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Real Eatery Reviews

Realfoodtravel reviewers look for restaurants, bakeries, and other food places that offer authentic regional or artisan food that's terrific.

If you know of someplace worthy of a RFT Eatery Review, let us know. Or, if you'd like to write a review for RFT, email us.

Daily Grill Grinds It Right



by Bobbie Hasselbring, RFT Editor

Realfoodtraveler doesnt often write about chain restaurants, but sometimes they do something so real, so extraordinary, we cant help ourselves. And so it is with the Daily Grill, a moderately-priced national chain of 21 restaurants serving Great American food that was born in Southern California in the mid 1980s. This restaurant group now grinds their own Certified Angus Beef twice a day for their signature hamburgers, plank steak, and meatloaf and the results are mouthwateringly good.

I always felt we did good hamburgers, said Bob Spivak, President and CEO of Grill Concepts, Inc, and one of the Daily Grills three founders. But we wanted to do something really special, something different to make our meat even better.

Theyve achieved that goal. The folks at the Daily Grill do five things that, in our opinion, make their ground meat dishes stand out:

- they grind the meat twice daily so it stays fresh
- they grind in the refrigerator to keep the meat at a constant cold temperature
- they use only 100% Certified Angus Ground Chuck
- they grind a mixture of 80% lean, 20% fat to ensure theres enough fat to keep the meat moist, juicy, and flavorful
- they hand-form all their ground meat dishes.



The Daily Grill's Classic Burger comes with the classic toppings: tomato, lettuce, onion, and Thousand Island Dressing.

The result of all this is extraordinary. RFT Editor Anne Weaver and I recently visited the Daily Grill in the Westin Hotel in downtown Portland, OR, sampling burgers, plank steak, and meatloaf.

The first thing we noticed about their hamburgers is that they're big, really big. All of them come with an 8-ounce patty of beef. You'll need to come with a big appetite or plan to take some home. A nice feature is that you can have your choice of sides, including fresh (not canned) fruit, crispy shoestring potatoes, delicate sweet potato fries, or crunchy, nutty roasted peanut cole slaw.



Your choices of sides at the Daily Grill reflects CEO and founder Bob Spivak's philosophy, "The answer is yes. What's the question."

Their Classic Cheeseburger comes with a big, freshly ground Certified Angus Beef patty topped with double cheddar cheese (or other cheese) and classic toppings: lettuce, tomato, onion, sliced pickle, and 1,000 Island dressing. It's served with peanut coleslaw and shoestring potatoes. This is a juicy, life-size burger that demands multiple napkins.



Green chilies adds zing to their Green Chile Burger.

The Daily Grills Cheddar and Black Pepper Bacon Burger, our favorite, is a delicious variation that's meaty with an undertone of bacon goodness. Their Daily Double comes with two, 4-ounce patties with American cheese (or other cheese). Even though this burger delivers the same amount of meat as the others, we found it a challenge to get our mouths around this one. For those who love spicy food, they also have a Chile Verde Burger that comes with jack cheese and green chile that packs a chile punch.



You can easily share this big Plank Steak.

Their Plank Steak is a whopping 12-ounces of juicy, meaty ground Angus that comes on a big plank. Its served with creamy mashed potatoes and an oversized piece of broccoli thats cooked al dente. Unless youre a lumberjack, plan to share.

The Daily Grills Homestyle Meatloaf is soft-textured and juicy and topped with tomato glaze and a slightly spicy Bordelaise Sauce. It will remind you of grandmas favorite meatloaf. It comes surrounded by ultra-creamy red-skinned mashed potatoes and that cooked-just-right broccoli. Again, theres a lot of food here.



Goey and delicious, Daily Grill's Fudge Brownie Pie is huge like everything else they serve.

By the time we finished sampling, we were both impressed and stuffed. But, in the name of serving RFT readers, we forced ourselves to try the Daily Grills HUGE desserts. Their Fudge Brownie Pie is a six-inch circle of brownie with pecans, vanilla ice cream, fudge, and caramel sauce thats both cold (ice cream) and hot (brownie and sauces). Its sure to delight chocolate lovers with its rich chocolate flavor

Two or three layers would have been enough, but the Daily Grill insists on six for its Carrot Cake.

Their classic Carrot Cake is a big slab, six layers tall thats frosted with cream cheese frosting and served with a big scoop of hand-whipped whipped cream. Key Lime Pie, a slightly more reasonably-sized dessert (though still big), has a smooth, silky texture and an ultra-tangy lime flavor. Their Apple Pie Sundae, a special the night we visited, comes as a big bowl of ice cream with cinnamon spiced apple slices and caramel. This dessert was the least successful too much ice cream and not enough apples and caramel for our tastebut the apple pie flavor was definitely present.

Real Bottom Line: The Daily Grill lives up to its motto of serving great American comfort food and theyve taken their hamburgers, plank steak, and meatloaf to the next level by grinding and hand-forming these entrees with Certified 100% Angus Beef. The result is juicy and delicious. Their portions are huge (including their desserts), so go hungry. Now if realfoodtraveler.com could just convince the CEO that they should served fresh, hand-cut shoestring and sweet potato fries...

www.dailygrill.com

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