



They're Frying Their Way to Profits



Seven electric fry kettles in this restaurant and adjoining coffee shop have required almost no maintenance during eight years of constant service.

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"B & B, that means *better food and better service*," explained F. B. "Junior" Lucas with a smile as we settled down for a chat. And . . . better food and better service is exactly what customers have learned to expect at Dallas' bustling Lucas B & B Restaurant operated by brothers Pete and Junior Lucas.

A major share of the Lucas B & B profit picture can be credited to deep fried foods which account for about 30% of sales in the main restaurant and which keep five electric fry kettles busy for 12 full hours most every day. The Lucases count on moderate prices and high volume to keep them in business, and this is the formula which has meant success for nearly 50 years.

Veal and catfish biggest sellers. The deep fried menu at Lucas B & B very nearly runs the gamut of foods that can successfully be deep fried. Deep fried veal cutlet and catfish are the biggest menu sellers. The 91¢ special includes two veal cutlets, green tossed salad, potatoes (french fried or baked), green vegetable, hot rolls and butter, garlic bread, a drink, and ice cream.

Breaded veal cutlet, along with pork chops, is also a favorite at lunch. "We sell worlds of these every time we feature them," reports Junior, "and they're big portions too." Deep fried catfish breaded in egg batter and

continued on page 48

They're Frying Their Way to Profits *continued*



Electric kettles pave the way for deep-fried profits.



Fat is double-strained at least once daily.

ring meal, a Southern favorite, comes into its own on Fridays when the Lucases easily sell about 100 pounds during two meals.

Fried shrimp, as might be expected, is very popular. It's bought frozen and is then prepared in an egg batter blended with cracker and bread crumbs and seasoned with salt, pepper, and monosodium glutamate.

Chicken on Sundays. On Sundays, customers consume about 2,000 orders of deep-fried chicken, paying \$1.25 for a dinner that also includes salad, baked potato, hot rolls, and a beverage. The half-chickens are served at the joints for easier eating.

As for french fries, it's a rare spot that can beat Lucas B & B for sheer production. "Gosh, we'll run about 300 pounds a day—Sundays twice that," says Junior. All potatoes are prepared on the premises before being popped in the fryers.

Five electric kettles, each holding 28 pounds of fat, have been in use since 1953. In that time, total maintenance has included only two new elements and one thermostat. "We wouldn't trade them for anything," asserts Junior with obvious satisfaction.

No waste of fat. In addition to their production capacity, the electric kettles with their even heat do not waste fat. The restaurant uses almost 1,000 pounds of commercially prepared liquid vegetable fat in an average week. The frying compound, which is of top quality, combines forces with the electric kettles admirably; none ever has to be thrown away.

Sanitation is a way of life for the Lucases whose meticulous attention to every detail has paid off in terms of appearance and durability of equipment. The entire kitchen is steam cleaned regularly.

Fat for the fryers is double-strained daily, oftener if necessary, using a cotton cloth filter. Special attention is given to the sequence of the kettles in adding fat. To avoid transfer of flavor from differing fried foods, the next three kettles are used only for chicken and potatoes. The fourth kettle ordinarily handles veal cutlet and the fifth fryer is for seafood only. New fat is added to the first chicken kettle only and as the fat is strained, it is moved down the line toward the seafood kettle. Thus, no fat is wasted and there is no danger of transferring fat bearing a seafood flavor to another kettle.

Electric kettles are durable. Deep frying is also a major factor in business at the 24-hour coffee shop operated in conjunction with the main restaurant. Here are two electric kettles which remain in operation for 24 hours except when being cleaned. In spite of this hard usage, the only maintenance needed on them in eight years of operation has been two replaced thermostats and an occasional new cord.

Deep frying is not the whole story at Lucas B & B, but it is the real base of a menu that has appealed year after year to the family trade which is the backbone of Lucas patronage. "Stick with the middle class," says Junior of his customers, "and you'll make a living." Evidence available even to a casual observer indicates that it is considerably more than that. ■ ■ ■