

Restaurant review: Dugg Burger in Dallas



A free-style burger with Dugg sauce, pepper jack cheese, grape tomatoes and sautéed caramelized onions at Dugg Burger in Casa Linda Plaza in Dallas DFW.COM / PAUL MOSELEY

Dugg Burger
9540 Garland Road, No.
E407, Dallas
[214-584-6261](tel:214-584-6261)
duggburger.com

Hours: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Sunday-Thursday, 11
a.m.-10 p.m. Friday &
Saturday

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A popular fast-food burger chain, which shall remain nameless, once ran an ad campaign imploring its customers to “have it your way.”

Dugg Burger, a new fast-casual spot in East Dallas’ Casa Linda

Plaza owned by Jeff Braunstein, Martin Hennessy and Scott Terraciano-Spence, takes that concept and runs with it, putting the power of customization in the masses’ hands.

While the approach might sound gimmicky — the top part of the bun is hollowed out, hence the name of the place, which allows your selected toppings to be stacked as high as you please — the final result is surprisingly satisfying.

The restaurant doesn’t take up much square footage, although its industrial-chic design (lots of glass, cement and exposed brick) gives the strip-mall space the illusion of roominess. It’s a cozy place with an alt-rock soundtrack, but proves as inviting to the foodie set as it is to families: Chalk is provided for kids to scribble all along the brick wall, which is a welcoming touch.

Entering Dugg Burger, you’re funneled up a walkway to the register, where an employee will take your order.

The menu is about as straightforward as you’ll ever find. You can get a burger by itself (\$7, with an extra patty adding \$3), a side of fries (\$2.50), a fountain drink for \$1.50 or one of the local craft beers Dugg offers (think Revolver and Four Corners) for \$5.

Or, you can select one of the combo meals: a burger, fries and fountain drink for \$10, or a burger, fries and a beer for \$13. The addictive fries, thin and crispy, are dusted with salt and complement the juicy burgers.

A kid's meal, with a burger, fries and milk, is \$6. Dessert is limited to a sticky, warm bread pudding well worth the \$2.50, and is somewhat ingeniously recycled from the hollowed-out portions of the Village Baking Co.-made buns.

Here, we'll pause to explain Dugg Burger's methodology, because — as it was when my wife and I visited recently — it can be a little tricky your first time through. (The patient employees, however, will graciously answer any questions you have.)

There are three "core" burgers on the bare-bones menu: the Dugg, the mushroom-Swiss and the Western.

You can ask for one of those options, or simply start piling on the toppings, chosen from the "Dugg Dozen." Every burger is cooked to medium-well by default, although the kitchen will cook the patty to your specification if you ask.

There are four kinds of cheese to choose from — American, Swiss, pepper jack and cheddar — along with the familiar burger garnishes, like lettuce, tomato (grape tomatoes here), mushrooms, pickles, ketchup and mustard.

Dugg Burger also offers its own "Dugg sauce," as well as crispy onion strings, caramelized onions, hickory-smoked bacon, fire-roasted jalapeños, barbecue sauce and what it calls the "Lucky 13" ingredient, an extra, crowd-sourced option to gild the lily even further (on the night we visited, it was a tangy, homemade jalapeño ranch — which made a phenomenal dipping sauce for the fries).

The potential for building your own burger train-wreck is high, and the staff, to their credit, will let you add as much as you want. I went with a Dugg burger, featuring bacon, cheddar, crispy onion strings, lettuce, tomato, mustard and ketchup, while my wife went the mushroom-Swiss route. The hollowing-out of the bun (which is toasted) takes seconds, and then the staff begins stacking whatever you desire onto the burger.

The finished product for my burger was a little unwieldy — the grape tomatoes in particular kept falling off — but the taste was terrific. Many of the fast-casual burgers proliferating around town put a premium on the meat, and Dugg is no exception.

The patty was seasoned well, and plenty juicy, with the tangle of toppings enhancing rather than masking its beefy flavor.

The hollowed-out top did lead to some compression, but the entire bun held firm throughout — no bun breaches here.

Dugg Burger holds its own, and offers plenty of bang for the buck, in an area where there is no shortage of endlessly tweakable burgers — Hopdoddy, Grub Burger Bar, Smashburger and the like have all enjoyed success as an alternative to drive-through dullness — making the decision to "have it your way" a near no-brainer.