

San Angel Inn: Inside the Mexico Pavilion - A Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

When it comes to dining at Walt Disney World, there are so many places to choose from. We tend to stick to table service restaurants and still haven't quite made it to every single one on property, even after many visits. That perhaps also explains why it can take us years to get back to some of those restaurants, after an initial visit.

When we first went to the San Angel Inn restaurant in 2004, I'll be honest, it wasn't the greatest of meals. I was disappointed to discover that, when I looked at the menu, there was absolutely nothing for a non-meat eater. Admittedly, as soon as I said something to our server, an alternative menu was brought out for me, but I would've preferred to have seen some of those options on the main menu, rather than being forced to ask. When I did get my dish, and I can't remember now what I had, I do remember it being full of red kidney beans, which aren't my favourite food, so it didn't do much for me. I guess that partially explains why it took us a long time to head back there again.

However, in the intervening years, I heard many positive reviews of the San Angel from PassPorter members. Surely, if that many people had good experiences there, it couldn't be all bad and had to be worth another visit? Certainly, a quick view of the menus on [AllEars.Net](#) showed that there was much more choice for me, with both fish and vegetarian items finally main menu options.

Our first impression when we arrived wasn't good, as the place was absolutely mobbed. We did have an Advanced Dining Reservation (ADR), but waited some time to be seated. Usually that's not a problem, but here they didn't have much space for people to wait, so it was a bit of a zoo.

When we were finally seated, it was a very different feeling and instantly I remembered one of the positives from our first visit here -- the wonderful, relaxing atmosphere. I may be wrong, but I do suspect that, ever so slightly, they've increased the lighting in here. On our previous visit, we were struggling to see our food in front of us, but now it was much easier. Located inside the Mexico pavilion, the San Angel is alongside the Gran Fiesta Tour attraction and, if you're lucky enough to get a seat near the water, you can see boats setting out on an adventure every couple of minutes, with a pyramid and smoking volcano in the background adding to the romantic atmosphere in here.

After perusing the menu, we decided to get separate appetisers but share an entree, as this was a meal that we were paying out of pocket for, after having been on the Deluxe Dining Plan for part of our stay. I had to try the Sopa Azteca, a traditional tortilla soup with avocado, cheese and pasilla pepper, just to see what it was like, never having come across a dish like it before. It was essentially a Mexican form of minestrone soup, with all sorts of wonderful goodness in it, although it had a very unusual and different taste to it. The cheese and avocado brought the dish alive for me.

My husband opted for the duck meat tacos or Tacos de Pato Al Pastor, again another twist on a classic dish. Although of course I didn't sample it for myself, I'm told it was a very good start to the meal for him.

The entree was an easy choice for us. Obviously, any meat dishes were out, as we were sharing. We're both fish lovers, so we went for the Mahi-Mahi a la Veracruzana, which is a grilled fillet of mahi-mahi, served over white rice. It's prepared with a range of lovely ingredients, including bell peppers, tomatoes, olives, and capers. The latter two ingredients aren't amongst my favourites, so I wasn't sure what I'd make of this, but the flavours combined beautifully and I didn't find the olives or capers overpowering. That was a pleasant change, as they're both strong flavours. Something that often crosses my mind when I eat Mexican dishes is, how spicy will it be? I'm pleased to report that, although full of flavour, rather like a lot of the items available at the buffet at Boma, this dish wasn't too spicy at all.

With plans for a big meal the evening that we ate at the San Angel, we didn't get as far as the dessert menu, although the Flan de Vanilla -- vanilla custard in syrup, topped with roasted almonds -- sounded very appealing. The Capirotada de Chocolate Blanco, a white chocolate and golden raisin bread pudding served with Mexican milk caramel, was another option that intrigued us. I wouldn't mind trying either on a future visit.

The menu also has a wide selection of drinks on it, with margaritas unsurprisingly topping the list of alcoholic beverages on offer, although you can also have wine and beer to go with your meal. For younger members of the family, there's a separate menu for them, offering delights such as beef tacos, chicken tenders, and cheese quesadillas.

Based on our most recent experience at San Angel, would we go back there? It's not a place that we'd rush back to, simply because Mexican cuisine isn't at the top of the list of food that we love to sample. Our tastes tend to be more for African and Japanese cuisine, so you're more likely to find us visiting Teppan Edo or Boma on every trip we make to

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Walt Disney World.

Having said that, our second visit to San Angel was much better than our first experience there. The changes they've made to the menu to make it more accommodating to those of us who don't eat meat, and the items we sampled was excellent. It's certainly a good choice, particularly for a nice, romantic meal, with its stunning setting. Although we may not make it there every time we head to Disney, I'm sure we will back at some point in the future.

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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