

Carthay Circle Lounge: Disney California Adventure Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

If someone had told me before our most recent visit to Disneyland that one of our favourite dining spots would actually be a lounge, as opposed to a restaurant, I'd have been really shocked.

However, that's exactly what happened at Carthay Circle Lounge in Disney California Adventure.

We hadn't planned on eating at the Carthay Circle Lounge at all. In fact, the day we did, we were supposed to be off site from Disney, but sadly illness got in the way of those plans, and we found ourselves in the park unexpectedly. Hungry, we headed over to the Carthay Circle, as we'd eaten there at the restaurant, and really enjoyed the atmosphere in there. We were lucky, and instantly found a seat, and only waited a short while to be served. This was surprising, as there were long lines outside for the various counter service restaurants.

□ We'd already seen the menu for the lounge on our earlier visit, and were intrigued by it. It's certainly much more wide ranging than you'd expect to see in a traditional lounge. Divided into bites, snacks, rolls and small plates when we ate there, options included Santa Monica devilled eggs with smoked salmon and lemon crègrave; me fraiche, lobster pad Thai imperial roll with cashew tamarind sauce, jumbo asparagus with American prosciutto, toasted pine nuts, and parmesan aioli, and roasted Moroccan lamb meatballs with tzatziki and pepperoncini. As you can probably see from the items on the menu, they are certainly exotic, and from all corners of the globe. It's the perfect place to head for if you're a slightly more adventurous eater, which we are.

□ So what did we actually go for at Carthay Circle Lounge? I was intrigued by the chilled watermelon skewers with mango-lime sorbet. See what I mean about it being food for the slightly more adventurous? Sadly, once upon a time at Disney, you'd have seen items like this all over the parks, but now they're a rare sighting, and it's a great shame, as they were superb. I could easily have had more, but I had to save myself, as I'd ordered other items from the menu.

Next on the list for me were the ebi shrimp rolls, although with the red jalapenos that this dish usually comes with removed, as I can't deal with spicy food. It still had plenty of flavour, thanks to the soy, lemon aioli, avocado and cucumber that it came with. Once again, this was an excellent choice, and a very filling snack.

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□My husband tried the warm barbecue pork rolls with crispy onions, pea shoots, daikon, and sesame paper, and he seemed very pleased with his choice as well.

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□For both of us though, we felt the icing on the cake (almost literally!) were the desserts here. As with the other dishes, they're small sample plates, which does leave you wanting a bit more, but then again, better to want more than to come away feeling stuffed ... I had the trio of cake pops, made up of double dark chocolate chunk, which was exceptionally rich, the raspberry-white chocolate cheesecake, which I was surprised to find I enjoyed (European cheesecake is very different to American cheesecake, and the American one isn't usually to my taste), and the best of the bunch, the pineapple-macadamia nut upside down cake, which was wonderful.

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□I think my husband did even better than me though. He got the mini mousse cones, the first one made up of chocolate fudge, salted caramel and chocolate ganache, the second one was tiramisu with Frangelico Chantilly and hazelnut brittle, while the final one was a coconut-lemon custard snow ball. I always know when he's made a good dining choice, as I hear approving noises from him, and I don't get to sample any of it, which is always a giveaway that it's good.

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□Of course, this being a lounge, there's also a full selection of adult beverages available, including some wonderful, and very unusual cocktails. We ended up trying a couple of different ones, just for research purposes you understand, and they were very pleasant. They also have some unusual non-alcoholic items, including the rose petal soda, locally sourced sparkling water flavoured with delicate rose essence, and garnished with an edible sugar-glazed organic rose petal.

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□The atmosphere here is very similar to the upstairs restaurant, taking you back to the refined splendour of 1930s Los Angeles. You really do feel like a movie star in here, just able to relax, and unwind, and enjoy good food. Perhaps the best thing about eating here is that, because you're not actually seated at a table, once you've finished eating, you don't feel as if you need to move on. You can just sit and watch the world go by, and that's exactly what we did. Do bear in mind if you eat here, you may also be lucky enough to encounter some of Disney's wonderful streetmosphere characters. We did while we were enjoying our food, and the one we met was an absolute riot.

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□All in all, we had a superb meal in a very unexpected location. I'd never usually think of coming to a lounge to eat, this the Carthay Circle Lounge is definitely on my list of places to return to the next time we get

back to Disneyland.

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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