocado Pesto Turkey would be at the end of the line.

At the LBT, the food matches the setting: well-worn. **CW**