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InsideE!

Enlightening, Educating & Entertaining
E! Employees Everywhere

Reviews: Vegetarian Dining

By Yvonne King Lopez

For those brave souls who haven't joined the low-carb craze and are actually vegetarian or enjoy having a healthy, meat-free meal now and then, there are some nice, local options.

Johnnie's New York Pizza: Johnnie's lunch combo for \$8.95, which includes a nine-inch pizza or pasta with salad and a soft drink, is a good deal for the non-carnivorous set. Four out of the five pastas (spaghetti marinara; tomato, basil and garlic; pasta primavera; and penne arrabiatta) are meatless. The eggplant-parmesan sandwich served on pizza bread and topped with marinara sauce, melted mozzarella and Parmesan cheese, is not even close to being healthy or low-fat, but it's so good I don't care. Call ahead, unless you can stand the extremely slow service which should disqualify Johnnie's from having "New York" in its name.

Briazz: The best bet for vegetarian lovers at Briazz is the salad bar, where you can create your own salad. Briazz also offers a handful of meatless sandwiches, including the veggie club and three-cheese panini.

Baja Fresh: I can no longer eat Baja Fresh, but I do remember that when I could, I enjoyed the vegetarian bare burrito. As the name suggests, it is not wrapped in a tortilla and comes with rice, beans (black or pinto), lettuce, jack cheese, pico de gallo, chilis, onions and salsa baja. According to the Baja Fresh Website it has 560 calories, eight grams of fat, 20 grams of protein and--here's the really good news--22 grams of fiber, which means you'll feel fuller longer and hit the vending machines less. There's also the grilled vegetarian burrito, cheese enchiladas and my personal favorite, the tostada salad served in a hard-shell flour tortilla with mixed greens, black or pinto beans, jack cheese, guacamole, sour cream, tomato and pico de gallo.

Black Dog Coffee: Black Dog Coffee offers a range of vegetarian options, including the very good Caesar salad and a Greek salad. If you're craving something a little more interesting, there's a spinach salad with blue-cheese crumbles, avocado, corn, red onions, olives and ranch dressing; or go for the Wilshire, which has wild greens, Gorgonzola, walnuts, pear slices, rosemary and a cranberry-vinaigrette dressing. Among the veggie sandwiches there is white cheddar, fresh mozzarella, egg salad and goat cheese.

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