

DINING

Authentically Mediterranean

The welcome was warm and the food so good it unlocked fond memories of an OE

Zeytin Cafe

118 Maunganui Rd, Mount Maunganui
Ph: (07) 574 3040. Open 7 days, 9am-9pm. Licensed.
www.zeytinmountcafe.co.nz

On the menu: There's a Mediterranean flavour through everything. There are plenty of bread and dip-type options to start with and sharing is always a good thing with this. The main courses include favourites such as doner kebabs, iskender and moussaka. Yummy looking pizzas and salads complete the menu. A selection of tasty desserts is available if there is any room left.

The buzz: There's a wonderful friendly, warm feeling about the place. Diners cover just about every age group from 5 to 65. Such is the menu's range, there is something for everyone. This is relaxed dining that is cheery and comfortable.

I'll have: Scallop Meze (\$15.50) Pan-seared skewered scallops on toasted bruschetta served with a

home-made salsa of fresh pawpaw and avocado. The scallops lured me to this dish but the home-made salad was equally delightful. For a main, I went with tradition and chose Iskenders with wood-fired lamb (\$28, served with rice, hummus, tabouleh and salad). Lucky I was hungry. It was enough to feed two! The wood-fired lamb was tasty and tender and the rice, salads and sauces took me in my mind to a Turkish seaside village.

She'll have: My wife went with two starters for her two courses, starting with Dolma Meze (\$12, vegetarian stuffed dolma, served on home-made hot tomato and basil passata with feta cheese and baby watercress). She found this dish beautifully presented and a lovely combination of tastes between the dolma, feta and sauce.

For mains, she chose Haloumi Meze (\$15.50, pan-fried haloumi and red peppers, served with olive tapenade, capers and baby watercress). This was full of Mediterranean flavours, with the



caperberries an intriguing addition to the meal. Both starters were a good size and proved just right in terms of quantity.

Value for money: Meze Board (\$28, a selection of popular dips and kitchen's choice from the selection of four, garnished with fresh salad greens and home-made



Turkish bread from the wood-fired pizza oven). This is suggested as an option for four so could prove to be an economical option for two. Nothing on the menu is too extravagant in price.


To drink: Most bases are covered here with white and red wine (from \$7 a glass to \$42 a bottle), a

selection of beers and ciders, juices, smoothies, soft drinks, coffees and frappes.

The staff: Very friendly and helpful. Our waitress was there when we needed her but not overwhelming. The staff made the experience very comfortable.

The verdict: Mandy and Albert, who went from Zeytin employees to owners, have created a go-to eating experience at the Mount. Such is the vibe, this cafe is welcoming to all ages and the menu has something for everyone. A group get-together will also find Zeytin Cafe a great option.

— Craig Nicholson




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