

THE CHOO CHOO Story

In 1951, a young entrepreneur and his wife opened a diner in Des Plaines with the hopes that they could operate a successful business that would be an entertaining experience for all ages.

They were James Ballowe and his wife Marilyn, and the diner was the Choo-Choo Restaurant. As James Ballowe once said, "Trains go fast, and that's how we wanted our customers to be served."



JAMES BALLOWE, ORIGINAL OWNER

The diner quickly became a source of popularity among adults and children alike.

The idea for the Choo-Choo style of restaurant was conceived by younger brother

Roy Ballowe, while a soldier in the Philippines. The rations served were less than ideal, and Ballowe dreamed of the kinds of food he'd like to have. After a complaint by a fellow soldier who was tired of the "gray train," the idea began to further take shape in Roy Ballowe's mind. "Gray train," thought the young Private. "Why not serve hamburgers on a model train? Kids love both of 'em."



CHOO-CHOO'S ON MINER

The opening of another hamburger joint a few blocks away by a Mr. Ray Kroc did little to dissolve the Ballowes' excitement. James Ballowe was just sure that he would be able to beat out the hamburger joint dubbed McDonald's, because of the novelty of the train. He also donned the proper attire: an engineer's cap, red bandanna around his neck, and a whistle he would blow whenever he sent the train around. And

according to Marilyn, Ray Kroc didn't think his restaurant would surpass the business the Ballowes' were getting. He even paid the Ballowes' a visit and reassured them that his restaurant would be no competition. He told them, "I don't have a place for people to sit down."

James and Marilyn Ballowe owned the diner for 25 years, before James retired at age 68. Marilyn is happy to see the diner she and her husband created back in business. Says Marilyn, "I'm getting to enjoy it all over again."



600 LEE/MANNHEIM
DES PLAINES
(847) 391-9815

DESIGN: DESIGNLAB INC. WWW.DESIGNLABINC.COM ILLUSTRATION: RYAN THURLWELL



CHOO-CHOO YOUR FOOD!



Our burgers are made of USDA ground chuck. We cook our burgers the old fashioned way. We start with a large scoop of fresh meat on the grill, press it flat and cook it until it has just the right amount of delicate crispiness around the edges. Served on a toasted bun.

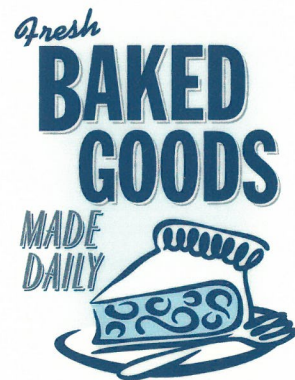
- THE CHOO-CHOO** Fresh lettuce, tomato, pickle\$5.65
- THE DAIRY CAR** (Cheese Burger)
Fresh lettuce, tomato, pickle, with a slice of American cheese\$6.15
- THE CHOO-CHOO DOUBLE** Over a half pound.
2 fresh patties, fresh lettuce, tomato, and pickle\$6.95
with American cheese\$7.45
- THE VEGGIE BURGER**
Fresh lettuce, tomato, pickle, and honey mustard\$5.65
- EXTRAS**
Bacon (2 slices).....\$.95
Raw Onions Free
Grilled Onions Free

Other Favorite SANDWICHES

Choice of White, 7 Grain, or Rye Bread

- BREAST OF CHICKEN** Juicy chicken breast on a toasted bun
with fresh lettuce, tomato & mayonnaise\$6.95
with bacon add.....\$.95
- GRILLED HAM & CHEESE**
Sliced premium ham with American cheese.....\$5.95
- GRILLED CHEESE**\$4.85
- EGG SALAD SANDWICH**
Homemade, just like mom used to make. Piled high\$5.35
- 1/4 lb. PURE BEEF CHICAGO HOT DOG**
A really big pure beef hot dog\$4.95
- FRANCHEESIE** Our 1/4lb. hotdog stuffed with American Cheese
and wrapped with our extra thick bacon.....\$6.25
- CHILI DOG** A pure beef hot dog
served with our homemade turkey chili on top\$5.95
- BACON, LETTUCE & TOMATO** Our special cut of thick sliced bacon,
fried crisp. Fresh lettuce, tomato & mayonnaise.....\$6.25
- SLOPPY JOE**\$5.65

We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone. Sales tax will be added on all items.
An 18% gratuity may be added to parties of 6 or more.



With cheddar cheese & diced onion

YOUR FOOD!

KIDS MEALS ON WHEELS!

For kids age 10 and under. No exceptions please!

- KID'S HOT DOG** Fries and small drink.....\$4.40
- KID'S BURGER** Fries and small drink\$4.50
- KID'S CHEESE BURGER** Fries and small drink\$4.65
- KID'S GRILLED CHEESE** Fries and small drink\$4.25

SIDES

- FRENCH FRIES** A basket full!\$1.95
- ONION RINGS**.....\$2.55
Substitute for French Fries (additional)\$.75
- TURKEY CHILI** With cheddar cheese & diced onion.....Cup \$3.25.....Bowl \$5.75
- SOUP OF THE DAY** Cup..... \$1.95 Bowl.....\$2.95

BEVERAGES & FOUNTAINS

- SODA POP** Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Pink Lemonade, Orange, Root Beer
(Free refills on soda when dining in)\$1.65
- MILK** White or Chocolate\$1.65
- COFFEE** Ground fresh to make every pot of coffee the finest anywhere!
Served with heavy whipping cream. Regular or decaffeinated\$1.65
- TEA** Hot or Iced\$1.65
- HOT CHOCOLATE** Served with whipped cream - Seasonal\$1.65
- RICH THICK MILK SHAKES & MALTS** Chocolate, Vanilla,
Strawberry or Oreo made with premium hand dipped ice cream\$3.95
- ROOT BEER FLOAT** Vanilla ice-cream & root beer\$3.95

DESSERTS

- TRAIN CUPCAKES**
Homemade cupcake with sprinkles and a train whistle on top\$1.75
- ICE CREAM SUNDAE** Chocolate or Vanilla. 2 scoops of our
premium ice cream, chocolate syrup, and whipped cream\$3.50
Child's Sundae - one scoop of our premium ice-cream,
chocolate syrup and whipped cream\$1.50
Child's scoop\$1.25
- BROWNIES** Made from scratch with homemade
chocolate frosting on top\$2.50
With two scoops of vanilla ice cream and chocolate syrup\$4.95
- RICE KRISPIE TREAT** With chocolate and peanut butter chips\$.75

