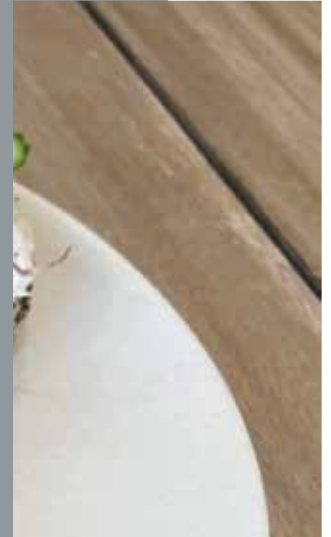


HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS FOOD AT ARIZONA'S CIVANA WELLNESS RESORT & SPA



Veg Out Bagel

ARTICLE SANDY BORNSTEIN
PHOTOGRAPHY THE TRAVELING BORNSTEIN'S

ARIZONA'S CIVANA WELLNESS RESORT & SPA NOT ONLY OFFERS AN INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF WELLNESS ACTIVITIES AND SPA THERAPIES ON ITS 20+ ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE SONORAN DESERT, BUT IT ALSO TREATS VISITORS TO NUTRIENT-DENSE DELICIOUS RECIPES.

In mid-August, Ira and I had the pleasure to experience the resort's award-winning hospitality, and simultaneously took advantage of the convenience of dining in the destination's two restaurants, the Seed Café & Market and Terras.

After working at one of the best restaurants in the world as well as a taco shack on the beach, Scott Winegard became Civana's executive chef about a year ago. When asked about his background, Chef Scott said, "The location is always my start for inspiration. I was fortunate to spend the start of my culinary career at Angelica Kitchen in New York City where ingredients were the most important.

This introduction kept me focused on finding the best and most interesting produce. There are always countless sources of inspiration." With a wellness and fitness clientele, it is essential to have a culinary staff who understands the significance of healthy recipes. Chef Scott was quick to point out his approach. "I have always gravitated to cooking with some sort of purpose. Nutrient-dense menus come naturally, and always has, for me."

For breakfast and lunch, we split our time between dine-in and carryout service at the casual Seed Café and Market. The menu included a handful of Chopra Health Retreat foods along with an impressive assortment of gluten free, nut free, and vegan dishes.

We were able to adhere to our nutrient-dense diet without any issues since the restaurant's emphasis was on using locally grown, colorful superfoods rich with micro-nutrients.

Each night, we enjoyed multi-course meals at the Terras restaurant. The menus offered a wide range of creative dishes. When talking about his menus, Chef Scott said, "Civana is a wellness resort. We want our guests to feel great while they are here, so we offer something for everyone while keeping it fresh and beautiful."

With a jam packed schedule of indoor and outdoor activities, our appetites were soaring. Luckily, the food quality and the portions matched are continuous need to be nourished throughout the day. In a desert environment, we also had to make sure that we remained hydrated. The resort had multiple water stations situated in convenient locations where we could refill our Civana insulated water bottles.

Revitalizing smoothies filled with fortifying ingredients added an extra layer of refreshment at key points in the day, especially after profusely sweating during an early morning hike in the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and participating in a cardio HIIT class.

BREAKFAST

In addition to the grab and go options— granola, chia pudding, breakfast bowls, vegetable topped sourdough bagel, and an oat entrée, the Seed offered a small selection of cooked foods—breakfast burritos, frittatas, and a spelt waffle. With so many healthy options, it wasn't easy to choose. Our two favorites included the Veg Out Everything Bagel and the Live a Little Waffle.

People seeking a nutrient-dense breakfast usually avoid empty-calorie bagels. The Seed's option puts a healthier spin on this American-Jewish favorite. First, the toasted bagels are made from sourdough and are topped with a creamy almond cream cheese, instead of the standard dairy-based variety. The bagel is enhanced with a colorful and flavorful layer of vegetables—tomatoes, cucumbers, sliced radishes, capers, and scallions. Had my appetite been more robust, I would have added slices of smoked salmon.

CONTINUED >

must-try

- + Spelt Waffle
- + Grateful Grain Bowl
- + Avocado Delight with Salmon



Seed Glow Getter Smoothie

chef faves

- + Crudo Wraps
- + Hearts of Palm Crab Cake
- + Raw Charred Tomato Carpaccio
- + Fire Roasted Cauliflower
- + Grilled Stone Fruit

The waffle stood out from everything else on the menu and was served consistently at adjacent tables. We were told by the wait-staff that the sourdough spelt combination created the remarkable airy texture. This delicious breakfast treat was garnished with sliced apples, an assortment of berries, and whipped coconut. We drizzled the homemade spiced maple syrup for a bit of added sweetness.

LUNCH

Avocado toast is one item that takes on a new character wherever it is served. This version was served on thick slices of sourdough bread layered with sprouts, tomatoes, and radish. Optional add-ons included smoked salmon, egg, or grilled tofu. The Avocado Delight was on both the breakfast and lunch menus.

Occasionally, we ate meals on the patio attached to our guestroom. The Grateful Grain Bowl was one of these portable options. There was no shortage of nutrients in this protein filled entrée. The ingredients included quinoa, jasmine rice, stewed lentils, marinated kale, roasted carrots, and ruby kraut drizzled with a mustard seed vinaigrette.

We ordered it with grilled tofu, but we also had the option to add smoked salmon, egg, grilled chicken, or avocado.

DINNER

After a full day of classes and activities, we were glad that Terras, the onsite restaurant, offered wonderful food choices. We started each meal with at least one appetizer. The Raw and Charred Tomato Carpaccio, the Hearts of Palm "Crab" Cake, and the Crudo Lettuce Wraps topped our list.

This creative carpaccio had whipped chevre, avocado, nopale, crispy corn, and complementary herbs. The spicier crudo was enhanced with sushi grade Pacific grouper, oranges, radishes, avocado, lime leaf, and chiles. The most flavorful appetizer was the Hearts of Palm "Crab" Cake served on top of frisée salad coated with a thin layer of citrus mustard seed vinaigrette.

While we tended to gravitate toward the restaurant's fish entrees, I also tried vegetarian options and Ira deviated from his usual pescatarian diet by tasting the grass-fed beef tenderloin. If it was possible for a second helping, we would have chosen the hemp crusted tuna and the Achiote Cauliflower. Both dishes were designed for hearty appetites. The tuna sat on a sizable bed of grilled cabbage and togarashi aioli. The cauliflower was served with a creative combination of Mexican quinoa and lentils.

Added flavor came from the chipotle jam, pickled carrots, and cilantro crema. We added a little bit more sugar into our diet than usual when we enjoyed a shared dessert. The rainbow carrot cake and the grilled stone fruit were worth the few extra calories. The vegan and gluten-free cake was topped with orange blossom cream cheese and tangerine frosting. At first, we were confused since the stone fruit we were served did not match up with the menu description. The substitutions added just the right amount of sweetness to end our meal on a high note. Disappointingly, the brownie was created without any healthy ingredients and included a scoop of gelato. We passed on this over-the-top indulgence because we know that cancer patients should avoid sugar spikes.

Staying at the Civana Wellness Resort & Spa opened the door to the luxury of eating a plethora of healthy, nutrient-dense foods without the burden of preparation. After Ira's glioblastoma diagnosis, I no longer rely on the convenience of prepared and processed foods. Without having to spend hours in the kitchen, we were able to enjoy a full-days' worth of activities with the additional time to meditate and contemplate how I can duplicate some of the items we tasted. Glancing at the images, one can easily see why I'd like to add some of Chef Scott's recipes to my home cooking repertoire.

Disclosure

Civana Wellness Resort & Spa offered the Traveling Bornsteins a media rate for their accommodations, meals, and spa charges.



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