

Kona Cafe at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Jennifer Thomas, PassPorter Guest Contributor

A few days before our recent Disney World trip, we checked the weather and realized that on one of our planned park days, they were forecasting a big storm, so we decided to adjust our plans to make that day a rest day.

Since a poolside rest day was out of the question, we decided to visit all of the monorail resorts and have dinner at one of the monorail resort restaurants.

I looked for reservations at all of the monorail resorts and came up with a 5:30 at Kona Cafe which is in Disney's Polynesian Village Resort and an 8:00 at The Wave which is in Disney's Contemporary Resort. Since we are early eaters, we decided on Kona Cafe.

□ We arrived a little early so we could explore and found Kona Cafe on the second floor of the lobby. For those of you needing an elevator, they are tucked away to the right as you enter the lobby. Make sure to give yourself some extra time if you do need elevators as they are very slow.

□ Kona Cafe is open to the second floor of the lobby, so we got a good view of the restaurant as we made our way to the hostess station. We checked in and were seated quickly by a hostess who was very excited about the amazing dessert choices, which are on display for you when you walk in. Desserts included a warm apple tart, a jasmine tea infused cheesecake, and a Kilhauea torte, which is a different take on a molten lava cake.

We were seated toward the back of the restaurant, which was nice because it gave us a buffer from the groups of people waiting to be seated at O'hana. If it isn't going to add too much time to your wait for a table, request a table at the back of the restaurant for better ambience.

□ Our waiter came by to take our drink orders. I ordered the Island Sunset, which is made of spiced rum and coconut rum, midori, and peach, orange and guava passion fruit juice. My husband ordered the Lapu Lapu, which is two kinds of rum and fruit juices served in a pineapple. Both drinks were great and came with a generous fruit garnish.

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□ Our waiter also confirmed that I do have a food allergy, which I explained was to avocados. The chef came out and explained that the sushi is made in a separate kitchen. This was a relief to me because one of the only problems I have with my avocado allergy is cross contamination. If you have a food allergy, speak up! Disney handles special food needs very well and you usually get to meet a chef.

□ The meal started with an amazing loaf of warm, sweet bread with a macademia nut butter. I enjoyed the bread so much I pinned the recipe on Pinterest so I could try it at home. Don't be afraid to ask for more if you want some; we were too shy and later wished we had asked for more.

□ We ordered an appetizer of steamed pork buns with a spicy Hoisin sauce. The Hoisin sauce was a little spicy, but it was served on the side, so I just used less of it. If you aren't sure about sauces, ask if the item can be prepared with them on the side. (While the menu has changed, the items we had are still on the menu, just in a slightly different form.)

□ My husband had the Togarashi Spiced Ahi Tuna entree, which was served on a warm noodle salad with sweet chili dressing and wild mushroom broth. You can currently get a similar dish as an appetizer, the Island Tuna Poke, which is Ahi Tuna served with a soy sesame sauce, avocado puree, togarashi rice and plantain chip. He enjoyed the tuna at first, but found it to be too spicy to finish, which surprised me because he usually enjoys spicy hot foods.

□ I had Kona coffee rubbed pork loin served with coconut milk polenta and seasonal greens. I am seriously sad this is not on the current menu. I loved every bite of this dish. The pork had a slight coffee flavor, but instead of overpowering the pork, it enhanced its flavor, especially when paired with the coconut milk polenta.

□ Currently, they have a Duo of Pork on the menu, which is probably what I would order instead because the Kona coffee rubbed pork was cooked perfectly. With the lean cut of meat, it is very easy to overcook, especially in a high volume kitchen, but it was perfect.

□ Despite the temptation of the desserts as we walked in, we decided to wait on dessert until later in our monorail tour and finished off our meal with a Kona coffee French press pot, which was the best coffee we had all week.

□ Overall, the service and the food were terrific, but with the crush of people waiting for O'hana, it was a little less peaceful than it should have been. I am excited to return to Kona Cafe to try their famed Tonga

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Toast paired with the Kona coffee French press pot.

About The Author: Jennie is a stay-at-home-wife who has a serious Disney addiction. She is currently "planning" their next trip to Disney World, date still to be determined.

Article last updated: 06-23-2017

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