

Mama Mia



Reviewed by: Laura Fulton

It's a common misconception that Italian food is all about pasta and pizza; La Mamma at the Sheraton is here to set the story straight. After an authentic Italian greeting beverage, we got down to business with a selection of breads served with grated parmesan, olives and a head of garlic roasted just soft enough to dig out individual cloves.

It's easy to overdo it with the breads, but you'll want to save yourself for the rest of the extensive menu. The basil atop the tomato and buffalo mozzarella salad gives it a lovely refreshing edge while the simple parmesan wrapped in eggplant is hearty and flavourful. The seared tuna, another no-fuss starter, gets just the kick it needs with a cool fennel and pomegranate salad.

A selection of main courses is evidence enough of the variety of true Italian food – the pine nuts tossed through the penne pasta gives this standard a unique texture, while the Chilean sea bass served with potato cake and white asparagus is just the right combination of light and

filling. A sprinkling of gorgonzola gives the tenderloin a tangy, interesting flavour, and the chocolate pudding with pears, almonds and vanilla ice cream is a decadent way to end the evening.

If you're brave enough to take on some of the worst construction in town en route to your dinner, you'll be rewarded with the Tuscan sun (the one painted on the ceiling anyway) and the sort of service that old-timers have come to expect from this Abu Dhabi institution. Always worth the trouble, the Sheraton delivers again.

**What?** La Mamma

**Where?** Sheraton Abu Dhabi

**Cost:** Reasonable – starters around AED 50, pizzas and pastas around AED 60, all mains under AED 150

**Why?** Excellent food, authentic atmosphere

**Why not?** The menu is heavy on the Italian lingo – unless you're a native speaker, be sure to check out the extensive descriptions

**We say:** Be sure to look for the summer lunchtime promotion - a pizza and drink for AED 65. Buonissimo!

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