

Trattoria al Forno at Disney's Boardwalk: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Trattoria al Forno is one of the newest additions to the dining line-up at Walt Disney World, located in the former home of Cat Cora's Kouzzina at the BoardWalk.

Described on Disney's website as a "casual Italian restaurant," the name gives you an idea of what you can expect, as "al forno" is Italian for "baked in an oven." Pizza and pasta, as you'd expect, are staples on the menu, but there is so much more to the menu than that.

It's been a long time since we last visited Kouzzina, as we didn't have the greatest dinner there, and with so many other wonderful choices at Walt Disney World, after our disappointment, we never returned. As a result, I honestly can't tell you how much the decor inside has changed, as I don't remember what it was like during its time as Kouzzina. However, straight away, I loved the sophisticated feel to the restaurant, with lots of dark browns, and reds in evidence, although mixed with cream colors, so that it doesn't feel too dark or too small.

However, what really hit me when we walked in was the wonderful aroma from the food being cooked in the open kitchen. You could immediately smell the bread being baked, mixed with the scent of various cheeses. I've never inhaled such an overwhelming aroma at any other restaurant I've entered in my life.

We soon got to sample that delicious bread, as it was brought to our table to start our meal. We were not disappointed with it, and our server Dale happily brought us seconds, it was that good. I need to say a word here about Dale. He was absolutely excellent, constantly checking on us, and his enthusiasm for Trattoria al Forno was infectious. When he told us about the menu, we could tell how genuine his love for the food here is.

I will say that the antipasti (appetizer) selection is quite limited here, with just seven options, but then again, given the extent of the entree menu, and how heavy some of those dishes are, that's understandable.

I tried the Caprese salad, as the mozzarella is house-made. It was superbly presented, and the balsamic dressing provided all the seasoning it needed. My husband had the fried calamari with balsamic

agrodolce, and I sampled one of the calamari, and it was beautifully cooked. Other options when we dined there were the thin-sliced Italian cured meats, Venetian mussels, and romaine lettuce with cucumber, tomato, olives and shaved pecorino romano on grilled bread.

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□The menu then turns to their pizza offerings, including an intriguing-sounding truffle cream, another with roasted portobello mushrooms and cipollini onions, and an offering with fennel sausage, salame picante and house-pickled peppers. For less adventuresome eaters, you can still get a traditional Margherita.

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□For my entree, I opted for one of the dishes from the pasta and rice section of the menu, the linguine alla vongole or linguine with clams. I asked for it without the salame picante, but still with the white wine and olive oil. I really enjoyed it, although I took a risk with this dish, as I knew it could be on the spicy side, and so it proved to be. Elsewhere on this section of the menu was that Italian favorite, lasagne, along with a seasonal risotto, and the fun-sounding polpetta gigante. However, that turned out to be quite straightforward, a giant meatball with ricotta cannelloni and marinara sauce.

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□My husband was immediately sold on what his entree would be when Dale explained that ahead of the restaurant opening, the serving staff had sampled every item on the menu (tough job, huh?). He'd gone home and told his wife, she could eat anything, confidently knowing it would all be great, but that the slow-cooked lamb shank was by far the best. Dale went on to tell us that you could pretty much say "boo" to the lamb and it would just drop off the bone, and my husband confirmed that description was pretty close to reality!

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□Other options on the meat and fish section of the menu included chicken breast alla parmigiana, eggplant rollatini (yes a vegetarian dish in this section -- at least as far as I could tell from the description), the T-bone steak Florentine, pork chop alla Milanese, whole roasted fish, and sauteed shrimp. As I said, the entree selection was pretty comprehensive.

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□By this point in the meal, I felt that I still had some good room for dessert, so much in fact that I opted for two desserts. The first had to be the tiramisu, one of my all-time favorite desserts, and always a good way to test out how good an Italian restaurant is. I found it to be excellent, although perhaps a little more rich than I'd have liked. I also opted for the spoonful of gelato. You could pick from double dark chocolate, strawberry-basil-balsamic, or pistachio-stracciatella, but I went for the hazelnut, and it was wonderful.

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□ My husband opted for their signature dessert of the bombolini (doughnuts) with dark chocolate served with vanilla gelato, and I didn't hear a word of complaint from him about it. Let's just say it quickly disappeared off the plate!

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□ Other options included the affogato al caffe, an espresso with a choice of hazelnut or vanilla gelato, a Piedmont hazelnut chocolate cake, and the no-sugar-added lemon panna cotta. The most peculiar sounding was spaghetti gelato and meatballs, which I couldn't quite bring myself to try… maybe next time!

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□ If you enjoy some alcohol with your meal, there's certainly an expansive selection on offer here. Disney is very proud of the fact that the wine selection is 100% Italian, as it should be at an Italian restaurant. Alongside this, Italian beers, a selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails, and some speciality Italian liquors and liqueurs such as grappa and limoncello round out the offering. You can even try orangecello, an orange liqueur, and I can thoroughly recommend it, having sampled it during the night we were at Trattoria al Forno.

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□ Our meal here wasn't cheap, coming in at \$140 for the two of us for three courses, a glass of wine for me, an Italian beer for my husband and two liqueurs to end the meal. However, it was also superb, and we felt worth every cent. At no point were we rushed, and we were left to enjoy a leisurely dinner that turned out to last more than two hours.

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□ Although we've only been once to Trattoria al Forno, it's already on our must-do list for the future. It's an excellent addition to the dining options at Walt Disney World, and up there as one of the best Italian restaurants there, if not the best.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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