



GOURMET BUFFET

It was approaching lunchtime and we didn't have that long before our next meeting, so my colleague suggested we pop into 'Gourmet Buffet' on King Street for something quick and easy.

"Come on, Harry, it's Chinese. All you can eat for a fixed price!"

Nothing prepared me for the great smell of Chinese food as we passed through the doors into this bright and clean establishment. We were quickly seated before I could begin to take stock of where we were. It was a remarkable place, the like of which I've never been in before, but I have since discovered that it is one of a restaurant chain and there are six others in London.

We were presented with a fork and spoon placed upon a napkin. My colleague had to specially ask for chopsticks but I

decided to stick with the recommended tools. Whilst I can handle chopsticks tolerably well, they can slow you down. We were invited to help ourselves from the counter in the centre of the room and asked what we would like to drink. Just coke for me in the middle of the day but beers, wines and cocktails, both alcoholic and non alcoholic were all on offer.

At the counter there were soups, starters and main courses, all clearly labelled and plenty to choose from. Alongside the food labels were other interesting notices and warnings. Lunch, all you can eat for £5.50! Do not overfill your plate! Avoid wastage! Management reserves the right to charge for any excessive food left on your plate!



'Gourmet Buffet' on King Street

There is obviously temptation to take too much. I took a modest serving of every starter and returned to my seat. It was then that I noticed another trade. People were coming in and filling up takeaway containers. There had been another sign I hadn't fully appreciated the meaning of when I had been up at the counter - do not overfill cartons! £3.00 for a small container, £3.90 for a large one.

This was quite a busy place. Added to the steady stream of takeaway customers were the seated; office workers, shoppers, friends and mums with children. Not deterred by self consciousness, and marvelling at how much others seemed to be eating, we got up to choose our main

course. I took a modest serving of every main course and returned to my seat. Our table had been efficiently cleared whilst we had been away and the waiter asked if we would like another drink. I glanced at my watch and my colleague lay down his chopsticks and reached for the fork and spoon on a napkin.

Everything I tasted was pretty good. Not the best Chinese food I've ever tasted but perfectly good staple favourites. However, this place is undeniably great value for money, so much so that I don't know how they do it! I was concerned that some of the dishes not in sauces would dry out and become disappointingly chewy. Nothing of mine was too chewy, so I assume they remove and replenish as necessary. However, should you be worried about that, you could always try the Teppanyakki. For Teppanyakki, you are invited to choose your fresh ingredients, from a separate counter in the restaurant, and the chef will cook them up for you.

We were pretty full, but still anxious to test the full menu. Unfortunately, it would cost me £2.00 to have an ice cream so we decided that it was probably best to leave. Eat all you can for dinner is £8.90 and they throw in a dessert.

by Harry Smith

Gourmet Buffet Ratings

Category:

Buffet Service Chinese Restaurant and Take Away

Ambience:

Focus seems to be the food and its consumption rather than atmosphere

Service:

Efficient and unobtrusive

Food Quality:

Perfectly acceptable

Value for Money:

Terrific

Overall Rating:

Great if you are limited on time (and money) and hungry!

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www.gourmetbuffet.co.uk