Portillo’s founder Dick Portillo was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1939. After graduating from Argo Community High School, Mr. Portillo served a tour with the Marine Corps until he was honorably discharged. Dick held several back-breaking jobs after his military service, including working in a steel mill, unloading box cars at a railroad, and working in a junkyard.

In 1963, Dick invested $1,100 into a 6’ x 12’ trailer to open the first Portillo’s hot dog stand on North Avenue in Villa Park, IL, which he called “The Dog House.” The trailer did not have a bathroom or running water. To get the water he needed, he ran 250 feet of garden hose from a nearby building into the trailer.

By 1967, Dick had turned The Dog House into a success and the business was ready for a new look. After it was remodeled, the restaurant was renamed “Portillo’s” and its popularity led Dick to open many more restaurants. In 1983, the first Portillo’s drive-thru opened in Downers Grove, IL. Almost immediately, Portillo’s became known for speedy, reliable drive-thru service due to its unconventional practice of sending employees outside to take orders. Today, some Portillo’s drive-thrus are so busy that area police officers are needed to manage traffic.

The Portillo’s menu has also expanded since 1963. Initially featuring only hot dogs, French fries, tamales, and soft drinks, the menu has grown to include popular items such as Italian beef sandwiches, char-grilled burgers, fresh salads, and our famous chocolate cake.

In 1993, the Barnelli’s Pasta Bowl concept was introduced inside an existing Portillo’s restaurant. The menu featured a variety of pastas with homemade sauces, gourmet salads, hand-made sandwiches, and home-cooked ribs. Barnelli’s proved so popular that many more have since been created inside shared space with Portillo’s.

Portillo’s Home Kitchen, the restaurant’s catering division, opened in 1999. The next year, Portillo’s began shipping food to all 50 states, much to the delight of fans across the country.

Over the years, Portillo’s has developed a huge fan base that includes many Hollywood actors, professional athletes, and politicians – you can see many of their pictures hanging on our restaurant walls. Our fans have repeatedly reached out to Mr. Portillo to suggest new locations for his restaurants. As a result, Portillo’s expanded to Southern California in 2005, Indiana in 2006, Arizona in 2013, Florida and Wisconsin in 2016, and Minnesota in 2017. Under Dick’s guidance, even more restaurants are planned in the future throughout the United States.

At Portillo’s, we attribute our success to our hard-working employees and to our loyal customers. Thank you for your support.
For allergen information visit www.portillos.com/allergens