



Great Basin's Breuben sandwich—the housemade bread is made with the same grains used to brew the iconic “Icky” IPA beer.  
PHOTO/TODD SOUTH

## First basin

**My family and I were recently turned** away at a succession of Sparks eateries (Chinese New Year, lack of reservations, etc.). We ended up at the original Great Basin Brewing Company (circa 1993). I hadn't eaten there in years, so what's old is new again.

Starting with drinks, my daughter ordered a margarita (\$7), served in a salt-rimmed pint glass. Pretty standard flavor, but plenty stiff. Bonus. My son and I went with the award-winning cerveza chilebeso (\$6 pint), a Kölsch-style ale brewed with hand-sliced jalapeños. I think this might be my hands-down favorite beer, ever.

Housemade brews are used in many of the comestibles served. Drunken stuffed jalapeños (\$10) are giant split-open chilis stuffed with cream cheese, deep-fried in ale batter, topped with cheddar cheese and crumbled smoky bacon. A honey jalapeño dipping sauce provided a counter to the heat and salt.

Tachos followed (\$9.50), tater tots topped with shredded cheese, fried bits of andouille sausage, diced tomato and scallion, sliced fresh jalapeño, and plenty of fabulous Wisconsin sharp cheddar beer cheese sauce. The tots remained crispy among the deluge, and I had to restrain myself from eating more than my fair share of this satisfying delicacy.

My daughter added 75 cents worth of parmesan to her black bean veggie burger with fries (\$10.50), substituting sweet potato fries with chipotle aioli for \$1.50. The sweet waffle fries were crunchy and more than acceptable. The bean patty had great flavor, with cumin a noticeable standout.

My daughter's friend ordered loaded nachos (\$11) with grilled chicken added for \$3.50, topped with chipotle black bean, tomato, scallion, jalapeño and sour cream,

with a chunky, medium-spicy salsa on the side. The chips were cemented together with a melted mix of three shredded cheeses. If they used a spiced-up version of that great beer cheese sauce instead, they'd have the best nachos in town.

My daughter-in-law's black and blue burger with fries (\$12.50), plus bacon jam for \$1.50 and substitution of garlic fries for 75 cents, was a damn good burger. The Cajun blackened patty filled out its brioche bun—cooked to a perfect medium—topped with lettuce, tomato, onion, house dressing and plenty of blue cheese. Between the seasonings and *fromage*, I really didn't notice the “jam,” but perhaps it played a subtle part in the overall effect. The garlic fries were pungent and completely enjoyable.

My son ordered the Breuben with fries (\$12.50), substituting bacon beer cheese fries for \$1.50. The housemade bread is made with the same grains used to brew the iconic “Icky” IPA beer, nicely grilled and stuffed with plenty of thin-sliced pastrami, Swiss cheese, sauerkraut and house dressing. The fries were topped with beer cheese sauce, crispy hardwood-smoked bacon and scallion.

My grandson ordered the kids' fried fish (\$7) with applesauce. Grandpa followed his lead with an adult order of fish and chips (\$14), served with cucumber salad and fries. The ale batter on the wild Alaskan cod was darker brown and more flavorful than most. The fries, perfectly fine. Perhaps best, the thin-sliced cucumber salad with carrot, onion, and cabbage in a rice vinegar dressing. Man, that stuff's good. □

## Great Basin Brewing Company

846 Victorian Ave., Sparks, 355-7711  
Visit [www.greatbasinbrewingco.com](http://www.greatbasinbrewingco.com) for more information.

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Acoustic singer-songwriters

### ROSE'S PAWN SHOP

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Americana, folk-rock, bluegrass, alt-country

### DANIEL SHEARIN

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