

# HAROLD'S CHICKEN SHACK SERVES AURORA & THE FOX VALLEY AREA

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Founded by Harold Pierce and his wife Hilda in 1950, the first Harold's Chicken Shack, then called simply H & H, specialized in dumplings and chicken feet, commonly known as soul food. A friend who owned a nearby poultry shop started to supply chicken to Harold. The nature of the restaurant and its name gradually changed and Harold's Chicken Shack became an example of a thriving fast food restaurant owned by an African-American entrepreneur that primarily served the Black Community and became a notable part of the culture of Chicago's South Side.

The original basic dinner is a half or quarter chicken served with French Fries, bread and a cup of cole slaw. It can be all white or all dark meat or a mix. Also usually added to the menu was wings, livers, gizzards, catfish and perch. The chicken can be ordered plain, but typically either hot or mild sauce is added. In Chicago style fried chicken, the sauce is drizzled over the meat which results in a softening of the skin as it soaks up the sauce.

Harold's fried chicken is very different from that served at other fast food chicken restaurants for two reasons: the chicken is cooked in a mix of half beef tallow and half vegetable oil, while most other places use only the latter. This provides a unique taste that is much closer to the traditional fried chicken invented in the American South. The second major difference is the chicken was not to be fried until it was ordered in order to preserve the freshly cooked taste. Since this resulted in a long wait between ordering and receiving the meal, now the chicken is partially fried and then cooked to completion when ordered.

Unlike other restaurants that bear the same name, Harold allowed each of his stores to develop its own personality. Some Chicken Shacks offer dine in service, some do or do not offer fountain drinks, catering or delivery. The only constants are the basic chicken dinner and the logo which shows a butcher with a cleaver chasing a chicken.

Harold's Menu at the Aurora location features Chicken, Fish and Wing Dinners (with various pieces or sizes), Chicken Tenders, Buckets of Chicken or Fish (with 15 pieces), Combos, Side Orders (including Okra) and Beverages (bottles of Coke or Pepsi products).

The Aurora store opened in 2003 at 3577 East New York Street, Suite 103 (630/499-8393). They suggest customers call ahead for faster carry out service. Catering is available for any size order. Credit Cards are accepted. Store hours are Monday through Thursday, 11 AM to 9 PM, Friday & Saturday, 11 AM to 10 PM, Sunday, closed.

