

## Bill and Karen's Irish adventure

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 By **BILL AND KAREN GARLOUGH For GO**

Around this time of year, we all feel a little more Irish and head to our favorite local Irish pubs to celebrate St Patrick's Day. In preparation for this, I traveled to three local Irish pubs to see what's brewing.

As you can imagine, they all are getting ready for some serious celebrating. Bill checked out the beer and pub grub scene, while Karen thought about a fun and easy recipe to help cap the celebration. Let's see what's going on:

### Irish Beverage

Bill and a couple of lads visited the Ballydoyle Pub in downtown Aurora (also located in Downers Grove), Tommy Nevin's Pub in South Naperville and Quigley's Irish Pub in downtown Naperville. As they say, it's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. All three pubs were busy with customers, and the decorations were going up. They shared many similarities. They have large selections of beer on tap, large selections of Irish whiskey, offer traditional Irish food menus and provide Snuggs, or semi-private conversation areas. The tradition behind Snuggs was to separate women and children from the main bar area, as only men were allowed to drink in public. This did give women a place to socialize and enjoy some drinks.

While checking out the beer selection, I found that these pubs offered between 14 to 25 different beers on tap. They were priced about the same, with the Imperial (20 oz.) pints ranging from \$5.50 to \$6 each. 10 oz. (half pints) and 16 oz. (standard pints) are also available and range from \$2.75 to \$4 each. Guinness Stout, Black & Tan (a mixture of half Guinness and half Bass Ale) and Half & Half (Guinness and Harp Lager) are St. Pat's favorites.



*Bill raises a pint at Ballydoyle Pub in downtown Aurora.  
 Courtesy of Bill Garlough*

**Bill's Picks of Irish Beverage**  
 Bass Ale (ok, it's English, but I like it), Harp Lager, Smithwick's Red Ale, Blacksmith (combination of Guinness and Smithwick's), Jameson's Whiskey (the #1 seller) Connemara Whiskey (offering smokey, peat notes) Celtic Crossing (lower proof and slightly sweet – good all around choice)

All three pubs offered Smithwick's (the w is silent) Red Ale, and you can enjoy this ale by itself or combine it with Guinness to create a BlackSmith. I found this to be smooth and less bitter than a Black & Tan. If you would like some background on lagers versus ales, please visit [www.mychef.com](http://www.mychef.com), scroll to the bottom left area and click on the past wine columns.

Irish whiskey is another St. Pat's favorite. Ballydoyle had the largest selection, offering 19 choices. Besides the traditional Jameson's (enjoyed in southern Ireland) and Bushmill's (enjoyed in northern

Ireland), the knowledgeable owner of Ballydoyle Pub, Phil Cullen, discussed the merits of several whiskies.

He mentioned that Middleton Rare is the best (blend) of the best, but carries a hefty price tag. If you are looking for a reasonably priced Irish whiskey to order for a table for both men and women, try Celtic Crossing.

### **Irish Food**

All three pubs offered classic Irish dinners such as Corned Beef & Cabbage, Sheppard's Pie and Irish Lamb stew. I also found boxty dishes, which are potato pancakes that are rolled like a crepe and have a variety of fillings. The favorites include fillings of corned beef or chicken & spinach.

They ranged in price from \$10.95 to \$12.95 for a dinner. These meals were a staple during Ireland's hard times and were considered a sign of poverty.

For bar pub grub, all three pubs offered a version of corned beef bites. This is a combination of corned beef and cream cheese that is rolled into a ball, breaded and deep fried.

It comes with a dipping sauce that varied by pub. Ballydoyle also offered Irish Chips, which are deep fried homemade potato chips that are sprinkled with Irish "dust." They are savory and slightly sweet and come with blue cheese dressing.

To finish off your St. Patrick's Day meal, look on the Web site for a fun, Irish drink.

May we leave you with this Irish toast:

May you always have  
Walls for the wind  
A roof for the rain  
And drinks beside the fire  
Happy St. Patrick's Day, everyone.

### **RECIPE FOR MARCH**

The Recipe

After a festive evening of corned beef, cabbage and Irish beer, a welcome nightcap would be a Baileys Chocolatini. Decadent, delicious and divine, the Baileys Chocolatini is fast to make but its dreamy taste will linger with you all evening. This drink will send you and your friends to chocolate heaven.

Baileys Chocolatini

Recipe compliments of Baileys.com

Drop several ice cubes into a shaker

Add 2 oz of Baileys Irish Cream, ¼ oz of vodka and ¼ oz of

Godiva Chocolate Liqueur

Shake together

Strain drink into a chilled martini glass

Garnish with chocolate shavings or a sprinkling of cocoa or hot chocolate powder

Bill and Karen Garlough are the owners of My Chef Catering in Naperville, winners of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's 2007 Small Business of the Year award. Bill is a Master Sommelier and pairs wine with food for their company's clients. They can be reached at [info@mychef.com](mailto:info@mychef.com).