



* IF YOU GO...

Roy's Taco House is located at 732 North College Ave. in Geneseo. It is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday from 3 to 9 p.m. Contact Roy's at (309) 944-5111.

A Twist on the Taco

Roy's Taco House has been a Geneseo favorite for 41 years

No matter where you travel, it's unlikely you'll ever come across a restaurant like Roy's Taco House in Geneseo.

"The original owners, Roy and Tillie Garza, were from Chicago, and they introduced Mexican food to Geneseo," says Kayleen Fulcher, who has owned Roy's since 1982. "And there are a lot of Belgian people who live in the Geneseo area, so we like to say we're a Mexican and American restaurant with a Belgian twist."

The Garzas opened Roy's Taco House in 1971, and Fulcher and her late husband, John, bought it 11 years later, adding American favorites such as fried chicken, hand-patted burgers, crinkle-cut fries and homemade coleslaw to the menu. When John passed away in 2002, Kayleen carried on the business with the help of dedicated employees, including chef Elizabeth Holt, who has worked there more than 25 years.

"We're both 63, and we call ourselves the Golden Girls," Fulcher says with a laugh. "Another employee, Dawn Stock, is 45 and has been working here since she was in high school. Since my husband died, Roy's has

pretty much been run by women."

Hungry customers keep coming back for Roy's enchiladas, smothered in a light gravy instead of the typical red sauce. Other popular entrees include chicken tacos with barbecue sauce, fish tacos, and the Mexican plate, which consists of spicy pork, rice, beans and tortillas.

"We make all our own sauces, including our hot sauce and extra hot sauce," Fulcher says. "People always tell us they love our fries, and I think it's because they're fried in the same fryer as our corn shells, so that flavor permeates them and they taste unique."

Roy's back dining room has low ceilings and two antique train cars that were in the diner that preceded the taco house.

"It's a very old building, and once we thought about tearing it down and building a brand-new restaurant," Fulcher says. "But our customers didn't want us to tear it down. Many people come back who ate here when they were young, and they love the fact that it's the same as it was when they were in high school. Our family has felt blessed to be able to keep the restaurant going all these years."

— Jessica Mozo