

08 DUMPLING DUMPLING

Type: Street food / Take-away
Country: UK



Why it is a good practice?

Founders of Dumpling Dumpling set up their business on the Isle of Wight to fill a niche in the market for authentic hand-made Asian style dumplings. However, they soon realized how versatile the food parcels could be and soon innovated the traditional version into inventive, original taste pleasing “food-bombs”. They did this in a fun way by allowing their customers become the inventors from time to time and in doing so created Vegan, Vegetarian and Meaty classics. Like most food businesses as a result of the Covid pandemic, they had to alter their business model and offerings. They have developed frozen feast boxes for delivery available for even beyond their native Isle and an online click’n’collect or delivery service for their hot dumplings and sides keeping the locals happy.

Action

It dawned on them how versatile the dumpling is, and pretty much anything (as long as it tastes good) can be put into the perfect little parcel with a dumpling wrap - they call them FLAVOURBOMBS! To date they’ve created over 100 dumpling flavours, including sweet and savoury. The most popular are the Hoisin Not Duck and the Pesto Mac ‘N’ Cheese – both of which are plant based using a creamy coconut cheese. Dan and Natalie love to get inspiration for dumpling fillings from customers and dumpling fans so run lots of “What’s in Yours?” competitions online. For example, the inspiration behind their All-Day Breakfast Dumpling came from one creative customer – it’s got hash browns, scrambled egg, sausage, crispy bacon and baked beans all in one little parcel.

About

Isle of Wight based street food business, Dumpling Dumpling, was the brainchild of Dan and Natalie Stirrup. After returning from living in China, they were left with a strong hankering for the classic dumpling experience of their former adopted country. The duo’s appreciation for the doughy delight began in the mountains of Yulin where they spent time wrapping dumplings with friends, before Natalie embarked on a cooking course in the region. After spending time perfecting the art of dumpling creation and trialing out their recipes on friends and family, the pair were finally ready to hit the local food scene and show off their culinary delights to customers. These customers are very influential as to what fillings make their way onto the Dumpling Dumpling menu.

Result

One of the biggest highlights so far for the business was winning Best International Cuisine and the top prize of Best Street Food at the 2019 Hampshire Street Food Awards. Where they were praised for the quality, texture, flavours, sides and the rapport they have with their customers and fellow traders. This mentioned rapport with customers, has gained them a loyal following and since lockdown measures were put in place in March 2020, the team have been busy doing ‘dumpling drop-offs’ in their local area. Since their launch 4 years ago, the Dumpling Dumpling team have made over 100,000 dumplings by hand, created over 70 original fillings and traded at 50+ events. Despite the fact that Covid-19 has prevented them from trading at lots of festivals & events, their frozen dumpling drop-off service has enabled them to keep the business going and they’ve received fantastic feedback from grateful customers needing a ‘pick-me-up, treat dish’ on social media.

Challenge

When the couple moved back to the Isle of Wight in 2011, they struggled to find dumplings that satisfied their cravings, so began to make them themselves based on what they had learnt from friends in China. They had friends over for dumpling parties where they got creative with fillings, rather than sticking to the traditional Chinese flavours.

Healthy

All menus are prepared from fresh quality ingredients. The foundation of the menu is based the handmade Asian pastry, but the versatility of it’s fillings means that vegan, vegetarian and omnivorous diets can all be catered for.

Sustainable

All their cutlery and serving trays are compostable and recyclable. Most of the events they attend do not allow plastic bottles, so drinks are in cans. They source ingredients locally and ensure the meat used is from reputable farms and butchers. They make small changes wherever they can, to limit the amount of single use items used within the business.

Follow Dumpling Dumpling’s story

