

Mirasol's Cafe- Sexy Coffee and Studly Sandwiches



by Ivey
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Before I start, I've gotta get something off my chest first:
WHY CAN'T I GET PICKLES AT MIRASOL'S CAFE?!?

OK, I feel better now that I put that out into the Universe. Other than my little pickle issue, I really enjoyed my lunch there. The first I had heard about Mirasol's was from my friend James Gagne, who extolled the beauty of the baristas there. Of course, that's not why I checked it out, but it is why I didn't bring my boyfriend with me.

During a busy day of shopping with my two month-old I ended up in Dartmouth, hungry and more than a little grumpy. I needed a little pick-me-up, so I met a friend at Mirasol's for a little South American flavor. The colorful cafe, located at 439 State Road in Dartmouth, is perfectly positioned for students at UMass, mall shoppers, and people like me who go to Target three times a week for diapers and dog food. Parking at lunch time was a little tight but I think that's because they share a parking lot with medical offices. Even so, I lucked out with a spot right in front. I did noticed that other people had parked on the street, so that helps with the parking lot size. Since my lunch date hadn't arrived yet, I sat in the outdoor section and was hit with the aroma of fresh coffee and the sounds of Latin America, which was very welcoming to the senses.



Once inside Mirasol's, I noticed that even though the building itself wasn't very interesting, the inside was charming and airy. In the corner there were a few large seating areas with couches and lounge chairs, and there were also spots for people to cozy up with a cup of coffee

and a book. The large menu behind the bar was a little overwhelming. We had to hang back and let others who were more familiar with the joint make their purchases while we mulled over our choices. I finally decided on a frozen french vanilla coffee (with coffee ice cream!) and the Cubana sandwich from their Caliente menu, while my girlfriend went the easy route and chose the "Jive" Turkey Club.

I'd like to mention that as a Floridian, I love Cuban Sandwiches. I was born in Tampa, the undisputed home of the Cuban, and to see my favorite lunch on the menu at Mirasol's was pretty exciting. Now I know I'm probably not going to find a Cuban like the ones back in Ybor City, but I was hoping for just a little taste of home. Unfortunately, as I looked

at the ingredients on the sandwich, I discovered that I wasn't getting an authentic Cuban Sandwich. As their menu implies, you can substitute or add any item to your sandwich that you like, so I asked that the onions and tomatoes be removed and that pickles be

added instead. This is where my pickle rant comes from. Not only could they not put pickles on my Cuban, but there were no pickles in the whole place. I gave the pretty barista my best disappointed face, spared her a lesson in Cuban sandwich making, and ordered it anyway. Just to prove my pickle point



though, here is an excerpt on the making of a proper Cuban Sandwich:

"...The sandwiches have a submarine-style layering of ham, roast pork, cheese, and pickle between a sliced length of Cuban bread. The key to a great, versus a good, Cuban Sandwich lies in the grilling. A great Cuban sandwich is grilled in a sandwich press (called a plancha) until the ham, pork, and pickles have warmed in their own steam (the steady application of heat and weight fuse the meat, cheese, and bread into a delectable and compact treat). One of the greatest sins in Cuban sandwich preparation is too light a press. A heavy hand on the press pushes all the juices and flavors together while still achieving the desired crunchy crust. These sandwiches use no mayonnaise, lettuce, onions, bell peppers, or tomatoes; however, butter and mustard are optional..."

As much as I was disappointed in the "styling" of my sandwich, it was quite good. The crusty bread complimented the roasted pork and the salty ham. The best part about the whole thing was the smear of spicy mustard. I wasn't expecting the kick but it was delicious. My friends' turkey club was bursting out of its wrap, and she said it tasted very fresh. My frozen coffee was also excellent: Those girls really know how to serve up some java, and you can't ever go wrong with ice cream. I think next time I visit Mirasol's I'll choose something different from the menu, like the Peruana: Grilled Chicken with Jalapeno Cream. Or maybe I'll try the Sexy Asparagus with Smoked Gouda and some Peruvian Hot Chocolate. The cafe has a cool vibe and it seems like a great place to hang out. Its a great place to spend hours studying, as they have free wi-fi, and the atmosphere beats Starbucks hands-down. Mirasol's also caters and has a mobile coffee shop called the CHiPPiMobile.

Restaurant info:

- Menu items are a la carte, so drinks and chips are

separate, which easily made my lunch total over \$10.

- Least expensive item: 4-Cheese Quesadilla- \$4.50. House-made black bean and corn salsa, guacamole, sour cream, and a 4-cheese blend.
- Most expensive item: Chileana- \$7.50. Marinated & Grilled Seasoned Steak & Smoked Gouda, topped with Avocado Spread, String Beans, Lettuce Mix and Tomatoes.
- Hours of Operation: 7am-7pm Mon-Sat and 9am-5pm on "Pajama" Sunday
- Find out more about Mirasol's Cafe and their mobile coffee shop locations here: www.mirasolscafe.com

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