

Wagamama Review

We recently met my brother in law in London for lunch with the kids and various family members. Great to get together and catch up. As a group we have lots of allergies to take into account; our family includes people with milk, egg, gluten, chilli and nut allergies.

Always fun to eat with us!

The ten of us arrived at Wagamama's in the usual drip feed fashion so drinks and nibbles were ordered while we waited for everyone to arrive. This also gave us the chance to ask to see the allergy information and the specific gluten free menu. It arrived and we started flipping through things. Heavens it was a bulky document!

One of the things I like about Wagamama's allergy approach is that they flag allergies on the hand set. This means we can be sure that the information makes it to the kitchen; rather than hoping the serving staff flag it properly. They were extremely accommodating about taking items out of dishes, and substituting rice noodles into dishes. I do think that their policy of 'it comes in whatever order it comes in' helps here. This approach means that the kitchen is under less pressure to deliver modified mains at the same time as the rest of the meals. I find the food at Wagamama's to be consistent whenever we go – I think that the starters and sides are tastier than the mains but that's just me.

I do, however, think the new regulations have made Wagamama's a bit 'clip board happy'. They confirmed on the hand held the allergies, and then when we ordered, they went through the allergy menu to check each item again. Now...we'd already checked that each dish was okay, and it's a huge menu with all the options, so finding things can be a bit time consuming. With us checking the menu first, then the waiter double checking that we'd got it right, the amount of time to place orders skyrocketed. It took an age. And it became strangely irritating having to flip through the menu (flipping it up and over all the time) again and show the waiter that each item we'd ordered was indeed milk, egg or gluten free. I think it Wagamama's is going to double check every item ordered for allergic customers they'd better computerise the process and have the hand-sets flag up allergens.

Anyway...its fab that the Duck Gyoza's are egg and milk free, and they've added a new dish – Coconut Seafood Broth – which comes made with Rice Noodles (and dairy free). It was delicious and they were great about removing the chilli for Molly. The Chilli Squid had egg

so Julian and Conrad got to scoff all of that but we grabbed most of the Edamame. Everyone seemed to enjoy their food – from the Chicken Chilli Men to the Katsu Curry. The food arrived hot, and just as we ordered with no mistakes on the replacement items (rice noodles to replace wheat, no chilli etc.) so no complaints there.

Wagamama's is one of our 'go to' restaurants as they use coconut milk in many recipes. I understand why they are concerned about ensuring that customers don't eat anything they are allergic to, but those of us who are allergic don't want to be treated like children. We are capable of checking a menu and making decisions...really we are.

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