Walt Disney World News

Asian-Inspired Cuisine at Disney's Polynesian Resort

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – Gardens thick with coconut palms and orchids, volcanic rock waterfalls, white-sand beaches and Polynesian music set the stage at Disney's Polynesian Resort, home of Kona Café and 'Ohana.

The energetic, casual Kona is awash in warm colors with brilliant ceramic tilework, hammered ironwork and distinctive lighting. Center stage is a dessert kitchen, where an array of sweets is arranged on the stone countertop, tempting diners before they're even seated.

The 172-seat restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, starting with the Sunrise Menu that features fresh juices and fruits, omelets and the decadent Auntie Kaui's Tonga Toast, a longtime Polynesian favorite – banana-stuffed sourdough bread, rolled in cinnamon sugar, then fried. The aroma of Kona coffee, one of the richest coffees in the world, wafts through the air. Kona coffee comes from one of the most fertile regions in Hawaii; the green coffee beans are flown to Central Florida, then roasted to produce the house blend. Beans are ground to order throughout the day.

The restaurant adds a Pan-Pacific spin to its Midday Menu, with pot stickers and steaming bowls of soup with Asian vegetables in broth with noodles and meat or fish. But the restaurant also offers basic lunchtime fare: hearty salads, grilled fish and the Kahuna Burger, for instance.

At dinner, the stage is set for boldly flavored evening specialties, with Pacific Rim spices jazzing up dishes like shrimp and scallops with spicy guava-passion fruit and wasabi cream, or macadamia nut and chive-crusted mahi mahi. A modest selection of beers, wines and cocktails accompanies the eclectic menu.

Across the way from Kona is 'Ohana, featuring the popular 'Ohana's Best Friends Breakfast with Lilo and Stitch and an all-you-care-to-eat dinner daily. Breakfast is from 7 to 11 a.m. and offers favorite American fare such as scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, pork sausage and bacon, fruit and breads. The Disney characters are the stars of the show, including Mickey Mouse and Pluto who drop by from time to time to join Lilo and Stitch.

When the doors open for dinner, the bellow of conch shells welcomes diners to a festive "island feast" served family-style in the spacious dining room with a dramatic, 18-foot-long, open fire pit. There's no menu, everyone shares starters that include grilled shrimp and honey-coriander chicken wings, then platters of grilled pork loin, turkey, sirloin steak, Hawaiian sausage – all grilled over oak on skewers – and stir-fried vegetables. For dessert, it's banana bread pudding. A full bar offers select wines and tropical drinks.

Families especially enjoy the ambience at 'Ohana ('Ohana means family in the Hawaiian culture) with live entertainment including storytellers, hula dancing and coconut-rolling contests for children of all ages.
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