

Ileana Rivera
BUF 4300- Multi-Sensory paper

a. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated?

One would feel welcome and safe as they would enter Casa La Femme, as soon as one would walk in, they would be welcomed and greeted by the host and manager. The host immediately said “ Hi there ! What is the party and name under? ”, as soon as one responded we were set aside for the host to set up the seating arrangements for our big party. Being that it was chilly out, one would be anxious to be seated right away under the heaters. As soon as the host finished setting up the beautiful tables and seatings together, the host would address the party to sit down.

For someone to eat at Casa La Femme, one would have to call and make reservations before going there. The reservations can be either through the website system open table which is an online restaurant-reservation service company. Or one can directly call the restaurant to make reservations. Overall Casa La Femme recommends making reservations instead of going there since it's first come first serve, but one can be seated easily if it's not on a busy day without making reservations. Calling for reservations is simple and one would easily agree, the host picked up and asked the date you will like to attend, provide you the times available, lastly ask which area one would like to be seated in. Then one would get a receipt from the open table in their email confirming their reservations.

When one is waiting next to the New York Egyptian authentic restaurant before being seated outside, the wait would be around five to seven minutes. The reason one would wait for five to seven minutes is that it was a big party and the seating arrangements were going to be arranged for us. One would witness the host put together tables for the spacing to be longer, wider, and more comfortable for exactly 6 people. One would agree that waiting outside for that amount of time isn't so bad. To differ, they would wonder why the seating arrangements weren't prepared and ready before entering the restaurant, especially if they made a reservation.

b. What are the cultural differences you notice? (Use class notes) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains.

The cultural differences would instantly appeal and attract one that is not familiar with Egyptian ancient cuisine or simply Egyptian culture. Casa La femme truly showcases and strongly represents Egyptian cultural geography. One would notice the arts and prints of the Egyptian culture shown on the chairs, tables, rugs, and tents in Casa La Femme. The difference between this restaurant and any American local restaurant is the artistic, colorful, and ancient

designs that one would appeal to. One would be amazed by the royal design aesthetics in decorations that are showcased everywhere. First, one's eyes would be on the tents as soon as one would step on the block of the restaurant, the tents are of silk, sea through tan-colored, called Khayamiya that is a decorative textile that's used to decorate tents throughout the middle east. The sea-through tents are tied up onto the sealings inside the restaurant that one can see through the outdoor dining view. While the outdoor dining is sectioned off with wood wall dividers, wood is showcased a lot, there are wooden chairs and tables, the wood is significant in Egypt because Ancient Egyptians had to rely on imported wood for masts, large coffins, or temple doors. Abstract art would be seen on the chairs, rugs, and wood dividers, abstract art is also significant in Egypt. It's highly symbolic and even merges abstract style with naturalism showcasing visual expression (Mikdadi,2004). The art was seen as royalty and elite and Casa la femme showcased gold, purple, green, all the royal colors one would notice as a cultural difference.

The taste of the food was a different taste and experience than any American restaurant. If one is not used to Egyptian food there taste buds would react differently versus someone that eats Egyptian food all the time. There were tastes of sour, sweet, and chili, everything our party ordered was solely a uniquely different taste experience than any other. One would agree the diversity of flavors wouldn't be the same as an American restaurant would have. The textures of the sauces when dipping one's finger in the sauce would be a different feeling for each. One sauce was soft like a liquid, another sauce was slimy, and the last sauce was a thick grainy texture. Smelling the food as soon as it was served and placed on the wide wooden table would open up one's senses. The strong delighted olive and garlic smell hitting the nose would make one want to dive right in. Sitting down vibing to the sound of the peaceful music was an experience one wouldn't forget. The music was Egyptian music that made you feel as if one was on a beach in the middle east having dinner. The sound of the musical instruments in ancient Egypt was heard in Casa La Femme's playlist such as clappers, drums, sistra, cymbals, pipes, trumpets, and the harp (Dadrian, 2010). The music was a great selection and fit the vibe and aesthetic in the restaurant.

c. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu?

The menu's first item was called "*Mezza's select three*" this comes with a selection of small dishes served as appetizers that are popular food items in Egypt. The waiter recommended the party should get two orders of the Mezza's since it was six of us and one wouldn't be enough, they appreciated the waiters honesty. The Mezza consists of dipping sauces such as Humus, Tahini, fowl, babaganoush, zabadi, Gibnah, spicy feta, Harrisa, house-made pita bread, with your choice of crudite or fresh vegetables. They offered Mediterranean salad bowls, kebob platter,

flatbread, plant-based dishes, soups, and desserts. The beverages listed were coffee, teas, alcoholic beverages such as wine champagne, and cocktails.

Unusual items one might come across is the special which was a Hamam Mahshi, which was described as Egyptian pigeons stuffed with jasmine rice served with Molokai soup. This was an unusual item for most people that aren't used to Egyptians choices of meat. One would understand our chicken in America is equivalent to eating pigeons for them, so it's understandable. If one was thinking about how this item was served, one would be confused if they never had it before. One would either think the pigeon looks how a chopped shredded chicken would be served, or one would think of it as a different dynamic, in which the whole pigeon is served on the plate, if so, this would be seen as a different experience for someone. A pigeon is uniquely different and this can open up one's food preferences if one isn't accustomed to it.

The menu greatly describes the ingredients in the food and the waiter even will help one to figure out anything if one might still be confused. For example, on the menu, there's a word called "*Mashway*" and under mashway, it's stated Mediterranean charcoal grill, labeled to anyone who might be confused as to what mashway is. Under this section, it was described to one that this is where you can find the meats on the menu. There was Gionni Free-range bone out half chicken, New Zealand Lamb Chops, Wild Filet of Salmon, and 2lb Mediterranean whole Bronzini. The menu even has percentages of what an item on the menu is made up of, for example, a liquor named "Paul Laurent Champagne Brut" under the champagne list states it consist of 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay. Giving the customer a detailed description of what they will be drinking.

Other various food items in the menu one would see are the side dishes they have to offer. Some side dishes are sumac Hand-Cut Fries, Harissa, CousCous, Fattah, Molokhya, Arugula salad, and One Kebab. The side dishes were very filling and can be counted as a meal based on one's opinion. Overall the items on the menu all sounded delicious and everything was a great balance. One would believe having plant-based options on any menu would be an amazing option to add because not all people eat meat. A brunch menu is also available providing egg dishes, salad bowls, and the cocktails that are a part of the brunch.

The menu items one ordered was the Mezza appetizer, for the full meal was the New Zealand lamb chops with the herb rice that was under the Mediterranean Charcoal Grill section. The food had so much flavor, the right amount of portions, and seasoning. The lamb chops were soft and juicy and complemented the soft white herb rice, the herb rice was served with two circle small shapes and had green herb seasoning in it. One can taste the charcoal grill flavor and texture of the lamb chops that were described in the menu. For beverages, One had a mango martini in a perfect circular medium-sized thick clear glass cup, the color of the martini was a beautiful orange color that complemented the green leaf that was placed on the corner rim of the cup, making my drink look colorful and vibrant.

There wasn't more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu except for English only. If there was more than one language on the menu it should have been Arabic.

There would be more culture if the Arabic language was next to the English wordings. This way one can see and experience the culture of Arabic/ Egypt as a whole. If you go to Casa La Femme One would only hear Arabic songs playing but no one would not see them on the menu.

D. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like?

The traditional common salad would be a greek salad offered, the other salads are couscous salad, peasant salad, Fatoush salad, grilled salmon, and chicken shrimp salad. The types of bread offered are pita bread that can be served warm or cold by the customer's choice. The pita bread is known as a common bread in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and neighboring areas. They offer other flatbreads such as vegetarian, chicken, and ground lamb. These toppings would be placed on top of the bread.

Such deserts offered are Baklava, Basbousa Ice Cream Sandwiches, Kunefa, and Baklava Ice cream. The whole party ordered all the desserts on the menu since they were mini pieces, they were displayed on a large oval abstract design white and blue plate that was shareable. The desert was the best part of one's experience, it was sweet and savory. The baklava is a desert one is familiar with, it is a layered pastry dessert made of filo pastry that's filled with chopped nuts that's sweetened with syrup or honey. Even pistachio nuts can be replaced with regular nuts, it's the most popular middle eastern desert cuisine. Basbousa ice cream sandwiches are Middle Eastern Coconut Semolina Cake made with a lot of dairy, semolina is a sticky sweetness from rose or orange blossom-scented sugar syrup. Kanafeh is made with shredded filo pastry, or semolina dough, soaked in sweet, sugar-based syrup layered with cheese. Baklava Ice cream is creamy vanilla ice cream with cinnamon candied nuts, all of these desserts are similar whereas they have sweet syrup and nuts served with them which are traditional Egypt and middle eastern dessert ingredients.

e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant?

There are many beverage options one can choose from. The beverages that are offered are hot beverages and cold beverages such as teas and coffee. The teas available are mint tea, green tea, Hibiscus tea, egyptian black tea, and Annisse Tea. One ordered the green tea to start since it's one favorite hot beverage to drink. Coffee available is Arabic coffee, espresso, and cappuccino. Alcohol is also a part of the beverage list with a lot of options.

The alcohol menu has a variety of sparkling drinks, rose wine, white wines, red wines, and cocktails. With many different options to choose from, one can favor the cocktails menus for different flavors such as guava, mango, lemonade, hibiscus lemon, and orange zest flavor.

What's typically not offered in an American chain restaurant that is at Casa La Femme is Egyptian black tea and Arabic tea. Other teas that would be offered in traditional American restaurants are chamomile, mint, and black tea that are common. The Egyptian black tea blended with pure spearmint leaves is a common form of flavored tea in Egypt and Middle- Eastern countries. It is a rich flavorful and mildly flavored black tea that is sweeter and has less pungent aroma than peppermint. Arabic tea can be mixed with coffee and has historically been known to help with digestion, It is drunk before meals to help enzymes for nutrients.

f. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (Use class lecture notes)? (i.e. spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country, this culture's food is best known.

The food at Casa La Femme is reflective of their cultural geography because they incorporate their traditional historical foods and architecture from the middle east, they apply it to the restaurant. They feature the cuisine and culture from the northern region of Egypt like Alexandria and one would feel, experience, and see that during their time there. Previously mentioned the food such as the Meeza and deserts are incorporated from the Egyptian cultural geography because those dishes are what's popular in the middle east. Being that Egypt's economic geography is opened with an overview as a transition economy such as combining well-educated workers, advanced technologies, and energy resources, it was all incorporated into one's experience and one would feel as if they were in Egypt eating at the restaurant.

The food at casa la femme is best known in Egypt and in the areas Alexandria which is a city in Egypt. Alexandria is the Mediterranean port city in northern Egypt and their food is mainly sweets such as Om Ali and kunnafa. The kunnafa is served in Casa La Femme as a dessert dish but it's known to be spelled differently. On the menu it's spelled Kunefa, these dishes were introduced by mameluks and Fatimids who weren't Egyptians. Alexandria is also influenced by elements from other cultures/countries (Mark,2018). For example Lebanese French, Italian, and Greek cuisine, adding diverse and vibrant value.

g. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Roacher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately.

They were well-educated workers when it came to the staff's hospitality, the manager was present, the waiter will always help someone if they had any problems, questions, and concerns. The architecture person was even present as well, the party had a great conversation with him. The friend of the party complimented the woods around, then the waiter got the guy who made the woods, she was kind to introduce the party to him. He stated it was expensive exotic wood that he made. It took him months to complete and finish one bench that was surrounding us, it was a light-colored wood that did look firm and expensive to the eye.

The staff was friendly and helpful and showed great hospitality service. They were all in sync with each other wearing all black, which shows you the unity and professional approach the management team has. The waiters did represent dress of their identity, showcasing an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body (Higgins, 1992). The waiters had aprons around their waist, inside the aprons were utensils like spoons, forks, and napkins just in case anyone needed it. These were supplements added to their dress.

h. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

Casa La Femme's atmosphere was such a cozy but yet elegant restaurant that will leave one with the best impressions so far. If you want to get away from the traditional American chain restaurants and experience a whole other level of satisfaction and diversity, one will need to come to Casa La femme on 140 Charles St, New York, NY 10014. This Egyptian restaurant fully embraces the Middle Eastern fantasy cliché with its fancy Egyptian Plush decor & entertainment from a belly dancer that's there some days occasionally. The aroma of oregano, lemon, herbs, jasmine, and sweet fruits will all hit you at once, luckily that's with anything you will order. The strong oregano of the Egyptian hummus, jasmine rice, and meats will have someone's mouth-watering just within a few seconds. The preparation put into making sure all of the customers' food comes out all at the same time is fantastic. If one has any problems it will be fixed and brought to you on your desired option, that's one important factor all restaurant employees should have, catering to the customers is necessary. If one sits down and simply observes the atmosphere of Casa la femme they will feel comfortable. The decor is more of a homey appeal due to the Egyptian style abstract rugs under the seating arrangement, with the big plants surrounding you which makes it zen and relaxing. The ancient woods and leather chairs make you feel your part of royalty. One's experience eating outside was clean and not filthy, one would not smell the dirty aroma of New York City streets, the set up being divided by wood wall dividers are the perfect idea especially because of COVID-19. Price is more than affordable for authentic Egyptian food, for example, the Mediterranean salad bowl ranges from \$11.00 to

\$18.00. One would pick their main meats and then have them aside. The Mediterranean whole Bronzini is \$42, New Zealand Lamb Chops \$38, half chicken \$25, and Wild Filet of Salmon \$30 with your choice of Fattah, CousCous, Molokya Rice Or Arugula that comes with it. This experience and rate for Casa La Femme is an A-. The rate is an A- because overall hospitality, food, service, the atmosphere was amazing, the wait to sit down when one already called beforehand before coming and making reservations is what makes the rating an A-.

i. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

While experiencing Casa La Femme one would learn and contribute that diversity is important and should be well established in other places especially in New York. Bringing diversity into the restaurant business and establishing other countries' cuisine is fundamental and one can learn other countries' history, art, music, food, and much more just by attending an ethnic authentic restaurant. Before going to Casa La Femme one didn't know that in the middle east they eat pigeons, they have tapas (for example the Mezza appetizers on the menu) that are served in small portions, they have syrupy sweets for dessert that's common. One never knew Egypt is known for abstract designs and they are known for their royal colors displaying in their architecture as well. It amazes me that you can learn about a country just by going to a restaurant.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

References

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