

# DiscreetDiner

## Keep Food for Thought in mind

You know the place — that small restaurant in your neighbourhood you drive by a million times but never seem to go into. Well, this time The Friend and I change that tune, making a stop at Food For Thought on Main Street near Mountain Avenue.

What a hoot! This cozy mid-size diner is a Mecca to '70s kitsch. Between the wood-paneled walls, the wood Melamine tables and the upholstered kitchen chairs, we feel like we're in our parents' basements — all that's missing is the shag carpet. Every table displays

some I-think-my-neighbours-had-that-figurine, while the walls are festooned with everything from copper peacocks to Elvis (circa *Aloha from Hawaii*) on wood. Even the music gets us in the groove — who doesn't want to eat with BTO's *Takin' Care of Business* in the background?

We start with an invigorating Fruit Smoothie (\$3.50). After sampling its

strong mix of orange, strawberries and pineapple, we agree with our server: This sugar-free drink is like a liquid version of a fruit salad — pulp and all. Not getting enough fruits in your diet? This cool beverage counts as five servings of fruit as per Canada's food guide.

In addition to the menu items, there's a healthy list of daily specials, from soups to sandwiches and desserts.

We choose our lunch from the combination plates section of the menu, which allows us to pair a sandwich or wrap with one of the daily soup specials — the best of both worlds.

TF opts for the Lemon Dill Tuna Wrap (\$7.29) with Vegetarian Borscht. I contemplate the Chopped Liver Sandwich but decide on the Smoked Ham Sandwich with Red Lentil and Apricot Soup (\$6.49).

Our soups are quick to arrive, along with the side order of North End garlic toast (\$2.50). Every spoonful of TF's beet soup offers something different. While not purpley red like baba's, this pale, reddish-brown version has all the taste, thanks to a broth brimming with onions, green beans, celery, carrots and beets.

Like a hug in a bowl, my mmm-mmm-good bowl of lentil soup succeeds in warming my insides. While I can't taste the apricots, this pureed soup has a thick consistency.

Even better, the soups are



HOT SPOT: Food for Thought.

JASON HALSTEAD/SUN

MSG-free. Non-meat eaters will appreciate that the vegetable soups are made with a vegetable base.

We're just finishing our soups when part two of our lunch arrives. The generous tuna filling — accented with dill, shredded purple cabbage and carrots, it has just the right amount of

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1236 Main St., 772-3663.

Hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mon. - Fri.

★★★★½ out of ★★★★★

mayo to be moist but not soupy — is wrapped in a whole-wheat tortilla. Half a wrap is more than enough to satisfy TF's hunger pangs.

I sink my teeth into a just-like-homemade ham sandwich. There's no need for me to dislocate my jaw to take a bite of the ample slices of not-too-salty ham, lettuce and shredded Edam cheese sandwiched between two slices of not-too-thick squishy rye bread. We give our silent kudos to the cook who obviously knows that mayo's true purpose is to moisten and not drench a sandwich.

Besides, we're saving our fat calories for the homemade desserts! Which brings us to my Cherry Cheesecake (\$3.50) indulgence. Made from scratch, this velvety smooth baked cheesecake with a golden brown top rests on a thin graham-cracker crust. Serious spoonfuls of cherry pie filling provide the crowning sweet touch.

TF gets the comfort of a still warm-from-the-oven Hot Chocolate Cake. A bigger-than-brownie-sized square of deep chocolate cake beats anything out of our Easy Bake oven. The decadence continues with a drizzling of chocolate syrup.

We pair these send-you-to-sleep desserts with cups of coffee (\$1.69) and tea (\$1.49). We agree Food For Thought — if they were only open on the weekends — is the kind of place where you'd nestle in with a big cup of coffee and a couple of gooey chocolate chip cookies to leisurely read the newspaper.

Homey atmosphere, friendly service and reasonable prices add up to three good reasons to do more than think about Food For Thought when you're craving a homecooked lunch or an on-the-go breakfast.