

Dublin Dr. Pepper and Austin

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This post is for the real Dr. Pepper fans. One of the things I've come to love here in Austin is Dublin Dr. Pepper. For those that don't know, Dublin Dr. Pepper is manufactured in Dublin, Texas at the first and oldest Dr. Pepper bottler and uses the original Dr. Pepper recipe. Now, I know what you're thinking if they use the original recipe, then what does everyone else use? Well, the original Dr. Pepper recipe, and the same likely holds true for most soft drinks, uses cane sugar as the sweetener rather than high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Pretty much all soft drink manufacturers switched from using cane sugar to HFCS in the 70s when the price of cane sugar rose above that of HFCS. This is likely because it's much easier to grow corn here in the US than it is to grow sugar cane.

Anyway, when everyone else else switched to HFCS, the Dublin Dr. Pepper plant decided to continue using Imperial Cane Sugar as they had always done to preserve the original Dr. Pepper recipe. When I found out about this I became intrigued and decided to find some to try it for myself. Finding Dublin Dr. Pepper is not an easy task. The franchise area covered by the Dublin Dr. Pepper plant is not very large, only about a 44 mile radius. And with Dublin, TX about 140 miles from Austin that leaves quite the drive. Fortunately though there are a few places in Austin (and apparently most of Texas now) where you can at least buy Dublin Dr. Pepper, even if it isn't on the cheap.

Read on for my quest in tracking down a good source of cheap Dublin Dr. Pepper near Austin...

The first place where I found Dublin Dr. Pepper here in Austin was at Rudy's Bar-B-Q. The problem with buying it at Rudy's though is that they sell it individually for \$1.65 per 8 oz. bottle. Yes, Dublin Dr. Pepper comes in 8 oz. glass bottles. So a 6 pack will run you about \$10 - not very cheap. But if you're interested in trying out some Dubin, then it shouldn't be too difficult to find a Rudy's nearby.

After a bit of digging on the Internet and from the suggestions of some co-workers I found that Central Market also carries Dublin Dr. Pepper. At Central Market the price is a bit better at \$6.99 for a six-pack of 8 oz. bottles, but that's still \$1.17 per bottle. I bought myself a couple of six packs there but now I was determined to find a better and more price-efficient supply.

From visiting the Dublin Dr. Pepper website I knew that you could also get Dublin Dr. Pepper in 12 oz. cans because you can actually buy

24-packs directly from them online. The price is \$10 for a 24 pack, which isn't too bad, but there's a \$5 packing charge plus about \$11 in shipping bringing the total to about \$26 or \$1.08 per 12 oz. can. That's a bit better than the 8 oz. glass bottles, especially since you get 4 more ounces, but still a bit pricey for Dr. Pepper.

After a visit to Wikipedia I found that the Dublin Dr. Pepper plant is not the only one to produce Dr. Pepper with cane sugar. There are three other bottlers that use sugar and one of them is located in Temple, TX - the Temple Bottling Company. In fact, according to Wikipedia the canned Dublin Dr. Pepper that you can buy online is actually produced by the Temple Bottling Company. Temple is only about 60 miles from Austin so driving up there isn't a very long drive. But might there be something closer?

According to the Temple Bottling Company's website they serve the following counties in Texas: Bell, Brazos, Burleson, Coryell, Falls, Grimes, and Milam. Bell County (as far as I could tell) is the closest to Austin and easily accessible by following I-35 north. Prairie Dell is the first town that you'll come to in Bell County but there's really not much there as it's a very small town. The next town that you'll come to is Salado which I had hoped would be big enough to find some canned Dublin. I was able to find a small grocery store there but they only carried the 8 oz. glass bottles. The price here though was only \$3.99 for a six pack, \$0.67 a bottle which was considerably better than anywhere else I had found. Now I knew I was on the right trail. Not finding any canned Dublin in Salado I kept heading north.

The next town that I came to was Belton, TX, about 6 miles north of Salado. Belton is a much bigger town and really the last candidate before having to go all the way to Temple. Following a tip from one of my co-workers that you could find canned Dublin at H-E-B Food stores I checked in at the H-E-B in Belton. And sure enough there it was, in all its glory - canned Dublin Dr. Pepper. It's labeled as 10-2-4 Dr. Pepper, but it's got the Imperial Cane Sugar logo clearly on the front of the cans. And the best thing is that it's only \$2.49 for a six pack, that's only \$0.42 a can, the best deal yet.

With my treasure found I stocked up. I took all 9 six packs they had on the shelves and asked if they had any more in the back. They did, but only 4 more six packs for 13 total - 78 cans of goodness. My mission was complete.

So as far as I can tell, the closest place to Austin

to get canned Dublin Dr. Pepper is in Belton, TX, about 54 miles to the north. If anyone knows of some place closer then I'd love to know. Is there anywhere in Salado that carries it? Anything further south? Please leave me some comments.

So now I'm sure some of you are thinking, is it worth it? To know that for sure you'll really need to try some Dublin Dr. Pepper yourself. As for me, yes, it definitely is worth it.

References:

H-E-B Foods in Belton

525 N Main St.

Belton, TX 76513

The Dublin Dr. Pepper Bottling Company

Dublin Dr. Pepper on Wikipedia

Temple Bottling Company