

# Indulging at the Inbal

*Having a sumptuous Shabbat lunch at a fine hotel is an exquisitely extravagant way to spend a summer afternoon*

• By RUTH BELOFF

On these hot summer days, when it's a pleasure to dine in an air-conditioned space rather than slaving over a hot stove or blech, having Shabbat lunch at a posh hotel is a very cool idea.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, a friend and I enjoyed a sumptuous buffet lunch at the five-star Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem. With a fabulous array of beautifully displayed strictly kosher food to choose from, we made our way through a delectable meal.

Lunch is served in the hotel restaurant on the main floor, called the Carmel. Each table was set with a white tablecloth, white linen napkins and a small vase with two fresh roses and a sprig of baby's breath.

For starters, we picked and chose from among the wide range of salads and appetizers. There was a slew of slaws, mixed salads and fresh-cut vegetables, as well as platters of cold cuts. For fish lovers, there was a whole assortment of smoked salmon, herring and other types of marine marinades. To my delight, there was a large platter of chopped liver, which was just what I was in the mood for.

For the main course, the selection was wide and varied. Alluring chafing dishes offered such choices as braised beef, goulash, roast chicken, Moroccan fish and, of course, cholent. There was also a section where a chef stood ready to slice pieces of chicken, beef and perhaps duck.

For side dishes, one could sample the rice, couscous, roasted potatoes and grilled vegetables, as well as several others that I'm sure I have neglected to mention.

There were also dishes designed for children, namely spaghetti, hot dogs and hamburgers.

One of the nice things about a Shabbat buffet lunch is that you can sit and take your time. No one is rushing you out, and people are not waiting in line to take your table, so you can take all the time in the world to sit and savor. Well, lunch is served from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., so you don't really have all the time in the world, but because the atmosphere is so relaxing, it feels like it.

This allows you to take a breather



before you head over to the dessert counters. And at the Inbal, you don't want to miss the desserts because the hotel's head chef, Moti Buchbut, is a master pastry artist. And that's the real beauty of a buffet for someone with a sweet tooth: an entire array of dessert delights is laid out before you, and you can take as much or as little as you want. Talk about a kid in a candy store!

The desserts included lemon meringue tarts, rich chocolate brownies, creamy chocolate eclairs, flaky mille feuilles (or Napoleons) and



a host of other cakes and pastries. There was also a large bowl of vanilla sorbet studded with chocolate chips. And, of course, platters of fresh fruit slices and bowls of fresh fruit salad.

Coffee and tea were served at our table as we enjoyed the perfect end to an altogether perfect meal.

Shabbat lunch at the Inbal costs NIS 299 per person, with a 50% discount for children between three and 13. It may seem rather pricy for an afternoon lunch, but if you consider the shopping and the shlepping, the cooking and the cleaning up you would have to do on your own, such a singular lunch might be well worth the splurge.

To reserve for Shabbat lunch, patrons can give their credit card number over the phone, and the cost of the meal is deducted after Shabbat.

*The writer was a guest of the restaurant.*

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