



Weekend Tiki Hula Hula Brunch at Trader Vic's JBR, Hilton Dubai Jumeirah

In a landscape of sadly bland weekend brunches, Dubai has lost its way.

Weekend brunches used to be grandiose affairs - the heart of the expat lifestyle in the emirate.

But nowadays, you go to a regular brunch and find the same food as your neighborhood corner restaurant - bit of hummus, some tired tabouli, and a few shish taouks, served in metal trays... grilled shrimp or two if you're lucky...

But you already know what I'm about to say!





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There are still the epic Dubai brunches that made the city famous!

And the good folk at the Hilton Dubai Jumeirah, hosted at Trader Vic's, have put on a spectacular, rip-roaring, Tiki Hula Hula weekend brunch on Saturdays.





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Let's start from the food first, because it was both exceptionally delicious and a fantastic unique selection that you'll be eager to explain to your office mates and coffee morning friends - and book again the following week!

Fresh and colorful... true Pacific Islands' style





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Not over the top in neither showiness nor exaggerated quantities (waste of which was the dark side of the extravagant brunches of the past), but just an exceptional selection of delicious specialties that you will struggle to find anywhere else in Dubai.

And elegant, in a comfy, understated way - and tangy and spicy and exciting, but without pushing too hard: and especially, in true Islander taste:

A warm welcome, a friendly smile - unpretentious, yet all your needs and preferences are met.

It was simply a brilliant brunch!





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Super fresh... lively food, prepared with choice ingredients, and presented in attractive self-serve buffet stations, as well as numerous live stations, where the staff can guide you as what sauces go with what.





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And the sauces were wild!

Wildly delicious, that is - a superbly thick sweet BBQ sauce to match with the massive chunk of sirloin steak at the carvery station; which, by the way, also can be paired with the spicy chimichurri-like sauce, based on coriander!

Wonderful baked and grilled vegetables to accompany the meat dishes - and a magnificent Kingfish, topped with a magical coconut curry-like sauce... unlike anything I've ever tasted, but so good I went back for thirds!!!



The Hawaiian and Tahitian cuisines are well-known in terms of most people recognizing the famous island names, but I'd say relatively mysterious and unknown to most, in that many Dubai residents aren't familiar with the nuances of Polynesian flavors in depth; unlike, for instance, the ubiquitous Arabian or Indian dishes.



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And so there was also that fun element at Tiki Hula Hula brunch - exploring and savouring a new and delicious culinary tradition, that of the Polynesian cultures.





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I stress again the absolute freshness, of wholesome ingredients - and the excitement of the exotic sauces.

And then also there were familiar dishes, of Asian influence, but somehow tweaked, or adapted, to Islander taste buds!





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Tip-top tasty noodles and a magnificent rendition of a fried rice, below.





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Both familiar dishes - but at Trader Vic's they have added something special.

I'm not sure what, but you taste them and you feel like jumping up and doing a Haka to celebrate and show appreciation for the Chefs' good work!





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Besides the traditional foods, like the above crispy appetizers, even the more international dishes, like the roasted pork shoulder, benefited from the kick of a Tiki Hula Hula kind of sexy sauce!





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And you're dining in an ambiance with a coherent theme, almost like visiting Tahiti or Hawaii in person... every corner has a surprise in the decor!





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Indeed, Trader Vic's JBR at Hilton Dubai Jumeirah is a marvellously decorated restaurant - you are virtually transported to the Pacific Ocean isles.







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An outdoor patio beckons as well, leaning onto the Hilton pool grounds, beaches, and the Gulf waters beyond.





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And I would not say I've saved the best for last, but I think it's fair to mention that Trader Vic's is not a Hollywood fake, representing Polynesian cuisine on a marketing whim - the original Trader Vic was even the inventor of the Mai Tai cocktail!

And that very same original cocktail is found on the Tiki Hula Hula brunch menu, recipe dating back to 1944 - and you may sample it at Trader Vic's JBR...





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No wonder the Mai Tai has become one of the most popular cocktails worldwide - and the original has not yet been improved on, I can vouch for that!

Actually, it is quite a complex cocktail to make, where balancing the sharp citrus flavors with nutty and vanilla notes is not an easy task.

Interestingly enough, at the Tiki Hula Hula brunch in JBR, there are try-it-yourself bartending stations set up, where, accompanied by a pro bartender if necessary, you can shake your wrist in making your own Mai Tai!





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Overall, we enjoyed the Tiki Hula Hula brunch immensely at Trader Vic's JBR, Dubai Hilton Jumeirah - imaginative Pacific Islands' vibes and interior feel, but also vibrant fresh ingredients paired with exciting Polynesian-inspired sauces, talented live musicians, and accompanied by a selection of delicious cocktails second to none in Dubai.