

RESTAURANT REVIEW

.....*By A Mom and Two Kids*.....

This column is dedicated to guiding readers to area restaurants that kids and grown-ups might like. It is written primarily by my two children, ages 11 and 9, and edited by me, a veteran freelance writer. We will not cover the obvious fast food outlets, but will instead focus on sit-down and read the menu restaurants that range from casual to formal dining. We will also try to cover all three meals and throw in a surprise restaurant that you might not think would be kid friendly.

In January we had a few half days of school. As a treat, Mom took us out for lunch to Opa! Coney and Grill, located in the Cherryland Center near Younker's. At first we were a little confused because she said it was a hot dog place, but there was all this Greek food on the menu. Mom explained this was a common thing in the Detroit area. Ooookkkkaayyy. Whatever.

The menu features appetizers, salads, soups, chili, Coney Island hot dog favorites, burgers, sandwiches, Gyros and pita plates and full dinners (served after 4 p.m. daily). The kids menu (age 10 and under) offers a hot dog, chicken strips, grilled cheese, and hamburger, all priced \$3.50 to \$4 and includes fries and drink. They also advertise that if you see something on the menu your kid would like, they would be happy to accommodate you. Plus they will also heat up your baby bottle if needed!!!

For our meal, we ordered the Hummus and Pita appetizer, the Greek Salad (minus pretty much everything except cucumbers and Feta cheese!), and the chicken strips. Mom ordered some bizarre thing called Dolmades. When our food came it all looked wonderful, except for Mom's. It was – honest to goodness – a bunch of leaves rolled up in a white sauce. Come to find out, Dolmades is stuffed grape leaves with seasoned rice inside. As much as we hate to admit it, they tasted pretty good.

The Coney Island Favorites include a Coney dog Detroit style, Flint Coney dog, loose Coney, Licky Fingers Dog and a plain hot dog. All are priced \$1.69 to \$3.39. The salad choices are chicken Greek, regular Greek, baby Greek (just a smaller size), TC Cherry, Chef's and a small tossed salad. The Opa! dressing is homemade and very tasty. Mom wanted us to mention that she had the Avyolemeno (chicken lemon rice) soup on a previous visit and it was wonderful!



The dinner selection was a bunch of things we have never heard of, but Mom said they looked delicious: Souvlaki (sort of a pork shish ka bob), Kefthetes (Greek meat balls with tomato red wine sauce), Golabki (stuffed cabbage leaves), Kotlety (Polish pork chops), Pierogi and Bigos (cheese and potato ravioli things), and chicken stuffed Phyllo (chicken, spinach, feta cheese, cream cheese and Greek spices. All entrees cost \$10.99.

The dessert menu is right out of a kids dream come true: Root Beer Float, Ice Cream Sundae, and Milk Shake. Grown-ups might like the Crème Brulee, Cherry Phyllo, Rizogalo (Greek rice pudding), and, of course, Baklava.

To confuse things further, not only does this hot dog place serve authentic Greek and some Polish food, they also offer breakfast. No kidding. On Sunday, they serve it all day long! Breakfast offerings include eggs served any style, Gyro and eggs, buttermilk pancakes, French toast, nine kinds of Omelets, and something called Mega Omelets. Mom said the Greek coffee would probably knock her socks off, so she definitely wants to come back and try it.

Overall, Opa! Coney and Grill is a nice place to eat. Kids can feel comfortable in the diner-like atmosphere. Spills will be no big deal. There is even a counter you can sit at and watch the cook. There is also plenty of parking because it is a shopping mall and -BONUS SUPREME - you can shop after eating (are you reading this Dad?)

Opa! is open Monday thru Saturday 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Phone number is 231-947-6721. Web site is www.opagrill.com.