# Where to Dine

There's nothing quite like an energetic family vacation to build an appetite, and sooner or later we'll all have to make the inevitable Disney dining decisions: where, when, and how much?

The expanded Disneyland Resort has something for everyone: a respectable lineup that can easily meet your needs for the duration of the typical visit. Until recently, dining options were pretty sparse—limited to those inside Disneyland and some old standbys at the Disneyland Hotel. But Disney's big expansion upped the ante with national theme/concept restaurants along Downtown Disney and newly competitive dining at the resort hotels. We've included the best of the field in this chapter as well as several notable choices in surrounding Orange County for those with a hankering to explore.

All our listed restaurants are categorized by price as follows: *Expensive* = over \$45 per person (for an appetizer, main course, dessert, and nonalcoholic beverage, at **dinner**), *Moderate* = between \$19 and \$45, and *Inexpensive* = under \$19. Some general rules of thumb for keeping your food expenditures down are:

- Remember that even some of the priciest spots are a lot more affordable at lunch; most of our listings include lunch prices for comparison.
- Does your hotel rate include breakfast? If so, take full advantage (perhaps slip a piece of fruit into your pocket for later).
- Does your hotel room have a fridge or kitchenette? Remember this when ordering in restaurants, particularly those with large portions—tonight's leftovers could be tomorrow's lunch.
- Remember to pack some quick pick-me-ups—granola bars, candy, bottled water, fresh fruit, etc. That way, your dining budget won't get eaten away by cotton candy, ice cream bars, and high-calorie fast food inside the theme parks.

For locations of the restaurants listed below, see the maps in chapter 4, "Where to Stay," and chapter 6, "What to See & Do at the Disneyland Resort."

# 1 Inside the Theme Parks

One thing's for sure at the Disneyland Resort—you'll go broke before you go hungry. There's food everywhere, from more than a dozen sit-down restaurants and cafeterias inside the two parks to eight at the three Resort hotels and eight more in Downtown Disney (see full listings, below)—and that isn't even counting snack carts, casual walk-up stands, and packaged-food shops. Overall, even though the food at the Disneyland Resort has improved substantially over the past couple of years, we have to admit that most snack concessions inside Disneyland and California Adventure are overrated, overcrowded, *and* definitely overpriced, redeeming themselves only with the convenience of being at hand whenever and wherever your blood sugar takes a dive. Finally, be aware that both parks have gone the mandatory combo route—in other words, you're going to get (and pay for) fries with that burger, like it or not, but the overpriced soft drink is extra.

The following is a thumbnail sketch of some of our favorite (and not-so-favorite) in-park dining options, all of which are family-friendly. Also keep in mind that it's easy to hop the monorail or shuttle outside the parks, where you can choose from Downtown Disney's establishments, hotel restaurants, or even an affordable coffee shop across the street. As long as you retain your admission ticket and get your hand stamped you can enter and exit the parks as much as you wish.

# DISNEYLAND DINING ADVENTURELAND

With only one counter-service restaurant, a fruit stand, and a juice bar, pickings are a little slim in Adventureland. **Bengal Barbeque** offers marinated beef, chicken, bacon, asparagus, and veggie skewers ranging in price from \$5 to \$10. Though the skewers are tasty, the portions are small and not a good value for the money. If you find yourself hungry in Adventureland, you'll find a much better

# Tips Call Ahead

If you plan on dining at any of the Disneyland Resort restaurants for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, we strongly suggest you make a reservation by calling **© 714/781-DINE**. You could save your family up to an hour's wait.

# Tips The Fruit of All Things

As a welcome relief to those ubiquitous salty, sugary junk-food stands, both Disneyland and California Adventure parks offer several bastions of healthy snacking—rustic wooden fruit stands teeming with a variety of quality seasonal fresh fruit and juices that sell for a fraction of the price you'd pay for a hot dog, fries, and Coke. Ask a Disney "Cast Member" (any employee) for the nearest stand.

selection of food in nearby New Orleans Square, Frontierland, or on Main Street.

# **CRITTER COUNTRY**

Even with the tremendous popularity of Splash Mountain and the new Winnie the Pooh ride, the restaurants in Critter Country remain good bets for avoiding the lunch and dinner rush. The main counter-service venue in Critter Country is the **Hungry Bear Restaurant**, which serves large portions of burgers, grilled chicken breasts, fried chicken tenders, and Caesar salads. It offers a spacious open deck with a great view of the New Orleans Square and Frontierland river activity. Expect to pay \$5 to \$9 for a sandwich, fries, and drink. Children's meals featuring chicken tender strips are available for about \$4. *Tip:* The **Harbour Galley**, near the dock of the *Columbia*, serves McDonald's french fries.

#### **FANTASYLAND**

Fantasyland offers the most rides of any of the lands yet the fewest places to eat. With the exception of the **Village Haus** counter-service restaurant, most of the food service in Fantasyland is supplied by street vendors. Add the daylong congestion to the scenario, and Fantasyland ties with Mickey's Toontown as the best place in the park not to eat. If you are hungry, it's much easier to troop over to Frontierland, New Orleans Square, or even back to Main Street than to grab a bite in Fantasyland. Plus, the Village Haus, the only full-scale eatery in Fantasyland, specializes in burgers, pizza, and the like—nothing distinctive, different, or worth the hassle.

#### FRONTIERLAND

One of our favorite restaurants in the park is **Rancho del Zocalo Restaurante.** Good Mexican fare is available as you would expect,

but the Rancho also serves the best barbecue chicken, ribs, and beef in the park. The restaurant is located across from the entrance of Big Thunder Mountain. Prices are in the \$7 to \$15 range.

We also like the **River Belle Terrace** (roast chicken, pasta, salad). With prices ranging from \$8 to \$14 per person for a meal and a drink, all four Frontierland eateries are somewhat more expensive than Disney's fast-food burgers and hot dogs. Children's meals, running about \$5, are available at all four restaurants. *Tip:* The Golden Horseshoe Stage cafe goes virtually unnoticed by the lunch crowd between shows.

# **NEW ORLEANS SQUARE**

The restaurants in New Orleans Square impart a special realism to the setting. The Blue Bayou, the only full-service restaurant in the park, is to the left of the Pirates of the Caribbean exit. With its waterside, bayou-at-dusk setting, the Blue Bayou offers a classic New Orleans atmosphere equaled by few restaurants anywhere, complete with lush, vine-wrapped ironwork, chirping crickets, and (nonalcoholic) mint juleps. Its misty, sunless atmosphere comes from being literally inside the Pirates of the Caribbean ride, so boatloads of pirate-bound riders drift subtly by during your meal. The menu features some Creole and Cajun selections as well as a longtime favorite among visitors, the Monte Cristo sandwich. Prices range from \$12 to \$18 for lunch, and from \$23 to \$37 for dinner. Reservations are generally required and should be made at the door of the restaurant as soon as possible after you enter the park. You can make priority seatings up to 30 days in advance by calling @ 714/ 956-6425.

Ethnic menu diversification has also improved selections at the French Market counter-service restaurant. Jambalaya and Cajun

# Tips Sweet Treats

Anyone with a sweet tooth won't want to miss Main Street's Candy Kitchen, purveyor of old-style treats like caramel apples, candy ribbons, and chocolate nonpareils. The exhibition kitchen's enormous copper vats and marble worktables are put to use throughout the day, offering a glimpse into how candy canes are twisted into barber-shop-pole perfection or how chocolate fudge gets its velvety texture.

chicken breast sandwiches have been added to a lineup that includes angel hair pasta, fried chicken, and beef stew. Prices run in the \$8 to \$10 range, with children's fried chicken or fettuccine meals available for about \$5. More limited fare is available at the Royal Street Veranda, which serves clam chowder in a bread bowl for \$5.

Possibly the most overlooked counter-service restaurant in the park is **La Petite Patisserie.** Consisting of only two modest serving windows midblock on Royal Street, La Petite Patisserie serves good desserts and coffee to the few guests who stumble upon it.

### **TOMORROWLAND**

The **Redd Rocket's Pizza Port** in the old Mission to Mars building near the entrance to Space Mountain serves towering platters of Italian salads, pastas, and thick-crust pizza that taste better than expected and fill the bill for hungry families. The ancient Tomorrowland Terrace is now **Club Buzz**, featuring burgers, salads, chicken nuggets, and a kid's show, "Calling All Space Scout . . . A Buzz Lightyear Adventure." Little ones will definitely enjoy it, but most adults will find it grating, especially as an accompaniment to dining. See the daily entertainment schedule in the park handout map for show times.

# DISNEY'S CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE DINING A BUG'S LAND

Picnic-style grub (get it?) is sold at the **Bountiful Valley Farmer's Market**, everything from roasted turkey legs served with coleslaw and cornbread to PB&Js, barbecue chicken, beef brisket sandwiches, and chocolate mud. Few visitors realize that food is sold here, so the lines are rarely long.

### **GOLDEN STATE**

The very upscale **Vineyard Room** at the Golden Vine Winery serves haute California cuisine—multicourse meals accompanied by wines selected specifically to go with each course. The Mission-style design of the restaurant and the relative tranquility of the setting transport you, at least mentally, out of the theme park for the duration of your meal. Three- and four-course meals range from \$43 to \$85. The adjacent **Wine County Trattoria** offers a less formal (and less expensive) Italian dining option for lunch and dinner—lasagna, pastas, grilled sandwiches, salads, and such—and terrace seating.

For an interactive change of pace, head to Pacific Wharf for a trio of edible attractions reminiscent of grade-school field trips to

# ips Disney Dining Tips

CHAPTER 5 · WHERE TO DINE

If you are tired of fighting crowds and eating at odd times, exit the park for lunch or dinner at one of many Downtown Disney restaurants, or for a little relaxation and decompression at one of its watering holes. The coming and going isn't nearly as time-consuming as it appears, and you will probably be able to get a better meal with faster service in a more relaxed atmosphere. The trip over and back takes very little time, and the restaurants are often slack, particularly at lunch.

The Disneyland Resort has a park rule against bringing your own food and drink but will typically overlook a few snacks and bottled water. And in case you're wondering, the security people checking purses, packs, and the like at the park entrances won't hassle you or confiscate your goodies if they discover you're bringing in food—they've got bigger fish to fry.

Several park eateries serve cold deli sandwiches. Consider buying a cold lunch before 11am when there's no line and then carry your food (or put it in a locker) until you're ready to eat.

name-brand factories. At the demonstration kitchens for **Boudin Sourdough Bakery, Mission Tortilla Factory,** and **Lucky Fortune Cookery,** you can follow up with a traditional snack featuring the products you saw being made: soup in a Boudin sourdough bowl, tacos and burritos on Mission tortillas, or Chinese rice bowls and egg rolls followed by a fresh fortune cookie.

Two other Pacific Wharf recommendations are Cocina Cucamonga Mexican Grill, which serves pretty good carne asada, carnitas, and tacos, and the Pacific Wharf Café, specializing in corn or clam chowder bread bowls as well as designer salads.

# HOLLYWOOD PICTURES BACKLOT

Our only two Backlot recommendations are **Hollywood and Dine**, a food court serving Asian favorites and decent deli sandwiches on ciabatta bread, and **Award Wieners**, where you can get a pretty good sausage dog (but only as a "combo" and good luck finding a free table).

Be forewarned that most patrons in the food lines are buying for their whole family or group; the 10 people in line ahead of you will require the serving of 30 to 40 meals, not just 10.

Park restaurants are most crowded between 11:30am and 2:30pm. Good counter-service restaurants frequently overlooked at Disneyland Park include the Rancho del Zocalo on the front side of Big Thunder and the Plaza Inn or Carnation Cafe on Main Street.

Disney's California Adventure counter-service restaurants in the Pacific Wharf and Bountiful Valley Farm theme areas of the Golden State district are our picks for good food and tolerable lines. Also check out Hollywood and Dine in the Hollywood Pictures Backlot; it's a food court with good variety, and it's often overlooked by the lunch crowd.

Eat a full breakfast before arriving—you don't want to waste early morning touring time eating an overpriced breakfast at the park.

Reservations for full-service restaurants can be made at the door of the restaurant any time after park opening.

## **PARADISE PIER**

**Ariel's Grotto** is one of the park's three full-service restaurants. Specializing in local seafood preparations, it overlooks Paradise Bay and the midway rides of Paradise Pier on the opposite shore. Meals range from \$7 to \$11. In addition to the restaurant, there's a cozy bar that also offers a knockout view of Paradise Pier. Though we're not particularly high on the Paradise Pier attractions, we must admit that they create a stunning nighttime vista as seen from the Avalon Cove restaurant or bar. *Tip:* There's a good chance that your kids will meet the Little Mermaid here.

Along the Paradise Pier boardwalk (to the right of the Mulholland Madness roller coaster), **Corn Dog Castle** is home to this traditional beach snack; they serve little else, and the freshly deep-fried dogs are big enough for two to share. You'll also find a full-service **McDonald's** counter to the left of the Mulholland Madness roller coaster (but there's no indoor seating), as well as **Pizza Oom Mow Mow**, a surf-themed pizzeria.

52

# Fun Fact Cocktails with Mickey?

Disneyland has been known for years as a teetotaler's paradise, a family destination devoid of alcoholic beverages. Not any more.

Though you'll certainly not be seeing folks traipsing down Main Street clutching a brown-bagged fifth (in fact, alcohol is still not available in any of the public areas of Disneyland), Downtown Disney features independently operated restaurants and clubs, many of which feature impressively stocked bars, wine cellars, and inventive cocktail menus. The Vineyard Room restaurant within California Adventure also serves wine and beer.

# THE REST OF THE RESORT: DOWNTOWN DISNEY & THE DISNEY HOTELS EXPENSIVE

Granville's Steak House & STEAKHOUSE Located deep inside the Disneyland Hotel tower, this classic steakhouse specializes in thick-cut steaks and seafood in a men's club-style ambience replete with dark wood paneling, beveled glass, richly colored carpeting, and scenic paintings depicting the American Southwest. It's perfectly suited for meat-lovers with big appetites and a penchant for fine wines. Dinner starts with a loaf of sourdough bread on a cutting board, followed by a waitperson who brings a small display of the various cuts of beef available—porterhouse, filet mignon, New York—to your table and a chart to determine your particular taste for doneness. Although the prices are expensive—a meal for two will set you back about \$150—the tender cuts are very generous, as are the classic steakhouse sides such as baked potatoes, creamed spinach, and Caesar salad. Granville's is also one of the few places where you can get a brief respite from the Disney theme; as such, it's not recommended for children. Dress is casual, though you may feel a bit out of place in your Mickey T-shirt.

1150 W. Cerritos Ave. (in the Disneyland Hotel). © 714/956-6755; reservations 714/956-6755. www.disneyland.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$24–\$31. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 5–10pm.

Napa Rose AAA CALIFORNIAN Situated inside the upscale Grand Californian Hotel, Napa Rose is the first really serious (read: on foodie radar) restaurant at the Disneyland Resort. Its warm and

light dining room mirrors the Arts and Crafts style of the hotel, down to Frank Lloyd Wright stained-glass windows and Craftsmaninspired seating throughout the restaurant and adjoining lounge. Executive chef Andrew Sutton was lured away from the Napa Valley's chic Auberge du Soleil, bringing with him a wine-country sensibility and passion for fresh California ingredients and inventive preparations. You can see him busy in the impressive open exhibition kitchen, showcasing specialty items like Sierra golden trout, artisan cheeses from Humboldt County and the Gold Country, and the Sonoma rabbit in Sutton's signature braised mushroom-rabbit tart. The tantalizing "Seven Sparkling Sins" starter platter (for two) features jewel-like portions of *foie gras*, caviar, oysters, lobster, and other delicacies; the same attention to detail is evident in seasonally composed main-course standouts like grilled yellowtail with tangerine-basil fruit salsa atop savory couscous, or free-range veal osso buco in rich bacon-forest-mushroom ragout. Leave room for dessert, to at least share one of pastry chef Jorge Sotelo's creative treats—our favorites are Sonoma goat-cheese flan with Riesling-soaked tropical fruit, and chocolate crepes with house-made caramelized-banana ice cream. Napa Rose boasts an impressive and balanced wine list, with 45 by-the-glass choices, and outdoor seating is arranged around a rustic fire pit, gazing out across a landscaped arroyo toward California Adventure's distinctive Grizzly Peak.

1600 S. Disneyland Dr. (in Disney's Grand Californian Hotel). © 714/300-7170. www.disneyland.com. Reservations strongly recommended. Main courses \$12–\$16 lunch, \$19–\$30 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm.

Yamabuki A JAPANESE Often ignored by all but their thriving clientele of Asian tourists and business folk—plus in-the-know expense-account suits from surrounding Orange County—Yamabuki has been tucked away for years in the low-profile former Pacific Hotel (now reinvented as Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel). With an upscale and quietly traditional Japanese aesthetic, Yamabuki—the name of a Japanese rose—has a rich interior of deep-red lacquer,

# Tips Cut to the Food

At Napa Rose you can skip all the pomp and circumstance of a full sit-down meal by dining at the restaurant's lounge, which offers full menu service.

delicate porcelain vases, discreet teak shutters, and translucent rice-paper screens that together impart a sense of very un-Disney nobility. The staff is elegantly kimono-clad—even at lunch, when the fare includes casual bento boxes, lunch specials, and sushi/sashimi selections. At dinner, tradition demands a languorous procession of courses, from refreshing seafood starters and steaming noodle bowls to grilled teriyaki meats or table-cooked specialties like sukiyaki or *shabu shabu*. The menu, in Japanese and English, rates each dish as "contemporary," "traditional," or "very traditional," presenting the opportunity to try unusual squid, soybean, and pickled-root dishes common in the Far East. If you're willing to spend the time—and the money—Yamabuki is a cultural trip across the globe.

1717 S. Disneyland Dr. (in Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel). © 714/239-5683; reservations 714/956-6755. www.disneyland.com. Reservations recommended at dinner. Main courses \$7.50–\$11 lunch, \$14–\$30 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm, daily 5:30–10pm.

#### **MODERATE**

Downstairs, the Uva Bar (*uva* means "grape" in Spanish) is a casual tapas bar offering 40 different wines by the glass in a pleasing outdoor pavilion setting. The affordable menu features the same pan-Mediterranean influence, even offering many items from the Catal menu; standouts include cabernet-braised short ribs atop horseradish mashed potatoes, marinated olives and cured Spanish ham, and Andalusian gazpacho with rock shrimp.

1580 Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/774-4442. Reservations recommended Sun—Thurs, not accepted Fri–Sat (Catal); not accepted for Uva Bar. Main courses \$14–\$24, tapas \$5–\$8. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon—Thurs 11am—11pm, Fri–Sun 11am—midnight.

Goofy's Kitchen ← Rids AMERICAN Your younger kids will never forgive you if they miss an opportunity to dine with their favorite Disney characters at this colorful, lively restaurant inside the Disneyland Hotel. Known for its entertainment and wacky and offcenter Toontown-esque decor, Goofy's Kitchen features tableside visits by costumed Disney characters from the classic era (Snow White, Mickey Mouse) to the new generation (Pocahontas, Buzz Lightyear), who thrill the youngsters with miniperformances, autograph signing, and up-close-and-personal encounters. Meals are buffet style and offer an adequate selection of crowd pleasers and reliable standbys from bacon and eggs at breakfast to fried chicken, Caesar salad, deli sandwiches, and Italian pastas at lunch and dinner. This place isn't really about the food, though, and is definitely not for kidless grown-ups (unless you're trying to make up for a deprived childhood). You'll also want to remember a camera for capturing the family's "candid" encounters.

1150 Magic Way (inside the Disneyland Hotel). © 714/956-6755. www.disneyland. com. Reservations recommended. Buffet prices (child/adult): \$10/\$17 breakfast, \$10/\$18 lunch, \$10/\$27 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–9pm.

**House of Blues** AMERICAN/SOUTHERN For years fans have been comparing the House of Blues to Disneyland, so this celeb-backed restaurant/nightclub fits right into the Disney compound. Locations in Las Vegas, L.A., Orlando, and so forth, all sport a calculated backwoods-bayou-meets-Country-Bear-Jamboree appearance that fits right into the Disneyfied world. The Anaheim HOB follows the formula, filled with made-to-look-old found objects, amateur paintings, uneven wood floors, seemingly decayed chandeliers, and a country-casual attitude. The restaurant features Delta-inspired stick-to-your-ribs cuisine like Louisiana crawfish cakes, Creole seafood jambalaya, cornmeal-crusted catfish, baby back ribs glazed with Jack Daniel's sauce, and spicy Cajun meatloaf—plus some out-of-place Cal-lite stragglers like seared ahi and pesto pasta. Sunday's Gospel Brunch is an advance-ticket event of hand-clapping, foot-stomping proportions, and the adjacent Company Store offers logo ware interspersed with selected pieces of folk art. HOB's state-of-the-art Music Hall is a welcome addition to the local music scene (advance tickets are highly recommended for bigname bookings; see "Nightlife" in section 3, "Downtown Disney," in chapter 6, "What to See & Do at the Disneyland Resort").

1530 S. Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/778-2583. www.hob.com. Reservations not accepted for restaurant (tickets required for performance). Main courses \$8–\$17. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am—midnight (open from 10am Sun).

Naples Ristorante e Pizzeria € ITALIAN The eye-catching entrance of this better-than-expected Italian concept eatery features a larger-than-life harlequin with an impish expression, wielding a pizza and beckoning you to step inside. Designed to be sophisticated enough for discerning palates while still appropriate for casual families, Naples features a colorful, high-ceilinged dining room filled with padded love seats and comfy chairs. Busy chefs work the white-tiled open kitchen's wood-burning oven while a floor-toceiling cherry-wood bar anchors the other side of the room. Naples also boasts some of the most scenic outdoor seating in Downtown Disney—request a patio table when reserving. At dinner, you can also opt for the quieter ambience of the upstairs dining room. Piedmontese executive chef Corrado Gionatti is a master of the thincrust Neapolitan pizza, and uses an appropriately light hand saucing the menu's selection of pastas. Salads, antipasti, and calzone round out the menu; everything is very good, and—be forewarned portions are quite large.

1550 Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/776-6200. Reservations strongly recommended. Main courses \$11–\$16. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm.

Rainforest Cafe & INTERNATIONAL Designed to suggest ancient temple ruins in an overgrown Central American jungle, this national chain favorite successfully combines entertainment, retail, and family-friendly dining in one fantasy setting. There are cascading waterfalls inside and out, a canopy of lush vegetation, simulated tropical mists, and even a troupe of colorful parrots beckoning shoppers into the "Retail Village." Once seated, diners choose from an amalgam of wildly flavored dishes inspired by Caribbean, Polynesian, Latin, Asian, and Mediterranean cuisines. Masquerading under exotic-sounding names like "Jungle Safari Soup" (a meaty version of minestrone) and "Mojo Bones" (barbecue pork ribs), the food is really fairly familiar: a translated sampling includes Cobb

# Tips Attention Sports Fans

Sports fans may prefer to dine at the ESPN Zone in Downtown Disney, 1545 Disneyland Dr. (© 714/300-ESPN; www. espnzone.com). More than 175 TV monitors allow you to watch just about every current sporting event in the U.S. while dining on American grill food and pub food.

5

salad, pita sandwiches, potstickers, shrimp-studded pasta, and charbroiled chicken. Fresh fruit smoothies and tropical specialty cocktails are offered, as well as a best-shared dessert called "Giant Chocolate Volcano." After your meal, you can browse through logo items, environmentally educational toys and games, stuffed jungle animals and puppets, straw safari hats, and other themed souvenirs in the lobby store. There's a children's menu, and the Rainforest Cafe is one of the few Downtown Disney eateries to have full breakfast service.

1515 S. Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/772-0413. www.rainforest cafe.com. Reservations recommended for peak mealtimes. Main courses \$9–\$21. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 7am–11pm, Fri–Sat 7am–midnight.

Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen ← CAJUN-CREOLE If you always thought Disneyland's New Orleans Square was just like the real thing, wait till you see this authentically Southern concept restaurant at Downtown Disney. Ralph Brennan, of the New Orleans food dynasty responsible for NOLA landmarks like Commander's Palace and a trio of Big Easy hotspots, commissioned a handful of New Orleans artists to create the handcrafted furnishings that give the Jazz Kitchen its believable French Quarter ambience. Lacy wrought-iron grillwork, cascading ferns, and trickling stone fountains enhance three separate dining choices: The upstairs Carnival Club is an elegant dining salon with silk-draped chandeliers and terrace dining that overlooks the "street scene" below; casual Flambeaux is downstairs, where a bead-encrusted grand piano hints at the nightly live jazz that sizzles in this room (see "Nightlife" in chapter 6, "What to See & Do at the Disneyland Resort"); and the Creole Cafe is a quick stop for necessities like muffuletta or beignets. Expect traditional Cajun-Creole fare with heavy-handed seasonings and rich, heart-stopping sauces—now that's authentically New Orleans.

1590 S. Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/776-5200. www.rbjazz kitchen.com. Reservations strongly recommended. Main courses \$16–\$25 (Cafe items \$4–\$8). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–3pm and 5–11pm.

# **INEXPENSIVE TO MODERATE**

La Brea Bakery Express & Cafe BAKERY/MEDITERRANEAN Fresh from the ovens of L.A.'s now-nationally-known artisan bakery, this La Brea Bakery duo occupies a coveted position at the beginning of Downtown Disney, right across from the theme parks' ticket kiosks. Each morning still-groggy early-bird parkgoers stumble from

the parking-lot tram and head straight to La Brea's cafeteria-style Express for a caffeinated pick-me-up or a meal to start the day—light breakfast items are served in addition to creator Nancy Silverton's irresistible breads and pastries. The outdoor patio is comfortably outfitted with woven bistro chairs (plus heat lamps for brisk mornings) and provides a relaxing setting before braving the Disney throngs. Throughout the day, folks stop in for a lunch of sandwiches, filled brioche, or herb-laden focaccia—the kids' menu offers less-grown-up choices like grilled cheese and PB&J.

Beginning at lunchtime, the next-door Cafe joins the team with sit-down meals, complete with wine-by-the-glass selections. Sporting an airy, warm-wood gallery-like setting, the small bistro also features a few outdoor tables alongside the Downtown Disney footpath. Entrees feature the Mediterranean flavors popularized at Silverton's (with husband Mark Peel) acclaimed Campanile restaurant and range from the lighter side (seared salmon or ahi) to a hearty lamb/sirloin/sausage stew atop creamy polenta.

1556 Disneyland Dr. (at Downtown Disney). © 714/490-0233. www.labreabakery.com. Reservations recommended for Cafe. Light fare under \$5 (Express), main courses \$10–\$20 (Cafe). AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 8am–11pm (Express), 11am–11pm (Cafe).

# 2 Elsewhere in Orange County

#### **EXPENSIVE**

Roy's of Newport Beach & HAWAIIAN REGIONAL/PACIFIC RIM Any foodie who's been to Hawaii in the past decade knows the name Roy Yamaguchi, father of Hawaiian Regional Cuisine (HRC) and the islands' answer to Wolfgang Puck. Roy's empire expanded to Southern California in 1999, with the opening of this dinner-only restaurant on the fringe of Fashion Island shopping center. Yamaguchi developed a menu that represents his ground-breaking East/West/Polynesian cuisine but can be reliably executed by chefs in far-flung kitchens. Most of each night's specials are fresh Pacific fish, given the patented HRC touch with Japanese, Thai, and even Latin accents. Signature dishes include island-style ahi poke, spicy Mongolian-glazed rack of lamb, and blackened yellowfin tuna in soy-mustard-butter sauce. The bar whips up "vacation" cocktails in tropical colors, and there's a to-die-for chocolate soufflé dessert.

453 Newport Center Dr., Fashion Island. © 949/640-ROYS. Reservations suggested. Main courses \$16–\$29. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs and Sun 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm.



# Just the Two of Us . . .

As parents know only too well, it's sometimes a challenge to find family-friendly dining—especially when vacationing in unfamiliar territory. But in Anaheim, where Disneybound families make up a large percentage of all visitors, nearly every restaurant offers kid appeal and is well versed in accommodating youngsters of all ages in even the most elegant eateries.

But what are the options for child-free travelers or parents who stash the kids with in-hotel child care for a night out? The challenge might be where to find an atmosphere conducive to romance; here are a few sure-fire suggestions for kindling sparks over a quiet dinner alone.

- Even though well-behaved kids are often spotted nibbling foie gras with the best of them, Napa Rose (p. 52) has architectural nuances and culinary details best appreciated by adults, who can relax and get reacquainted at comfortably private tables looking out striking picture windows.
- With a serene Far Eastern ambience, Yamabuki (p. 53) is a quiet temple of grown-up style and fine Japanese food—and remember, many delicacies that elicit upturned noses in children have alluring, almost aphrodisiac qualities.
- At The White House (below), a stately historic mansion's rooms provide an intimate setting for dinner, and twinkling candles and outdoor Tivoli lights enhance the mood.
- The steep prices at Granville's Steak House (p. 52) usually keep the families at bay. The sedate dark-wood ambience and excellent selection of wines provide a rare romantic retreat.

The White House € ITALIAN/FRENCH Once surrounded by orange groves, this stately 1909 Colonial-style mansion now sits on a wide industrial street just 5 minutes from Disneyland. It's set nicely back, though, framed by stately lawns and gardens, and exudes gentility and nostalgia. The huge home is nicely restored

inside and out; the restaurant opened in 1981, when it was named after its stylistic cousin in Washington—the White House. Owner Bruno Serato maintains this architectural treasure, serving Northern Italian cuisine—with a French accent—in elegant white-on-white rooms on the main and second floors. Dinner courses are named for fashion giants (Versace whitefish, Prada rack of lamb) and sometimes arrive on oddly shaped platters that work better as artwork than dishware. But the chefs apply just the right amount of sauce to pastas both formal (gnocchi in velvety Gorgonzola sauce) and rustic (linguini with chunky garlic, roasted peppers, and olives). Prices tend to reflect the suited-expense-account and well-heeled-retiree crowd, but lunch prices (including a terrific prix-fixe bargain) deliver the same bang for fewer bucks.

887 Anaheim Blvd. (north of Ball Rd.), Anaheim. © 714/772-1381. www.anaheim whitehouse.com. Reservations recommended at dinner. Main courses \$10–\$16 lunch, \$18–\$28 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm, Sat–Sun 5–10pm.

# **MODERATE**

**Citrus City Grille** \*\*C CALIFORNIAN Though housed in Orange's second-oldest brick building, this sophisticated crowdpleaser is furnished without an antique in sight, paying homage to the town's agricultural (citrus) legacy with a bold industrial chic. World-inspired appetizers range from Hawaiian-style ahi poke to Southeast Asian coconut shrimp tempura accented with spiced apricots. Main courses come from the Mediterranean (pasta and risotto), Mexico (carne asada with avocado-corn relish), the American South (authentic Louisiana gumbo), and your mom's kitchen (meatloaf smothered in gravy and fried onions). Gleaming bar shelves house myriad bottles for the extensive Martini menu, and outdoor foyer tables are nicely protected from the street.

122 N. Glassell St. (½ block north of Chapman), Orange. © 714/639-9600. www. citruscitygrille.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$13 lunch, \$12–\$24 dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–3pm and 5–10pm.

**Crab Cooker** SEAFOOD Since 1951, folks in search of fresh, well-prepared seafood have headed to this bright-red former bank building. Also a fish market, the Crab Cooker has a casual atmosphere of humble wooden tables, uncomplicated smoked and grilled preparations, and meticulously selected fresh fare. The place is especially proud of its Maryland crab cakes; clams and oysters are also part of the repertoire.

6

2200 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach. © 949/673-0100. www.crabcooker.com. Dinner main courses \$10–\$25; lunch \$8–\$19. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10pm.

# **INEXPENSIVE**

Felix Continental Cafe & CUBAN/SPANISH If you like the re-created Disneyland Main Street, you'll love the historic 1886 town square in the city of Orange, on view from the cozy sidewalk tables outside the Felix Continental Cafe. Dining on traditional Cuban specialties (such as citrus-marinated chicken, black beans and rice, and fried plantains) and watching traffic spin around the magnificent fountain and rose bushes of the plaza evokes old Havana or Madrid rather than the cookie-cutter Orange County communities just blocks away. The food receives praise from restaurant reviewers and loyal locals alike.

36 Plaza Sq. (at the corner of Chapman and Glassell), Orange. © 714/633-5842. Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses \$6–\$14. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm, Sat–Sun 8am–10pm.