

Norwegian Jewel Dining

Free Dining

With the addition of O'Sheehan's Bar & Grill, the ship now offers four free dining areas. Aside from offering tasty, free food, O'Sheehan's also relieves some of the stress on the main dining rooms; we never had to wait longer than five minutes for a table in either Azura or Tsar's Palace because many people chose O'Sheehan's instead.

Norwegian Jewel also features Norwegian Cruise Line's new Norwegian NEXT dining program in its main dining rooms. The line created Norwegian NEXT to address the numerous complaints it received about the main dining room food. The menus in the two dining rooms are identical and quite extensive with 11 starters and 15 entrees to choose from, including seven "classic" entrees offered every night. Most of the entrees we tried were excellent, though you'll still find the occasional over-sauced dish. Our favorite main dining room meals were a delicious cod dish the first night and surprisingly tasty potato beignets (potato and spinach blintz-like creations over an okra-based ratatouille).

Azura Main Dining Room (Deck 6): The smaller of the two main dining rooms, Azura features a quirky pop art decor and can be rather noisy. Tables closer to the entrance also can be a bit chilly. Ask for a table off to the side if you get cold easily, or bring a sweater. As with both main dining rooms, you can ask to be seated with another party or dine on your own. Service in Azura is fast and friendly. Dinner is served from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Tsar's Palace Main Dining Room (Deck 6): According to Norwegian, the decor in Tsar's Palace is inspired by the "grandeur" of the palaces of St. Petersburg and the era of the Russian tsars. Larger and fancier than Azura, Tsar's Palace does have more of a banquet hall feel to it, with marbled pillars and faux Faberge egg balustrades, but it's quieter, and the service just a tad slower leading to a more leisurely meal. Tsar's also provides table service for breakfast (7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.), lunch (noon to 1:30 p.m.) and dinner (5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.).

This will be our Group Dining Hall at 5:30 each day...

Garden Cafe (Deck 12): Norwegian's signature buffet, the Garden Cafe offers breakfast, lunch and dinner via several standalone stations. Breakfasts include prepared-to-order omelets, scrambled eggs, waffles, pancakes, cereal, pastries and fruit. Apple and orange juice, tea and coffee are available for free during breakfast. Lunches and dinners feature pastas, carving stations, sandwiches and other hot entrees. Additionally, most nights are themed and, on our sailing, they included seafood, country western, a salmon bake and a taste of Asia. At the front of the Garden Cafe, you'll find the Kid's Cafe, which offers a kid-friendly menu and kid-sized seating. During the lunch rush (and weather permitting), you can also find seating in the Great Outdoors extension of the Garden Cafe, which offers a more limited version of the foods offered inside. Another extension of the buffet is the outdoor Topsiders Grill (also on Deck 12), offering beef and turkey burgers, hot dogs and sausages, and grilled chicken with all the fixings. Norwegian Jewel's Garden Cafe also is home to the line's original Washy-Washy waiter, who sings his love-it-or-hate-it song to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down" while spraying your hands with sanitizer. Ask him to sing his "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" version. It's brilliant.

O'Sheehan's Neighborhood Bar & Grill (Deck 8): Added during Norwegian Jewel's last dry dock, sports-themed O'Sheehan's is a 24-hour pub eatery first introduced on Norwegian Epic. The venue has proved so popular that it's being rolled out to the entire fleet. This iteration of O'Sheehan's, which overlooks the Crystal Atrium, is primarily a restaurant, though there is a small bar with two TVs showing sporting events. The menu features classic pub favorites like fish 'n' chips, chicken pot pie, old-fashioned meatloaf and fried mozzarella sticks. Lunch and dinner menus are the same, except dinner also highlights a rotating special of spare ribs, prime rib or fried chicken. My favorite place to grab breakfast, O'Sheehan's offers a traditional morning menu, including items like two eggs any style with sausage and bacon, homemade corned beef hash, made-to-order omelets and French toast.

Chin Chin Asian Restaurant (Deck 7); with a la carte sushi: A pan-Asian eatery (Chinese, Japanese and Thai), Chin Chin offers a dinner menu that includes hot and sour soup, vegetarian spring rolls, lemon pepper shrimp, noodle dishes and fried rice. You also can order sushi and sashimi at a la carte prices, as well as a Szechuan stir-fried lobster tail entree for an additional \$10 surcharge. There are also four tables with small built-in oven tops for a special type of Japanese meal called Shabu Shabu, where

sliced beef is cooked in a noodle pot in front of diners. Food is a bit hit-or-miss, with some dishes being quite tasty and others a tad mediocre. On full or half sea days, the sushi and sashimi also are available for lunch at the small sushi bar.

Room Service: With so many dining venues, it's easy to forget that 24-hour room service is also available (except on the morning of debarkation). Enjoy morning coffee and Continental fare like juice, fresh fruit, muffins and cold cereal, free of charge. Lunch and dinner options include perennial favorites like chicken Caesar salad and sandwiches, plus kid-pleasers like hot dogs and grilled cheese sandwiches attract a \$7.95 fee. Haven and suite passengers can still order room service entirely free of charge.

Fee Dining

As with all Norwegian Cruise Line ships, Norwegian Jewel offers a variety of specialty restaurants that cover a wide spectrum of food styles. Prices range from \$15 to \$30 per person.

Le Bistro French Restaurant (Deck 6); \$19.95 per person: A classic date night restaurant, Le Bistro offers upscale French dining and attentive service. Menu items run a bit on the heavy side and include dishes like cream of four mushroom soup, coq au vin, grilled beef tenderloin, duck breast and escargot. For an additional \$10 per person, you can also select seafood puff pastry with lobster, shrimp and scallops; a butter roasted lobster tail; or a 32-ounce rib-eye steak for two.

Teppanyaki (Deck 7); \$25 per person: One of Norwegian's most popular signature eateries (and rightfully so), this Benihana-esque hibachi restaurant serves up delicious Japanese fare prepared by a knife-wielding chef who does a variety of tricks on a large cooking top in front of diners. Entrees include combinations of chicken, beef and seafood (including lobster), served with miso soup, seafood salad, vegetables and garlic fried rice. Four chefs banging utensils in the small space can get loud, but most of the din is over within 10 to 15 minutes. Wear earplugs if you must; the food is too good to forego just because of the noise.

La Cucina (Deck 12); \$14.95 per person: The weakest link in Norwegian Jewel's specialty restaurant lineup, La Cucina offers rather mediocre Italian food in a pleasant setting at the back of the ship. The menu consists of traditional favorites like fried

calamari, bruschetta, chicken parmesan, osso buco, shrimp risotto, spaghetti and meatballs or spaghetti carbonara, Italian sausage, vegetarian lasagna and pizza.

Cagney's Steakhouse (Deck 13); \$29.95 per person: Located in one corner of Deck 13, immediately across from the ship's Brazilian steakhouse, Cagney's is Norwegian's signature American steakhouse, serving filet mignon, T-bone steak, rib-eye and New York strip. Diners will also find salmon and pork chop options. Cagney's is very popular and fills up quickly. Make your reservation in advance if you want a prime-time dinner slot.

Moderno Churrascaria (Deck 13); \$19.95 per person: You'll need to skip lunch if you've booked dinner at this Brazilian steakhouse. That's because the amount of skewered meats on offer can be a bit overwhelming, and they'll keep serving until you tell them to stop. There's also a sizeable salad bar if you want a little green to go along with all that meat.

Carlo's Bake Shop (Deck 7); a la carte: This tiny outpost of "Cake Boss" Buddy Valastro's famous bakery is located in the Crystal Atrium, right next to the Atrium Cafe and Bar. There you'll find cupcakes, lobster tails, cannolis and cakes baked fresh daily. You can even order a custom cake for special occasions. Prices range from 75 cents for an individual rugelach and \$2.25 for a cupcake to \$24.95 for a 7-inch cake.