

BAKER'S SWEETS

BAKERY AND BISTRO

story by Ashley Elvington



Baker's Sweets Bakery and Bistro is located at 1089 Alice Drive in Sumter, South Carolina. Opening hours are 6 AM-7 PM Monday through Saturday, and they can be reached at (803)-775-6016. The other location open at this time is located on 129 E. Main Street in Lake City, South Carolina. They can be reached at (843)374-1800. Hours of operation may vary due to COVID-19.

More than just a small-town bakery...

It was the year 2000 and Jennifer Baker had just turned 30 years old when she opened the doors of Baker's Sweets. This accomplishment was something she held near and dear to her heart. After gaining her own experience in the restaurant industry, it was nice to finally have a place to call her own. She recalls, "In the beginning, it was just my mom and me. She has been my rock and has helped me along the way." Baker's Sweets has now expanded into somewhat of a family business, as Jennifer's son (Devin) and daughter (Hannah) help their mom run her business. Chad Feagin, Jennifer's fiancé, also helps Jennifer in any way he can. "He is always ready to go and help where he can once he gets off work at his paying job!"

In the early days of Baker's Sweets, Jennifer and her staff did cakes only. "I am a self-taught baker and I found cake decorating to be a passion." Over time, they slowly progressed to pastries, coffee, and now a restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They have also mastered signature favorites, such as nutty praline cake, cream cheese pecan pie, pecan praline chicken salad, and apple praline muffins. Amongst these treats, you can also find delicious salads, burgers, wraps, smoothies, and sandwiches. Jennifer's hard work has certainly paid off, as Baker's Sweets now has three locations and a full menu. In 2010, they opened a

location inside of Palmetto Health and opened a third location in Lake City in 2015. While they have grown tremendously since the beginning, Baker's Sweets still maintains that small-town charm and continues to create amazing cakes for many different special occasions.

COVID-19 has been a game-changer for so many businesses in 2020. However, Jennifer has tried to remain positive and hopeful despite the circumstances. Jennifer has a combined staff of 57 people and she is currently utilizing who she can in between the two locations that are currently open (the Palmetto Health location is closed for now). "Sanitation has always been a huge focus for me as a business model, so we were washing hands, sanitizing, and not letting staff come to work sick long before it was the protocol due to COVID-19." While that may be nothing new, it has taken some time getting used to wearing masks. "Those are a new thing for us. We are wearing them, but I would be lying if I said we enjoy an 8 to 10 hour day in the middle of summer wearing one! But, it's important to keep everyone safe." They are currently practicing social distancing with their dine-in seating and have added curbside to-go pick-up at their Sumter location. Customers can also order online.

To learn more about Baker's Sweets and see their menu, visit www.bakersweets.com.