



Tish's Restaurant: A Favorite Among Locals and Tourists Alike

The restaurant industry is infamously fickle. Most restaurants fail within their first five years. When a restaurant manages to survive for decades, you know its owners have carefully created the right recipe for success.

Steve and Kathy Tisher started their foray into food entrepreneurship in 1980. The husband and wife team served up seasonal ice cream treats and sandwiches for 15 years at Tish's, which was a walk-up window in Council Bluffs.

The success of that venture led them to open up a full-fledged restaurant in 1995.

Tish's Restaurant soon became a local favorite of residents of Council Bluffs and Omaha. "There were 40 restaurants in Council Bluffs when we started. Now there are over 120," says Kathy. "And we're ranked in the top 10."

Kathy attributes the restaurant's popularity and longevity to quality food, staff and customer service.

"Everything is homemade from scratch. Soups are homemade and sauces are made from scratch. We cut our own steaks and chicken," she says. "Our signature chili has won accolades."

The eatery has a full bar and a dining area that seats 80 people. During warmer months, Tish's covered outdoor patio, which also accommodates 80, is an area hot spot. A separate banquet room can seat up to 70 people and is a popular setting for graduation parties, weddings, baby showers and retirement parties.

Tish's Restaurant employs 20 people. Kathy gives a lot of credit to their "awesome staff" and says they work hard to cultivate a culture of respect in the workplace. It appears to be working. Several of the kitchen staff have worked at the restaurant for more than a decade. One employee just retired after 22 years.

The restaurant attracts tourists. "We're in a hub area of the entertainment district, near the casino so we get an enormous amount of travelers," says Kathy.

Tish's also enjoys a solid local base of support. "We are incredibly fortunate to have regular customers who have been with us since back in our ice cream days," says Kathy. "Some of them come for lunch a couple of times each week. We're so thankful for their business and that of new customers too."

The Tishers are grateful for the relationships they've developed over the years through the restaurant. "My husband and I were born and raised here — this is our community," Kathy says. "It's great to have all the community support."

Kathy does her part to give back to the community. She has served on the local chamber of commerce board in the past. She currently chairs the Jennie Edmundson Foundation board at the hospital and sits on the Council Bluffs Public Library Foundation board.