

Afternoon Tea at the Garden View Lounge: Taking Tea in a Grand Setting

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Walt Disney World is known for many things, but a good afternoon tea is hardly what immediately comes to most people's minds. However, there is one that takes place daily in the Garden View Lounge, just at the back of the lobby of the Grand Floridian. It's the sort of place that you can walk past many times and not even realise it's there. I must admit that, after we booked our tea there, I did have to think hard about where exactly it was.

It's a small place and, as we were part of a large group, we ended up at three different tables, which was a shame, as I had been hoping to chat to everyone in the group. It's something worth keeping in mind if you're planning on going there for a big family reunion.

If afternoon tea conjures up images of enjoying a nice cup of tea with perhaps a cake to go with it, then you're halfway there with what the Garden View Lounge offers, but there's so much more to their menu. The first choice you need to make is whether you want to make selections a la carte off the menu or whether you want to go for one of their meals. It was a tough choice for us and one that we debated long and hard over, as there was just so much to pick from.

Eventually, I opted for the Grand Tea, which is described as the "classic English tradition of afternoon tea, Grand Floridian tea." Being English myself, I was looking forward to judging just how traditional this was. After all, the food on offer at the Rose and Crown in the United Kingdom in Epcot isn't exactly what I'd call authentic.

This begins with a selection of sandwiches and, as a vegetarian, I was able to enjoy the famous cucumber sandwiches that all afternoon teas should have, along with egg mayonnaise and a vegetable pate. As we were in a big group, I was also able to steal some prawn sandwiches from elsewhere on the table. From there, your next course brings you a scone, with jam of course, and a jam tart. Then you can choose from a range of pastries or English trifle and I had to give the trifle a go. I gave the food a very firm thumbs up, both in terms of taste and authenticity. I really felt like a member of the Royal family as I happily enjoyed all the food brought before me. I also enjoyed a glass of sparkling wine, which was a very nice touch and, although I thought it looked a bit odd on the menu, it blended with the food perfectly.

Other meal options include Prince Edward's tea, which my husband

opted for, offering terrines and pates, along with English Blue Stilton, fresh berries and Cumberland sauce. It's a little less food than the Grand Tea, only offering scones with cream. With this meal, you also get a glass of port.

Both meals filled us up much more than we thought they would. We had planned dinner at Chef Mickey's, but had to ditch those plans after eating here, as we were full by the time we left. It's a little like Victoria and Albert's in that respect, as you feel as if you're not eating much food at the time, but all the same, it comfortably fills you up.

If the meal selections don't grab you, then you can make up your own meal from the a la carte options, which include the various components of the meals, including the British cheese platter, a plate of assorted tea sandwiches, English trifle and English blue Stilton cheese. I did consider going for the a la carte menu for some time and, in truth, it's worth looking carefully at the meals on offer and deciding if you like everything that's included. If you're only interested in one or two things, you may be better choosing this way.

Let's be honest though. The food is only half the story here, the most important part is the tea and they certainly know how to make tea properly here. Perhaps the first thing that caught my eye was the charming bone china cups and saucers that the tea is served up in. Of course, it's brewed in its own tea pot, which is contained in its own very regal looking tea cosy. Your server will pour your first cup of tea for you through the tea strainer, ensuring that you don't get any tea leaves in your cup. I was very impressed that I got three cups of tea out of my tea pot, which seemed like good value to me.

The tea menu is quite something to see. We're avid tea drinkers at home and I don't think we've ever seen so many different teas all listed in one place. They even have their own signature blend, of course called the Gardenview Blend, and a special Princess Breakfast tea. More familiar sounding teas include Earl Grey and Imperial English Breakfast, which I sampled and greatly enjoyed.

Green teas and white teas are on offer here, as are fruit ones. Eros has flavours of mandarin and vanilla, while Cassis, as the name suggests, is a black currant flavour. If you fancy being a bit more exotic, you can try the Mad Hatter, which blends together passion fruit, pomegranate and vanilla. According to my husband, who's very much a traditional tea drinker like me, it was very enjoyable.

If you're not a tea fan, don't be put off trying the afternoon tea, as they have a whole drinks menu, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. The

non-tea drinkers in our group loved the experience as much as everyone else. This really is the perfect place to take a relaxed, but refined, break from the parks. I can't wait to go back for my next afternoon tea, Disney style.

The Grand Floridian afternoon tea is available daily at the Garden View Lounge between 2:00 pm and 4:30 pm.

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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