

CHEAP EATS: WHERE TO EAT FOR LESS THAN \$13 AN ENTREE

Antioch's scone zone brews more than tea and sweets

By Robin Mather Jenkins
Tribune staff reporter
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First impressions: On a wintry afternoon, one might wish for a spot of tea in a cozy nook, and you'll find precisely that at Infini-Tea in Antioch. There's plenty of tea paraphernalia, natch, and also tons of fussy Victoriana that many people associate with the English. Indeed, the snug room does seem like the kind of tearoom you might find in an English seaside resort. Shabby chic, and all that. And yes, you're supposed to eat the fresh orchid bloom that comes on every plate.

On the menu: There's the tea, of course. Choose from more than 50 varieties of green, black, oolong and white teas, or rooibos, decaf or herbal teas. We tried Welsh Morning ("In the realm of English breakfast teas, except slightly stronger than most English and less malty than most Irish teas") on one visit, and Moon over Madagascar ("Black, indulgent and decadent tea blend of China and Ceylon Black with bourbon vanilla from Madagascar . . . ") on another, liking both very much. Order by the two-cup pot (\$3.50) or the six-cup pot (\$6.50). Not surprisingly, the day menu centers on light luncheon fare and brunch dishes. The dinner menu features such English favorites as shepherd's pie (\$13.95) and chicken pot pie (\$14.95)--though they're beyond the Cheap Eats budget. Dinners include herb cheese scones, soup or salad, and potatoes or rice pilaf.

At your service: To call the service "leisurely" would suggest undue speed. The whole idea here is to relax and forget about the world outside. If you've got an appointment after lunch, plan to eat elsewhere. One luncheon took nearly two hours, including nearly half an hour to get the check, then get it paid for.

Second helpings: The "Crabbie Lorrie," with lemon cream cheese mayo, avocado, lettuce, sprouts and tomato shards, was especially good on multigrain bread. The "Tea Lite Service" is a nice nibble in mid-afternoon, with a scone served with lemon curd, jam and clotted cream, plus some savory bites, and tea.

Take a pass: No matter how you describe it, deli turkey is still deli turkey. If you insist on a turkey sandwich, skip the "Thames" (\$8.95) and at least have the "Smoked Turkey Mango Wrap" (\$12.95).

Prices: Soups, \$3.75 cup, \$4.75 bowl (add \$1 for seafood soups); salads, \$10.95-\$11.50; sandwiches, \$8.95-\$10.95; desserts, \$4.50.

Infini-Tea

(3 forks)

902 Main St., Antioch 847-395-3520

Hours: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Saturday (the restaurant's hours as published have been corrected in this text)

Credit cards: AE, D, MC, V

Noise: Conversation-friendly Delivery: No

Other: Non-smoking, handicapped accessible

Nearby

What a dish: It's a leisurely walk to Pickard China, but you may wish to drive if you're planning on buying anything at the china factory's outlet store. Pickard manufactures the official service for U.S. embassies and the official china for Air Force One and the king of Saudi Arabia, among others. You can learn more in the factory's museum, attached to the outlet store. 782 Pickard Ave., Antioch; 847-395-3800.

Crafty: Around the corner from Infini-Tea is Hannah's Home Accents, where you can learn to knit, crochet, quilt or scrapbook. Lots of supplies, too. 455 W. Lake St., Antioch; 847-395-3355.

Ratings key: 4 forks, don't miss it; 3 forks, one of the best; 2 forks, very good; 1 fork, good

Reviews are based on anonymous visits; meals are paid for by the Tribune.

rjenkins@tribune.com

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