



Weekend Dining at NAPO Pizzeria in Abu Dhabi

The recent boom in independently-owned restaurants popping up in the UAE's capital city is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit taking over Abu Dhabi.

And there is no doubt that whoever set up NAPO Pizzeria put their heart and passion into creating an authentic Italian pizzeria!





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I know this the moment I walk in - there, centerstage, is a custom-built wood-fired pizza oven!





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Indeed, NAPO is a very attractive cozy place, one you can easily become a regular.





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And outside, a lovely secluded garden offers an *al fresco* dining option as well!



But it is the Chef and his team in the kitchens that bring NAPO Pizzeria alive!

First and foremost is pizza, obviously - but before looking at their Neapolitan-style creations, let me start from saying NAPO Pizzeria is a lot more than a pizzeria!

If you order *Cacio e Pepe*, for example - one of the oldest pasta preparations in Italian history, as well as the simplest, but in that simplicity it is also one of the most difficult to get just right...





... this is the superb pasta dish that reaches your table...

... but only after being prepared live, in front of your very eyes, with both mastery and flair!







I assure you that there are extremely few, if any, eateries in Abu Dhabi able to prepare an excellent *Cacio e Pepe*!

Similarly, the NAPO menu presents a delightful selection of dishes, from a fresh and tasty Feta and Watermelon salad - cleverly garnished with fresh mint leaves, pomegranate seeds, and toasted almonds!





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And plated marvelously in an elevated skyscraper structure, reminiscent of the views just across the marina from NAPO Pizzeria.





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Also the basil-infused mocktail came expressing an Italian flair for fashionable design!



And then the pizza!

Classic Napoli - 100% authentic, but also not afraid to extend those roots of tradition into experimenting: and that is where the entrepreneurial spirit shines!

Myself, I will almost always select a simple Margherita - just because.

But at NAPO Pizzeria, I took a calculated risk.

I had already seen and tasted the *Cacio e Pepe*, and based on that exceptional dish, I knew the Margherita would be fantastic - and so I wanted to up the ante, and so I went for the NAPO pizza... their namesake.



A spectacular pizza arrived to the table - a masterpiece.

From the look of it, it is clearly a proper Neapolitan pizza. And indeed a Margherita would have been exceptional on that soft and fluffy yet crispy base!

But the NAPO pizza toppings blew me away in their subtle complexity.



Firstly, a combination of 4 cheeses, or more accurately, 4 different ways of preparing cheeses: fully melted, dollops on the way to melting, slivers of tasty grana, and magical crunchy honeycombs!

Plus, tasty slow-cooked short rib meat chunks, accompanied by caramelized onion... crispy fresh radish coins, and a generous sprinkling of fresh parsley sprigs!

Simply, a pizza that could be presented for international awards.





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Dessert and a good coffee concluded our meal.



Overall, NAPO Pizzeria presented an outstanding dining experience above and beyond the expectations placed on a pizzeria - while it is true the pizza was exceptional and authentic in Neapolitan style, and creative in offering exciting new toppings, the pasta and salad dishes elevate NAPO Pizzeria to a formidable and complete Italian lunch or dinner in Abu Dhabi.