



Chopsticks at the ready

Having practiced our chopstick technique, the Abu Dhabi Week team heads off to the latest place offering authentic Asian cuisine

The Noodle House sits quietly amid a scattering of other food finery at the new Qaryat al Beri Souk, the modern cum- traditional tourist-touting spot located next to the Shangri-La.

With views of calm, sparkling waters and the stunning Sheikh Zayed Mosque illuminated in the background, the venue is certainly pleasing (not too much building work at that time of the evening, thankfully).

The main entrance is a fun affair. There's something good about being able to see the cooks at work preparing the food; walking past a giant glass screen we get steam, flames and frying pans in full action. After this rather frantic activity, turning the corner leads to an entirely different experience – the venue is surprisingly quiet.

We opted for a table outside on the balcony. The seating there is far more formal than the benches inside, but the view is stunning and it's easy to see why there's less free space than indoors.

We're more than ready to eat, but there's no service in sight. After several minutes spent trying to catch various waiters' eyes, we finally get our drinks orders in – though it does take a few attempts to work out what's actually available, as neither the drinks menu nor our waiter seem completely au fait.



However, we perk up with the arrival of drinks and the food menu. Starters arrive quickly and we're soon tucking in to spring rolls and king prawns covered in breadcrumbs. We're not even halfway through the starters, however, when one of the main courses arrives – a slightly spicy, prawn soup. We sit for a few minutes, wondering if the other mains will follow. None of them do, not until the rest of the starters are finished. So we have to start on the soup, which means the bowl is finished by the time the other plates arrive – not the most sociable way to eat together. Singapore chicken and rice noodles, chilli prawns plus a few lamb and beef dishes along with vegetable rice follow; we end up piling a bit of each on everyone's plate so we can all eat together as intended.

The good news: the food is delicious, and the noodles are typical of The Noodle House chain – very good and full of flavour, and easy to wrap around your chopsticks (or you can completely cheat with a fork).

The location is first class, the style is simple and clean, and the food selection is wide (although non-spicy fans be warned – even a mild dish will have you requesting more water). A lack of bustling, sociable people made the restaurant lack some personality, but it's rescued somewhat by the beautiful surroundings.

What? The Noodle House

Where? The Souk, Qaryat al Beri

How much? AED175 per person, sharing five starters and five mains, including drinks

Why: Stunning views, good choice of dishes

Why not? Slow service, disappointing level of menu knowledge from the staff, lack of atmosphere

Rated:

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