

Nostalgic Indulgence at Bentley's BML Cafe



A Storied Past

Fun Fact: the entire edifice that houses **Bentley's BML Cafe** was moved to its current downtown from across the street way back in the 1930s. It was hoisted by herculean horses who pulled it over logs that had been rolled into the road. The building was an eatery even then, owned by a man named Dewey Snyder. In 1940, one of Snyder's employees, the enterprising young Beula Bentley, purchased the whole kit-and-caboodle from her boss, thus debuting the diner that would become a St. Ignace tradition.

Since 1940, Bentley's Café has provided St. Ignace with pies, malts, and classic diner food, and has served as a community gathering spot that has fulfilled various purposes over the years. During construction of the Mackinac Bridge, part of the building was even turned into housing for bridge workers. Back in those days, Bentley's was open 24 hours a day, all year long.



Bentley's BML Café seemed to be on everyone's lips, and we couldn't wait to finally experience it for ourselves. We eagerly entered the cafe, delighted by the vintage decor. I marveled at the original stools and countertops still in use, and at the original soda machine that is still housed in the restaurant. If you love a classic soda shop aesthetic, you *must* check this place out!



Nostalgia is further woven by the stories shared by loyal patrons. Owner Mary Bentley told us about a group of guys who frequented the cafe in their youth and continue to come in every morning, recalling days long past when some of them would come down to have fries and a shake after school. They've been coming here since they were kids, and they still come to this day. Bentley shared her warm fondness for these special

customers, “There’s nothing better than sitting and listening to the old-time stories. That’s my favorite thing ever!”



Perfecting Pies

What makes Bentley’s pies so perfect? Bentley revealed a secret, “You have to put the sugar on top of the crust, and you have to caramelize it just a little bit. It has a little bit of nuttiness to it that you wouldn’t think would go with it, but it does make it crunchy. That’s a bonus.”



Bentley then revealed her clever pie-marketing strategy: “Nowadays I put pies in the window to cool. It’s actually a selling tactic. Everybody’s like oh, I want that pie. It’s like that with the sticky buns too.” We certainly couldn’t pass on a taste of those berry-laden delights, and I am here to tell you that our slices did not disappoint. We were relieved to find that they also offer whole pies to take home for later!

Contemplating the Classic Malt



In an automated universe, Bentley’s BML Cafe stands out with its devotion to handcrafted pleasures, and you can taste the difference in their beautiful malts. While many establishments opt for the convenience of ice cream machines, Mary explained, “We don’t do that. We actually *dip* ours and that’s what makes it a different texture.” The old-fashioned malts transported us back in time; we could almost hear the laughs of yesteryear as we slurped the frozen goodness.

If you’re not in the mood for sweets, Bentley’s BML Cafe offers an extensive diner menu featuring breakfast ‘till 11:00 am (noon on Sundays). Lunch and dinner favorites such as salad, pasties, and sandwiches round out the experience. Bentley’s BML Cafe doesn’t just serve food; it’s yet another living piece of history waiting for you to come explore...

in **St. Ignace!**

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