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THE RESTAURANT PAGE

Good Solid Cooking At Delancey Street

BY MICHAEL BAUER

Chronicle Food Editor

Diners get double the pleasure when eating at Delancey Street: the warmth of knowing they have helped people and honest food served up in such a big portions that there's enough left over for another meal.

The restaurant opened in South Beach in 1991, and all profits and tips go to support what has become the country's largest self-help residential program for people trying to rebuild their lives. All the waiters, cooks and crew are involved in the program.

At times, especially at peak periods, the kitchen can get backed up and so can the waiters. But the prices are excellent, and the atmosphere is pleasant. The rather plain interior is bolstered by generous displays of fresh produce and flowers, and by the large windows overlooking the Embarcadero.

The menu concentrates on home cooking from around the world: You can get a decent pot roast (\$9.25) on the same menu as Thai red curry prawns (\$10.95) and Caribbean grilled chicken breast (\$10.25) with mango sauce. For those who want a taste of the Midwest there's even a pancake supper (\$5.50) featuring banana pancakes with maple syrup.

Some of the best food, however, comes off the rotisserie, including a loin of pork (\$9.95), leg of lamb (\$11.75) and the beef (\$9.95), a huge slab of rare meat crusted in

black peppercorns and a natural juice sauce that moistens the huge pile of garlic mashed potatoes. The plate is also scattered with fried onion rings; grilled corn on the cob comes on a plate on the side. It's simple and totally satisfying.

Another winner is the barbecued chicken and baby back ribs combination (\$9.95), gooey with slightly blackened sauce. It's served with braised greens and a two-inch-high slice of sweet potato pie. The look is impressive and the execution of the crust and filling is superb — a dollop of whipped cream would make it a perfect dessert.

There's also a selection of pastas, including a spicy version of penne arrabbiata (\$6.95), with a healthy dose of red pepper flakes, garlic and basil.

The best items on the menu, generally, are the most straightforward; you might be disappointed with the Moroccan chicken thighs (\$9.95), but you certainly won't have a complaint with the spit-roasted rosemary chicken (\$8.50).

To begin, the spinach salad (\$4.95) is nearly perfect with its blend of feta cheese, onions, bits of bacon and Greek-style olives.

A fudge pie (\$3.50) with a Snickers topping or a hot fruit crisp (\$3.50) are splendid ways to end the meal. Then you can waddle out, doggie bag in hand, and stroll along the Embarcadero with the skyline of Oakland shimmering in the background.

■ DINING UPDATES



CHRONICLE PHOTO BY EDDIE LEDESMA/1991

All profits and tips from Delancey Street support the country's largest self-help residential program

DELANCEY STREET RESTAURANT

600 Embarcadero (at Brannan), San Francisco
(415) 512-5179

Open for lunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday; brunch from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.
Dinner 5:30-11 p.m.
Tuesday-Sunday. Beer and wine.
Reservations and credit cards accepted.

Overall ★ ★ ½

Food ★ ★ ½

Service ★ ★

Atmosphere ★ ★ ½

Prices \$\$