

# Do you believe in magic?

Try Lovin' Spoonfuls vegetarian fare; it's tasty and healthy

By Kathleen Allen

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

ofu, anyone?

Yeah, we weren't too excited either.

But Lovin' Spoonfuls is a restaurant that readers insisted we review. And it's vegan.

That means no dairy. No meat. And tofu.

Sigh. Our duty called.

And thank the veggie gods it did.

Lovin' Spoonfuls may not turn meat lovers into meat haters (though the anti-meat propaganda available there may), but it'll easily convince you of the endless, and tasty, possibilities found in vegetarian fare.

Take the mushroom-walnut paté (\$5.45), for instance. A too-small scoop of the cold paté was earthy with mushrooms, nutty with the finely crushed walnuts, and kicked with just a hint of curry. Pile that on the small toast points topped with Earth Balance, a non-hydrogenated butter substitute, and be stunned by the freshness and flavor.

The spring rolls (\$4.95) appetizer had the same kind of taste jolt. The nine small rolls, made with wonton wrappers and fried to a golden crisp, were stuffed with cabbage, carrots and green onions. The sweet-and-sour sauce on the side was just so-so, but the rolls stood fine on their own.

The creativity really blossoms with the dinner entrees, where vegan meat (yes, you non-veggie types, there is such a thing), pasta and vegetables rule.

A simple dish such as the angel hair pasta topped with sweet tomatoes (\$8.25) laced with basil and garlic jumped with freshness and a gentle touch with the seasonings.

We discovered the wonders of tofu with the Stuffed Pasta Magnifica (\$9.25). The ravioli



was filled with a tofu that had a ricottalike texture. It was cut with a hint of garlic and had a slightly nutty taste. A sauce made with soy milk and vegan Parmesan and cut with lime was the crowning glory.

But it was the Buddha's Delight (\$8.25) that made us believe, for one fleeting moment, that we could live meat-free.

The dish was so simple — stir-fried veggies and a tamari sauce cut with fresh ginger. But the vegetables — onions, snow peas, bean sprouts, straw mushrooms — piled onto rice and topped

with toasted sesame seeds put the dish in the realm of "oh my" (while many things there are organic, the vegetables aren't; the folks at the restaurant dream of going fully organic, but they've yet to find a reliable supplier). The sweetness of the ginger, the crunch of the vegetables, the fluffiness of the rice — they all combined to make a meat-lover forget all about animal flesh.

We thought it couldn't get better. Then we tried the banana cream pie (\$3.75). This baby was sans the cream and

eggs that normally make the custard pie soar. What it had was soy milk, tofu and ripe bananas, which combined to make a killer pie.

Lovin' Spoonfuls is a casual kind of place, with booths and tables. You order at the counter, and cheery staff members with healthy glows bring it to your table.

We may not make tofu part of our daily diet, but now that we realize its potential, we have this to say: Bring it on.

## REVIEW Lovin' Spoonfuls

2990 N. Campbell  
Ave., 325-7766

Hours: 8 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Mondays through  
Fridays; 10 a.m.-9  
p.m. Saturdays; 10  
a.m.-3 p.m. Sun-  
days

Wine list: Not avail-  
able

Family call: Kids will  
love it, really

Noise level: Tolerable

Smoking: Not allowed

Accessibility: Acces-  
sible

Dress: Tucson casual

Reservations: Not ac-  
cepted

\$

Ron Medvescek /  
Arizona Daily Star

**These dishes are  
among the offer-  
ings at the new  
Lovin' Spoonfuls  
vegetarian restau-  
rant.**

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