Walt Disney World News

Walt Disney World Menus Evolving With Healthful Choices

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – It's all about healthful choices as Walt Disney World quick-service and fast-casual restaurants continue to refine menus. French fries aren't going away, but menus are being revised with well-balanced options with healthful sides and beverages and at least one vegetarian entrée in all quick-service and table-service restaurants.

Disney's Parks & Resorts standard kid's meals feature healthier side dishes and beverages, and an overwhelming majority of guests opt for healthy options, said Ed Wronski, director of Food and Beverage Concept Development for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

"Healthier choices on kids' menus are now the standard instead of the 'alternate,' " said Wronski. Grapes, apples, carrot sticks and unsweetened applesauce take the place of French fries, and 1 percent milk, or bottled water instead of soda, for instance. Guests must request fries and sodas (at no additional cost). Surveys show that 60 percent of all quick-service kids' complete meals are served with healthy option choices.

The number of fresh fruit carts at the parks is steadily increasing while other nutritious snacks like nuts and trail mix also are more readily available. More than 20,000 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables are consumed annually at Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort.

"The new healthful menus expand the options for our guests," said Wronski. "The reaction, both from the chefs and the guests, has been very, very positive."

Constantly looking for ways to improve the nutritional profiles and tastes of popular entrées, Disney changed to a guest-tested hamburger with fat content less than 20 percent. Quick-service pizzas now have added lower-fat cheese.

Even desserts get a makeover: anywhere they are served, guests will find options such as low sugar offerings and fresh fruit.

Disney continues to phase out added trans-fats, working with manufacturers to reformulate recipes for candy, packaged food and bakery items sold in the parks, or identifying replacement products. Portion-controlled snacks and treats and packaging to promote nutritious food are part of the changes.

Catering to Dietary Needs

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In 2011, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts was honored by the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) and received the FAAN Corporate Leadership Award for recognizing that "families with food allergies deserve to feel safe while on vacation."

In consideration of the increasing number of guests with food allergies, restaurants began introducing new allergy-friendly menus at Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort. Available upon request, these menus offer selections for guests with gluten/wheat, fish, peanut and tree nut allergies, and many include options for milk, eggs, soy and shellfish allergies. All major Disney-operated table-service and quick-service restaurants in U.S.-based parks and resorts will offer allergy-friendly menus by October 2015.

Guests will continue to have the option to consult directly with a Disney chef or special diets-trained cast member regarding menu offerings suitable for their dietary requirements. For guests with multiple allergies or less common special dietary requests, guests can email special.diets@disneyworld.com after booking a restaurant reservation.

Lifestyle diets – sugar free, low fat, low sodium, vegetarian or vegan – also be accommodated. When guests call 407/WDW-DINE, they can make the request and then talk with their server or the manager when they arrive at the restaurants. Information for guests also is available online at http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/guest-services/special-dietary-requests/.

With an increase in special dietary needs for cultural or religious reasons, Walt Disney World restaurants are able to accommodate requests related to religious beliefs and practices including kosher and halal. Meals are available at most full-service restaurants and need to be ordered at least 24 hours in advance by calling 407-WDW-DINE. Kosher meals also are available at a number of quick-service locations.

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Disney dining has evolved to meet the discriminating taste of its guests, offering innovative, fun and healthful dining choices. Disney delivers everything from stellar, award-winning dining experiences to immersive dining that transports guests into cherished stories. There are more than 450 places to eat at Walt Disney World Resort, including fine dining in unforgettable settings, Disney character dining and quick-service restaurants. Behind-the-scenes innovation leads the way with allergy-friendly menus at up to 120 quick-service and table-service locations. Walt Disney World Resort also is one of the largest single-site purveyors of wine, with more Level One sommeliers than any other company in the world. Each year, Disney's culinary team creates fresh dishes and new beverage choices for special events including the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival. For more information and to make reservations visit www.disneyworld.com/dine.