

Restaurant Review:

BadHappy poutine joint offers a little slice of Canada, eh?

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When people think of Canada, many things come to mind. Hockey, maple leaves, quirky accents, single-payer health care, or the elimination of the penny are common things people would bring up. But when I think of Canada, I think of poutine. Or, more specifically, why a popular dish in Canada like poutine never migrated into the United States.

Poutine is a dish composed of french fries mixed with cheese curds. If placing fried things next to cheese doesn't sound quite American enough to you, the dish is then slathered with brown gravy. It's a dish you would expect a Texan to eat while firing an assault rifle madly into the air and espousing unwavering support of 'Murica, not something a French Canadian would eat while walking through the streets of Montreal.

For close to 50 years poutine has been enjoyed almost exclusively in Canada, but no longer. Poutine has made its way to Chicago with the recent opening of the BadHappy Poutine Shop, Chicago's first and only poutine shop. Opened in 2012, BadHappy was created to share Canada's long-kept secret with the masses, and quickly enjoyed widespread exposure. BadHappy was in papers, on TV, and on the web. People were curious about poutine, and BadHappy could deliver.

Billing their poutine as "fine dining on fries," BadHappy is home to many different types of poutines. The shop pays tribute to its roots with "The Quebecer," a classic poutine with just fries, cheese curds, and gravy. The shop also prepares special poutines such as the "Old Smokey," which is made up of smoked meat, bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, fries, cheese curds, and sauce au poivre.

When I went I tried "The Good, the Bad, and the Happy," which was a poutine made up of pork belly, truffle mayo, foie gras mousse and gravy, fries, cheese curds, and a sunny-side up egg. After ordering, my anticipation for the dish built as the poutine was built in front of my eyes. Made fresh and in about 20 minutes, the poutine was served to me by the shop's owner and head chef.

Looking at the poutine for the first time, the only word that could be used to describe it was messy. All of the ingredients were jumbled together, and as I took my first bite I

was worried that it would all be too much, but it wasn't. It was tasty. It wasn't just tasty; it was delicious.

I finished the poutine in five minutes, and I was hungry for more. The flavors worked well together, and it was obvious that all the ingredients were fresh. The fries were fairly thick and heavily fried, which made them perfect; they were crispy and substantial. The gravy paired very well with the squeaky cheese curds, and the pork belly was delicious and, dare I say, better than bacon. The foie gras gravy brought the dish together and made it all fantastic.

Poutine isn't all BadHappy does, and I felt I would be remiss as a food critic if I didn't sample the rest of their menu. The shop also makes burgers, so I gave "The Nate" a try. A burger topped with BBQ pulled pork, onion rings, mac-n-cheese, cajun mayo, and pickles, it was not for the faint of heart. When the burger was brought out, it was about eight inches tall! The burger was good and would stand against other restaurant burgers, but my suggestion to you is to stick to the poutine.

Despite how delicious everything is, BadHappy is surprisingly affordable. A dinner made up of two poutines and two drinks would definitely leave you full and would cost you a little over \$30. The restaurant is also BYOB for those above the drinking age.

I'll be honest; poutine doesn't sound like the most appetizing dish. But if you can take that first impression and leave it at the door, BadHappy will prove you wrong and give you a delicious meal. There's a reason everyone says this is one of the best restaurants in the city and it has so much press. I give this place five stars out of five. If you're still not convinced, think of your time at BadHappy as a time of cultural learning and growth regarding our northerly neighbors.

BadHappy Poutine Shop is located at 939 North Orleans Street. It is open from noon to 10:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Saturday, and is open for Sunday Brunch from noon to 4:00 p.m. They accept all major credit cards and cash. From IIT, the easiest way to get to BadHappy via CTA is to take the Green Line towards Harlem from 35-Bronzeville-IIT, transfer to the Brown Line towards Kimball at State/Lake, get off the Brown Line at Chicago-Brown, walk west to N Orleans Street, then walk North on Orleans Street four blocks until the restaurant is on your right.

