

# Los Angeles Times

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**Don Smith**

## Orange County Restaurant Guide

### Tulsa Rib Co.

There was a scene in an episode of the MASH television series a few years ago where Alan (Hawkeye Pierce) Alda manages somehow to place an order for "ribs to go" from a Chicago (or was it Detroit?) rib joint and actually has them sent to him in Korea.

I can remember at the time telling a friend of mine that I thought it was a very funny routine but a bit far-

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**Tulsa Rib Co.**, 954 N. Tustin Ave., Orange, 633-3760. Open daily. Lunch, Wednesday through Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dinner daily from 4 to 10 p.m. MasterCard and Visa — they also take personal checks. No reservations. Wine and beer only. Free parking. Takeout available. Dinner for two, \$10 to \$18.90 plus beverage, tax, tip and extras.

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fetched. But my friend, a confirmed rib addict, didn't see anything wrong with the premise at all. His only concern was that he hadn't thought of doing the same thing when he was in Korea.

"Good ribs ain't that easy to find," he explained somewhat ungrammatically, "Lots of people try but few succeed."

Well, if they were reshooting that episode today, they might be able to save some postage. There's a place in Orange that could fill the bill.

It's called the Tulsa Rib Co., located in the middle of an Alpha Beta shopping center at Tustin Avenue and Collins Street in Orange. I have the feeling that its only connection with Tulsa is that one of the owners passed through there once, but the ribs are terrific and plentiful and the prices are right.

There are four types of ribs available here — baby back ribs, country style, beef ribs and short ribs — plus they also offer barbecue chicken, a combination of

chicken and ribs and a combination dinner for two that features all four types of ribs.

The underline for the Tulsa Rib Co. logo calls it "gourmet barbecue" and that is not just advertising hype. There is a chef involved in the kitchen and the menu includes such choices as rib eye steak, chicken *del re*, which is topped with avocado, tomato and cheese, and a shrimp brochette that includes five shrimp wrapped in bacon.

I said the price is right and the reason is that costs range from \$4.95 for the barbecued chicken (\$5.95 if you want boneless breast) to \$16 for the rib combination for two. Rib prices are \$6.25 for beef ribs, \$7.25 for short ribs, \$8.25 for country ribs and \$8.95 for baby backs. The ribs and chicken combo is \$7.95 for regular chicken and \$8.50 for the boneless breast. The rib eye is \$9.45, chicken *del re* is \$7.95 and the shrimp brochette is \$8.50.

So much for the prices; let's get to the food. My rib-loving friend, who claims he's been gnawing on ribs for 52 years all the way from Texas through the Midwest to California, says the Tulsa Rib Co. is "very, very good." If that sounds like rather faint praise, you have to know that he uses the same phrase to describe the Chez Cary, Ambrosia and La Cuisine.

I don't consider myself *that* much of an expert on ribs but I have to agree with his evaluation. We've tried a number of the rib offerings and have yet to be disappointed. My wife's favorite is the country ribs, which she says are meaty and tender, but I find myself leaning toward the baby backs.

All of the dinner offerings include cornbread (average), coleslaw (a bit too creamy and chopped too fine but a nice light touch), creamed corn (good) and a choice of potatoes — French fries, potato salad or Tulsa fries, which are basically cottage potatoes done in a herb butter sauce that includes garlic, Worcestershire sauce, butter and herbs.