

BEACH LIFE PERSONIFIED

Cooters Raw Bar and Restaurant

By Margaret Word Burnside and Aaron R. Fodiman
Photography by Noraa



Cooters Raw Bar and Restaurant

LOCALS AND visitors alike have been attracted to the relaxed, casual atmosphere and classic Southern hospitality of Cooters for more than fifteen years. This Clearwater Beach

gathering place has something for everyone, whether you are in the mood for a steak, seafood, a light bite, or just a cool, refreshing drink. You can even bring in your own fresh catch, and they will cook it for you. They serve Chicken Fingers, Nachos, Gator Bites, Fried Calamari, Spicy Ahi, Fried Clam Strips and plenty of other fun food. Their raw bar offers hot or cold Peel-and-Eat Shrimp, Oysters on the Half Shell either raw or steamed, and Steamed Mussels drenched in white wine, garlic and butter. Their sandwiches, such as a Loaded Grilled Cheese on Italian pannini or a fresh Grouper Sandwich, come with fries and a pickle. There are several half-pound burgers, a Cuban, Pulled Pork BBQ, a Quarter Pound Vienna Frank, a Chicken Caesar Wrap, chicken and shrimp sandwiches, and even three mini Sliders topped with grilled onions and dill pickle chips.

The Hot Crabby Shrimp Dip is a house favorite, as are the Buffalo Shrimp, their Snow or King Crab Legs and their Cooters

Chicken on black beans and rice with sour cream, onions and cheddar. For dinner, you can choose from Gulf Grouper; Mahi-Mahi; Shrimp; Ahi Tuna; a bucket of steamed mussels, oysters, shrimp, crab, corn and red potatoes; Sea Scallops, Fish and Chips, Snow Crab or King Crab Legs, Chicken, a New York Strip Steak, a sirloin Cooters Special Steak, Surf and Turf, Baby Back Ribs, Scampi Style Shrimp Pasta, Seafood Ravioli, or Chicken Pasta Alfredo. Of course, they also serve soups, gumbo, clam chowder and chili, as well as salads. But, we think the most spectacular item of all is the Wall of Fame Monster Burger. It is five pounds of goodness that is just too big for one person to consume in one sitting. It is a two-and-a-half pound burger smothered in cheese, chili, bacon, lettuce, tomato and fried onions. You have to eat it with a knife and fork, as it sits almost six inches high. It was delicious, and we gladly took home what was left.

They serve over thirty bottled beers and beach drinks, such as a Cooter Rita, their stylish margarita, and daiquiris that are virgin or otherwise.

Cooters offers daily specials, such as All-You-Can-Eat Snow Crab on Mondays and Tuesdays, a Shrimp Spectacular on Wednesdays and Super Grouper on Thursdays. The friendly and efficient servers know how to keep everything moving with a casual air that makes you feel as though you are sitting about in your own private club. You will feel at home and enjoy a taste of the real Florida at Cooters. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cooters Raw Bar and Restaurant is located at 423 Poinsettia Avenue on Clearwater Beach, (727) 462-2668.