



by Debbie Jo Evans

I remember going to The Spaghetti Warehouse in Houston when I was a little girl. It was one of my favorite "special occasion" restaurants. Today is no different. When my birthday rolled around this month, I couldn't think of a place I'd rather celebrate than The Spaghetti Warehouse. So, I took my husband Mike, 10 month old daughter Kayla, and our 9-year old neighbor Collyn for an Italian-style celebration.

We went to The Spaghetti Warehouse on a Wednesday night around 7 p.m. and were seated promptly. The high chair passed my "Kayla test" with a wide tray, plastic bib, wet wipe, and crackers.

The Spaghetti Warehouse is in an old, renovated downtown warehouse filled with beautiful and quaint antiques. From the moment you walk in, you are transported back in time to the 18th and 19th centuries. Antique advertisements and other signs cover the walls. There's even an old trolley car which holds several tables.

The atmosphere at The Spaghetti Warehouse is cheerful and fun. The wait staff is young and filled with enthusiasm and humor. Our waiter was prompt and pleasant, joking with the kids and making nice remarks about the baby.

We started with Mozzarella Sticks (\$3.99), your basic fried cheese, and Romano Chicken Strips (\$4.49), very tasty boneless chicken breast strips lightly breaded with romano cheese and bread crumbs, then fried and served with marinara sauce. They were delicious and unique. Other appetizers include Antipasto for Two (\$6.99), a selection of imported cheeses and deli meats, Calamata olives, marinated arti-

Family Dining Review

THE SPAGHETTI WAREHOUSE

117 W. 4th Street • 476-4059 • Fax 476-4071

Sunday - Thursday 11:00 am - 10:00 pm • Friday - Saturday 11:00 am - 11:00 pm
Reservations accepted for parties of 10 or more for lunch; 20 or more for dinner.

All major credit cards accepted • No checks accepted

Overall Opinion: Excellent! • Delicious food and fun atmosphere • An Austin tradition.

choke hearts and mushrooms, Italian peppers and fresh vegetables.

Dinners are served with either Minestrone Soup or salad. The Minestrone is a Spaghetti Warehouse classic, one I've loved for years. It's also low in calories, fat, and cholesterol. You can't beat that! (Heart healthy foods such as the Minestrone are noted on the menu with a heart.) My husband substituted the hearty Beer Chili, which he enjoyed. Unlimited loaves of hot sourdough bread are also served with every meal.

For our entrees, I went with the Chicken Parmigiana, a Warehouse Specialty (\$8.99). It's a large boneless breaded chicken breast, topped with sherry beehamel and tomato sauces, and provolone and romano cheeses. A generous portion of Spaghetti is served on the side. You may substitute Fettucini Alfredo for an additional 99¢. As usual, the Chicken Parmigiana was delicious!

My husband chose the Incredible 15-Layer Baked Lasagna (\$7.29). It's wonderful; made from scratch with Italian sausage, noodles, a rich meat sauce, herbs, spices, and ricotta, romano and provolone cheeses; topped with a classic tomato sauce. Vegetable Lasagna is \$6.99.

Spaghetti is available with your choice of ten sauces including rich meat sauce (\$5.19), Primavera (\$6.79), Seafood Marinara (\$6.49), or Chicken Tetrazini (\$7.49). You can substitute Fettucini, Linguini, Ziti, or Angel Hair Pasta for 30¢ extra. Pasta can be topped with sauteed mushrooms (99¢), a hand-rolled meatball (69¢), Italian sausage link (\$1.49), or Ro-

man Chicken Strips (\$1.99). All pasta dishes include soup or salad and sourdough bread.

Briana and Collyn ordered from the Kids' Menu (10 years old and younger). They both chose Pizza Bread for \$2.49. (Add pepperoni or sausage for \$2.99.) Kids' meals come with soup, salad or applesauce, sourdough bread and a drink. I was pleasantly surprised by the extra thick french bread-style pizza which literally hung over the edges of a platter.

Other kids' choices include Spaghetti (\$2.99), Macaroni & Cheese (\$2.99), Spaghetti and Meatballs (\$3.49), Meat or Cheese Ravioli (\$3.49), Mozzarella Cheese Sticks with tomato sauce (\$3.49), and Romano Chicken Strips (\$3.99).

Even though I didn't finish my dinner (it was great the next day), I still felt I needed dessert. (After all, it was my birthday!) I chose the Tiramisu (\$2.99), a traditional coffee flavored Italian dessert with Lady Finger sponge cake, rum flavored cream filling, and cappuccino cream icing, topped with chocolate syrup. To my disappointment, however, they were all out. I settled for a delicious Turtle Cheese Cake, topped with caramel sauce. It was wonderful. The kids chose the "Kid's Dessert," vanilla ice cream topped with chocolate sauce for 39¢. If you're up for it, the Spaghetti Warehouse does offer a birthday cake complete with a singing waitstaff.

After dinner, my husband took the kids on a tour of the eclectic restaurant and passed out quarters for the games. Look out for the game where you use buttons to guide a mechanical arm and claws to select a prize (namely candy) - it was filled with ants! Good thing Collyn won a toy instead of candy.

Since the restaurant is downtown, prepare to either hunt for a parking meter spot and walk, or you can park across the street from the restaurant for \$3.

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