

# The Health Nut's Guide to Quick Service Dining at Walt Disney World: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Guest Contributor

While burgers and chicken nuggets are plentiful at Walt Disney World, there are nutritious counter service offerings available at every Disney park and resort. You just need to know where to look and what places to avoid.

Let's face it, you don't really want to sit and eat plain lettuce at Pizzafari while everyone around you is chowing down on pizza and fries. So here is your crash course in Health-Nut-friendly counter service locations.

Animal Kingdom: Do not pass go, do not collect \$200, just head straight to Flame Tree Barbeque for lunch. There you will find one of the best salads available on Disney property. Loaded with an assortment of veggies and barbecued chicken, you can even share it and save room for the generously portioned fruit plate for dessert. Since the salad contains chickpeas, I'd wager you could keep it vegetarian and hold the chicken. Just be sure to get the creamy hot dressing on the side. You only need a little to get loads of flavor.

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Magic Kingdom: Tucked out of the way in Liberty Square, Columbia Harbor House is the best-kept counter service secret at Magic Kingdom. The chicken salad is decent, but especially impressive is the salmon with broccoli and couscous. We found the portion of salmon to be surprisingly large. It's even a kids meal option. Be our Guest also offers some sophisticated "real food" options, which will have you scratching your head wondering how it can cost one counter service credit. The notorious long waits and ever-changing policies for getting in for lunch, however, may send you packing down the lane to Columbia Harbor House anyway.

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□ If you are looking for a reprieve from the hustle and bustle of Magic Kingdom, take the boat or monorail over to the Grand Floridian. Tucked away downstairs in the back, Gasparillas Island Grill gets my vote for best health-nut counter service location at Walt Disney World. There you can get a made-to-order grilled chicken, steak, or vegan salad. You can load it with veggies and even chickpeas. While you're there, be sure to sit outside at one of the covered tables and revel in the gorgeous scenery. It's so serene you'll want to keep this oasis from the Magic Kingdom crowds a secret.

Hollywood Studios: No need for you to take three trips to find the hidden gem of ABC Commissary tucked out of the way in the back of the park. You won't have to settle for the chicken and ribs at Fairfax Fare when you can have couscous, quinoa, and arugula salad, with or without chicken or salmon. Again, the salmon dinner with broccoli and couscous and quinoa pilaf is a welcome alternative to fried food.

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□ Fussy kids have the option of choosing the Power Pack lunch here. I'm still trying to decide if it really constitutes a meal, containing yogurt, apple slices, carrot sticks, goldfish crackers, apple-cinnamon snack bar, and choice of small lowfat milk or water. The snack bar is dreadful, by the way.

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□ Epcot: After you've spent your morning in Future World, the place to eat is Sunshine Seasons. There's something for everyone with a wide array of soups, salads, sandwiches, and wraps. Honorable mention goes to the Power salad, with oat-fried chicken, quinoa, almonds, and honey vinaigrette. I asked for dressing on the side and the cast member happily tossed together a fresh bowl of salad while I waited.

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□ Later, when you find yourself somewhere between China and France, you'll be hard-pressed to make a choice between Katsura Grill and Tangerine Cafe. Katsura Grill offers Teriyaki salmon, chicken, or beef with vegetables and rice. I did find they go a little too heavy on the sauce. At Tangerine Cafe in Morocco, I enjoyed the vegetable platter served with falafel, couscous salad, humus, tabouleh, and lentil salad (hold the olives).

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□ I would be remiss, however, if I didn't mention the tantalizing snacks that await you as you make your way around the world. In Germany, you will smell the melt-in-your-mouth freshly made caramel popcorn before you see it. Over in France, you can indulge in incredible ice cream at Artisan des Glaces or sample a tantalizing pastry at La Patisserie. Rather than completely depriving yourself, I suggest buying one or two of these treats to share with the rest of your family. I usually manage to get one good bite of any treat by using this strategy. Hey, you did just walk all the way around the world in one day!

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□ Downtown Disney: I confess, after several visits to Downtown Disney, we still cannot bring ourselves to try anything but Earl of Sandwich, even when it means walking from DisneyQuest all the way back to the other end of Downtown. One Disney fan recently told me that if she were on death row, she'd want a sandwich from Earl of Sandwich to be her last meal!

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☐ Yes, there is a lovely almond berry salad with grilled chicken that the gluten-free and carb-counting set can order, but if you were to have bread only once on your entire trip, I implore you to indulge in a tuna melt or Hawaiian BBQ sandwich. The veggie sandwich is also divine.

☐ While we're breaking all the rules, do walk over to Ghiradelli and accept the free chocolate sample for dessert. Also circle around later that evening for a second sample and act like you weren't just there. It's only a little taste...

*About The Author: Amy Wear is a work at home mom, travel agent, writer, and registered occupational therapist. She lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and specializes in planning magical vacations for people of all abilities at Click The Mouse. You can find her online at <http://www.clickthemouse.ca/amy-w.html>*

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