

http://pilotonline.com/entertainment/restaurants/go-in-with-a-plan-when-dining-at-texas-de/article\_2fa63081-a1f3-50d8-bb72-6c6c2415f637.html

## Go in with a plan when dining at Texas de Brazil

By Holly Van Auken  
Correspondent  
Jun 5, 2016



Bill Tiernan | The Virginian-Pilot

[Buy Now](#)

Caipirinha, Brazil's national cocktail, made with Cachaca, sugar and lime. Cachaca is a distilled spirit made from sugarcane juice. Photographed at Texas de Brazil on Monticello Avenue in downtown Norfolk.



### IF YOU GO

#### the spot

Texas de Brazil, MacArthur Center, 300 Monticello Ave., Norfolk

#### the vibe

All-you-can-eat grilled meat and more served in sexy, inviting space

#### to try

Caipirinha cocktail, carrot cake, chocolate mousse cake

Outside of doing a little research, picking the right night and time, and knowing a restaurant's specialties, there is little strategic planning needed to experience a memorable dinner out in Hampton Roads.

At least one exception to this is when your plans involve Texas de Brazil, the Brazilian steakhouse that opened in November 2014 at MacArthur Center. It took over the space that Kincaid's had occupied since the mall's opening in 1999 – making Norfolk the international chain's third Virginia location.

**if you go**

prices

dinner – \$42.99; salad bar only – \$24.99; desserts - \$9

children

dinner prices - 2 and under – complimentary; 3 to 5 years old - \$5; 6 to 12 years old – 50 percent off regular dinner price.

hours

5 to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 5 to 10 p.m. Friday; 4 to 10 p.m. Saturday; 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday. Beijos Bar and Lounge opens 30 minutes before the restaurant.

reservations

accepted

parking

\$6 valet or MacArthur parking garage

contact

www.texasdebrazil.com or 757-622-3113

I had been to Espeto na Brasa on Granby Street (before it closed) and Brasa in Cary, N.C., so I was familiar with the all-you-can-eat, fixed-price dining concept before my visit to Texas de Brazil. But I don't recall getting so full so fast, nor do I remember dropping \$80 per person.

Had I strategized, I might have walked away lighter in the belly and heavier in the pocketbook.

I arrived before my friend and her teenage daughter, and was told we would be seated when they arrived. I made my way over to the bar, and Felisha hooked me up with one of the happy hour specials – a Caipirinha (\$5), Brazil's national cocktail, a refreshing mix of lime muddled with simple syrup, topped with ice and cachaça, a distilled spirit made from sugarcane juice.

My dates arrived, and we ordered a round to take to the table – a pomegranate Caipirinha for me, and a house sauvignon blanc (\$5) and Brazilian limeade (\$4.50) for my guests. I paid the tab, and realized my first mistake. Although the drinks hit the spot, had we all arrived together, I may not have spent that \$22 (plus a generous tip, since it was happy hour).

Once seated, our server, Joe, asked if we had visited before, and since we hadn't, he launched into a well-rehearsed spiel about the cooking method (meats are rubbed in salt and cooked over an open flame) and serving style ("gauchos" go from table to table with meats on long skewers and carve them onto your plate). A coaster is used to communicate your interest; the green side means "yes," and the red side means "stop."

Joe continued. Lobster bisque is the soup of the day, and there's rice, black beans, balsamic-marinated mushrooms and au gratin potatoes. Plates are stacked by the salad bar, and family-style sides of garlic mashed potatoes, Brazilian cheese bread and cinnamon sugar bananas – a palate cleanser between meats – would be delivered to the table.

So, after my guests ordered another round – with my friend switching to the house red blend (\$5) – we were off to the immaculate salad area, a white marble and glass 40-plus item menagerie of veggies, cheeses, meats, grains and sauces. We piled our plates with shaved Parmesan, buffalo mozzarella, Italian salami, Greek olives, smoked salmon, steamed asparagus and surimi sushi rolls (among other things), only to return to the promised side dishes and the start of one meat after another.

The website and promotional menu boast 16 cuts of meat, and I'm certain we were offered almost all of them.

The Brazilian Alcatra (top sirloin) was our favorite, followed by (in no particular order) the flank steak, filet mignon wrapped in bacon, Brazilian sausage, herb-marinated pork loin and chicken breast wrapped in bacon. Had we not gorged on the salad bar, creamy garlic mashers and delish donut hole-sized Brazilian cheese bread, we would have had more room for seconds of all of our favorites.

We weren't crazy about the pork ribs (outsides were too crispy), prime rib (too tough), parmesan-crusting pork loin (also too tough) and lamb chops (strange taste), and we turned down the braised beef ribs, Parmesan drumettes and at least one or two more offerings.

About an hour and a half in, we got up and headed back over to the salad bar area, and realized we hadn't even touched the hot bar – the smorgasbord of lobster bisque, jasmine rice, black beans and cheesy potatoes Joe had mentioned. There was really no room for anything but a bite of dessert, so we requested a rundown.

Joe went through nearly a dozen choices, and we opted to sample the carrot cake (\$9) and coconut chess pie (\$9), and pack the chocolate mousse cake (\$9) and Key Lime pie (\$9) to go.

The five-layer chocolate mousse cake (chocolate cake with alternating layers of milk chocolate and white chocolate mousse, covered with a thick chocolate ganache) was the best, followed by the gigantic carrot cake (two fat layers of cake with cream cheese icing).

The dinner bill before tip was \$208. That's dinner for three, four desserts, two glasses of house wine (a final one was post-happy hour and cost \$10) and a second Brazilian limeade (no free refills). While we were perfectly satisfied with the experience, the access to as much meat and sides as we could eat and the amount of time we were allowed to enjoy each other's company (more than two hours), I sure wish I had planned a little better.

My three tips for future Texas de Brazil guests? First, sign up for the e-club and you'll get \$25 off the purchase of two dinners. Next, whether you employ a pre-game or day-of approach, do whatever you do for other big meals (Thanksgiving, Easter and the like). Drink water and eat salad for a week ahead, wear your stretchy pants, avoid all side dishes, whatever works for you. And finally, dress in light, breathable clothing. Those meat sweats are the real deal.