

We've been to a lot of brunches so we like to think that we know something about the ingredients for success: great food, lots of variety and a relaxed atmosphere



One new addition to the Abu Dhabi brunch scene that has managed to answer these requirements for us is the Olea Brunch at St Regis Saadiyat Island.

Whether sat inside or outside on the terrace the view never changes. Thanks to the immense wall of glass that makes up the back of the restaurant the wonderful azure blue waters of the Arabian Gulf are visible from every single table. Tables are dotted at a respectable distance from each other with the occasional palm or trickling fountain separating you from your fellow diners.

The buzz is low-key as the terrace begins to fill up and everyone enjoys an aperitif and the small array of nibbles laid out to greet guests. Appetites whetted, it's time to head in for the initial inspection.

Quite simply this is an epic brunch. To try everything on offer would be something of a Herculean feat so we suggest letting your stomach lead you in its own direction.

We started with a plate of delicious seafood and sushi – the freshly poached prawns were a particular highlight, firm, juicy and packed full of flavour. Next it was on to an array of baked delights – from freshly cut slices of delicious roasted vegetable pizza to moist slithers of seafood lasagne and warm focaccia.

The seafood is definitely a highlight of this brunch, although there's plenty for meat lovers, including a finger-licking slab of Asian roasted beef with teriyaki sauce, which we couldn't resist visiting for a second helping.

By this time we were approaching capacity, but on hand to keep us entertained were a troupe of circus performers. A fantastic touch to an afternoon in the sunshine, these daredevils happily whipped between tables on unicycles, juggled their way across the terrace and even managed the odd acrobatic feat (avoiding a watery end in the fountains by a hair's breadth).

In short, this was a thoroughly enjoyable way to spend an afternoon. Our bellies were full and in between the conversation we enjoyed a show – the perfect recipe in our book.

***Megan Wynes***

**What?** Olea Brunch

**Where:** St Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi

**When:** Friday 12.30pm to 4pm

**We say:** Variety and entertainment – a winning combination

**Cost:** AED 300 ++ including soft drinks and juices, AED 385 ++ including grape, grain and Spanish beverages, AED 450 ++ exclusively accompanied with free flowing bubbly. Children up to 12 years of age can enjoy Olea's brunch free of charge.

**Contact:** 02 498 8888