

California Grill Brunch at Disney's Contemporary Resort: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

The California Grill is one of our favorite restaurants on Disney property. We've been there for Christmas Day dinner, birthday dinners, and dinners with large groups of friends -- you get the idea. So when I found out that they had started to serve up a Sunday brunch, I knew we wanted to try it, so I immediately moved around our plans to allow us to do the California Grill Brunch!

The brunch wasn't cheap at \$80/person. We were expecting a hefty charge, given it's a signature restaurant. I should mention here that we used two of our credits from the Deluxe Dining Plan to pay for it. So was it good value? Oh my goodness, yes!

☐ ☐ Perks of the California Grill Brunch

☐ We were very surprised when we pulled up at the Contemporary and said we were there for brunch to be told that we could use valet parking free of charge. What a lovely way to start the meal! From what we understood from discussions with the Cast Members there, it's something they're doing to encourage people to come and try out and the brunch. So while free valet parking could be stopped at any time, they gave us the impression it may continue for a while.

☐ Perhaps the nicest thing about the California Grill brunch is that you get to see the stunning view from the 15th floor of the Contemporary in the daylight, something you don't always get to enjoy if you go for dinner, as depending on the time of the year, it may already be dark by the time you're seated. Prepare yourself if you haven't seen this before, because there is so much to take in, and in my case, photograph! During or after your meal, you can wander around the restaurant or head outside on to the walkway to see more of what sprawls beneath you outside.

The other thing you immediately notice here is the fact there are musicians accompanying your meal. It really added a wonderful atmosphere, and it's something I wish they'd do for dinner as well.

☐ We were greeted with a wonderful selection of breads, and immediately asked what drinks we would like. Mimosas, or orange juice, are unlimited during your meal, and included in the cost, and one of our party even managed to get unlimited champagne, although whether that's something they'd offer to everyone, I'm not sure. They do have a

bloody Mary bar, but this is an additional charge, so we all decided we were happy with the drinks that were included with our meal. ☐ Food at the California Grill Brunch

☐ The way it works here is that it's half buffet, half a la carte. The self serve selections are exceptionally comprehensive, and as you'd expect from a brunch, they're a combination of breakfast and lunch items, but these are distinctly upmarket. To give you an idea, you can get devilled eggs, crispy lardons, with spicy aioli, hardwood smoked salmon with capers, egg, and red onion, or Greek yoghurt with vanilla scented granola, mixed berries and honeycomb. They even have salads, including kale and apple with dried cranberries, pink pearl apples, marcona almonds, and apple vinaigrette, or fregold with crispy sauteed vegetables, lemon vinaigrette, and Florida hearts of palm. But the section I was most delighted to see was the sushi, given how renowned the California Grill is for this -- and with good reason. I loved the California rolls with jumbo lump crabmeat, and the salmon, tuna, and Hamachi nigiri selections.

☐ Alongside this, you then select one item from the entree selection, although we were told we could order more if we wanted. None of our table did, as we all found one to be perfectly sufficient. I went for the eggs benedict, two soft-poached eggs, toasted English muffin, and classic Hollandaise. You can have two extras, the butter poached Maine lobster or smoked salmon, and I went for the lobster, although I asked for the orange-honey ham to be removed.

☐ My husband opted for the grilled hanger steak, with two eggs any style, chimichurri, marble potato hash, and charred red onion. His was beautifully cooked, but one of our friends also opted for this, and hers had to be re-cooked, as it came out considerably underdone.

☐ I will be honest, I was slightly disappointed with the entree selection, as I felt a lot of it was breakfast oriented, and for the price we were paying, I'd have preferred some more lunch options. Some of the other items on the menu included shrimp and grits, blueberry pancakes, chef's frittata, and pan-fried chicken cutlet. I personally would like to see some changes made to the entrees to move a little more away from mainly breakfast items, particularly for those who don't eat meat.

☐ Desserts come out to the table, and although we had all of them explained to us when they arrived, I didn't remember the details, as my eyes were focused on the macarons, my absolute favorite. I was in complete heaven with those!

☐ By the time we'd finished eating, we all felt just comfortably full, which

I always feel is the sign of a good meal. I couldn't fault anything I ate, and I loved the experience of being able to dine here during the day. I would return to the California Grill brunch in a heartbeat. <

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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