

## Veggie Dining At Disney: Counter Service Locations

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

As a non-meat eater, I scour guidebooks with interest whenever we're planning travel abroad to see how well our destination(s) cater to those of us who don't eat steaks or hamburgers. Fortunately it's very rarely an issue these days, with more and more people choosing to steer away from meat - and Disney is no exception to that rule.

We're blessed to have a huge selection of dining options at Walt Disney World Resort, from wonderful table service restaurants serving everything from exquisite romantic meals to character buffets, to a huge choice of counter service options, and carts selling snacks throughout the parks.

That's perhaps been one of the biggest changes in recent years. Those carts would, once upon a time, just have sold sweet treats, such as the famous Mickey bars, but now they're a wonderful opportunity to grab a healthy treat, such as fresh fruit, which can be exceptionally refreshing in the Florida heat.

When it comes to counter service places to eat, there are still plenty of non-meat options, despite the omnipresent burgers that, at first glance, seem to be available everywhere! The beauty is that Disney has changed what's on offer in recent years, partially to become more health conscious, but it's also benefited vegetarians, who've seen the range of options open to them expand.

We'll start our survey of counter service establishments with a stroll around the Magic Kingdom. You can find excellent vegetarian burgers at both Cosmic Ray's Starlight Cafe and Pecos Bill Cafe. These are both much better than the cardboard style veggie burgers you may have tasted elsewhere, and Pecos Bill has the added attraction of a wonderful fixins' bar. If burgers don't appeal, Cosmic Ray's also offers a vegetarian wrap.

Perhaps the best non-meat counter service choices in the Magic Kingdom can be found at Columbia Harbour House. If you eat fish, you'll be in heaven with clam chowder, which is exceptionally good, a fried fish basket that's not bad, and the Anchors Aweigh Sandwich, made up

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of tuna, all on the menu. True veggies will also find plenty, with a lighthouse sandwich, made up with hummus, tomato and broccoli slaw, and a tasty vegetarian chili.

On our most recent visit, we also discovered Pinocchio Village Haus, where the vegetable pizza with salad was a great find. There's also a cheese-only option, and you can have it with or without salad.

Epcot is traditionally the best park when it comes to dining and it's no exception when it comes to vegetarian options. You'll certainly find the widest variety here, with options from various countries around the World Showcase and some offerings in Future World. If you enjoy more unusual food, then make a beeline for the Tangerine Cafe in Morocco, where you can sample some superb dishes, generally based around the national dish, couscous. There are vegetarian Mediterranean wrap with Couscous salad, while the vegetarian platter is also served with couscous salad.

Nearby in Japan, Yakitori House serves up miso soup, a favorite of ours, and fish eaters will be in paradise with sushi, Tokyo rolls, and shrimp udon on offer; all great tasting and filling meals. Staying in the Far East, vegetarian stir fry is available with steamed rice at the Lotus Blossom Cafe in China and there are more Asian offerings at Sunshine Seasons Food Fair in The Land pavilion in Future World, perhaps one of the best choices in the park for non-meat eaters. There's always a vegetarian entree in the Asian section of this counter service eatery and you can also get a roasted beet and goat cheese salad, as well as a grilled vegetable Cuban sandwich.

At Disney's Hollywood Studios I used to dread having to find something I could eat at counter service places, but fortunately the selection there has improved dramatically in recent years. OK, so you're not going to find anything as unusual as in Epcot, but then again, you wouldn't expect to. Sure bets include cheese pizza at Catalina Eddie's and Toy Story Pizza Planet, where you can pick up a cheese pizza or the slightly more exciting veggie pizza, which comes complete with mushrooms, peppers and onions - now that's more like it! Perhaps even more exciting is the addition of a vegetarian cheeseburger to the line-up at Rosie's All American Cafe, although my vote still goes to the veggie burgers at the Magic Kingdom.

Once again, you perhaps expect more from Disney's Animal Kingdom but sadly, even with recent dining changes there, the result is disappointing. Yes, there is cheese pizza from Pizzafari and veggie burgers from Restaurantosaurus, but that's about it, ever since Tusker House became a table service restaurant throughout the day. It's a

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shame, as this was always my usual standby for a good light meal while in the park.

In the [next installment](#), we'll take a look at some of the better choices for table service dining if there are vegetarians or non-meat eaters in your party. However, even if you never set foot in one of Disney's restaurants during your vacation, it's clear there is plenty for everyone to enjoy from counter service places - sometimes it's just a case of knowing where to look.

And remember, don't be afraid to ask whether it's possible to have a different option if you like the look of something. On many occasions, I've asked if I could have the Caesar salad without chicken and, nine times out of ten, it's no problem at all. This is Disney after all, where customer service comes first.

*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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