



The great STEAK DEBATE

If there's one thing we love here at *Grazia* HQ (when we're not obsessing over the latest S/S11 trends to hit the stores, or trying to bag the last pair of discounted Loubs in the January sales) it's a tasty, succulent steak, with all the trimmings. And whether you prefer American or Argentinean, porterhouse or fillet, we've rounded up some of the best options that Dubai has to offer. Tuck in!

THE NEWCOMER:**WEST 14TH**

YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN for missing the turn-off to the new Oceana complex at the top of the Palm's Golden Mile, but miss it and you're missing out on the treat that is West 14th. It may only be a couple of months old, but the restaurant has quickly established itself as one of the city's go-to venues for dedicated carnivores. Marketed as a genuine New York steakhouse experience in the heart of the desert, expect exposed brick walls, attentive service, moody lighting and a sultry soundtrack – in fact, if it wasn't for the view of Dubai's iconic shoreline twinkling through the floor-to-ceiling windows (a view that's even better from the al fresco terrace, which sits next to the hotel's vast infinity pool), it would be easy to imagine that you were enjoying a slice of Stateside hospitality.

Examining the menu over some warm, fresh baked bread and flavoured butters, the selection is refreshingly pared down, even so it's still hard to choose between the starters which all sound equally tasty. In the end, thanks to a recommendation from the waiter, we opted for the Pacific Crab Cake – crispy and oh so moreish – and scallops, pan-seared with spicy wasabi potato sauce. Yum! On to the main event, there's a choice of USDA approved Black Angus or Australian steak, including a 'Lady's Cut' tenderloin, Wagyu Striploin, and a vast 575g corn-fed Cowboy Steak. Shunning the girly option, we went all out, opting for hearty portions of tenderloin and New York strip, accompanied by chunky fries, enormous stems of asparagus and steaming bowls of fluffy mash. Butter-soft and cooked to perfection, we also loved the gimmicky addition of being able to choose our own knives from an intimidating selection of blades. And if steak isn't your thing, there's always short ribs, succulent New Zealand lamb and organic chicken to whet your appetite.

Barely able to move, in the name of research (of course!) it would have been rude not to sample the desserts, with the waiter steering us towards West 14th's signature puddings, the Great American Cheesecake and The Brownie. Dense, decadent and not too sweet, the cheesecake was pure carb heaven, while the brownie was warm, rich and perfectly complemented by a generous scoop of chocolate ice cream. Pure bliss.

West 14th, Oceana Beach Club, The Palm Jumeirah, 04 447 7601 ▶



West 14th's sleek, brick-clad interior feels straight out of NYC

THE LATINO GRILL:**ASADO**

THERE'S NOT MANY NATIONALITIES who know their steaks like the Argentinians, who produce some of the finest grass-fed beef on the planet, and sure know how to cook it to perfection. We may be a few thousand miles away from South America, but luckily for us there's a dedicated Argentinian grill at Asado in The Palace, The Old Town. When you enter this bustling, award-winning restaurant, you'll find the open 'parilla' grill taking centre stage. Already sizzling away when we arrived, it wafts the tantalising aroma around the restaurant, making our mouths water.

For starters, we just had to sample the traditional empanadas, a traditional Argentinian pie/pasty, which comes with a selection of fillings from tasty cheese and onion to the more adventurous veal, potato and raisins. We were also tempted by the mix hot seafood starter, including lobster claw, calamari and crab with pine-nut mayonnaise, but resisted in a vain attempt to save our appetites for what was to come.

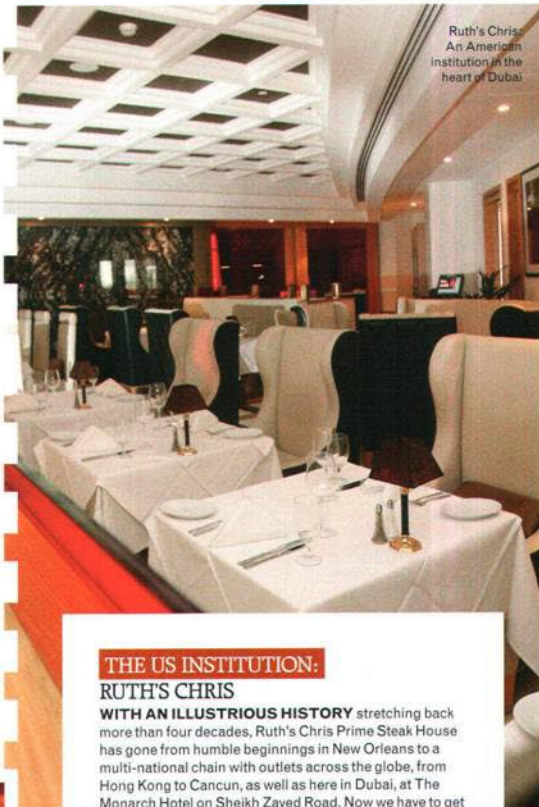
When it came to ordering the steaks, there was so much choice we opted for the tenderloin, or 'lomo de ternera', but not before eyeing up the mixed grill, billed as the 'most varied mixed grill in the world', and including roasted baby goat, steak, veal kidney, lamb chops, sweetbreads, short ribs and baby chicken (but fearing for the waistband on our Gigs, we gave this one a miss!). When they arrived, they lived up to expectations – juicy and full of flavour, and perfectly complemented by the heaps of mash that came as an accompaniment.

The dessert menu was a fitting end to the meal, with an exotic array of Argentinian-inspired dishes to choose from. The spicy chocolate soup was too good to miss, a decadent mix of truffles, chocolate fondant and white chocolate ganache. As were the dulce de leche pancakes, with rich toffee sauce and velvety vanilla ice cream.

★Asado, The Palace – The Old Town, 04 428 7888



Delicious scents waft around Asado thanks to the open 'parilla' grill which is centre-stage

**THE US INSTITUTION:****RUTH'S CHRIS**

WITH AN ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY stretching back more than four decades, Ruth's Chris Prime Steak House has gone from humble beginnings in New Orleans to a multi-national chain with outlets across the globe, from Hong Kong to Cancun, as well as here in Dubai, at The Monarch Hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road. Now we have to get one thing clear here: this is a restaurant for serious steak lovers, and true to its American heritage, the portions are vast (and delicious).

For appetisers, there's a good selection of seafood and salads, from New Orleans-style barbecued giant shrimp, sautéed with butter, garlic and fragrant spices, which is pretty much a meal in itself, to a generous wedge of iceberg lettuce, drenched in blue cheese dressing. While there's a tempting array of mains to choose from, such as fresh lobster and stuffed chicken, which gave us severe food-envy as we watched them whizz past our table to other diners, we highly recommend that you opt for one of Ruth's Chris' signature steaks, huge hunks of tender, melt-in-the-mouth beef which turns up to your table still sizzling away. Small appetites should opt for the smaller (relatively speaking) fillet, or there's the vast Porterhouse at the other end of the scale – recommended for two diners to share, it combines the flavour of strip steak with the tenderness of fillet.

And for desserts? Well, what can we say! Americans sure know how to finish a meal in style, that's what! So what better dish to try than the all-American warm apple crumb pie: tart Granny Smith apples baked in buttery flakey pastry with a strudel crust and a side portion of vanilla bean ice cream. Comfort food at its best.

★Ruth's Chris Steak House, The Monarch Dubai, 04 501 8666

The Thursday
STK buffet at
Media One is
now top of our
to-do list

THE TRADITIONAL OPTION:

HUNTER'S ROOM & GRILL

SURELY ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST CLASSY

options for steak-lovers, Hunter's has had us hooked since it opened back in 2008, thanks to its sophisticated interiors, superior service, and of course, unbeatable steaks, served to perfection from the open show kitchen, the first thing to greet you when you arrive.

This is tradition with a twist, from the choice of salt to accompany your dishes, to the array of steak sauces, from hollandaise and béarnaise, to the exotic soy garlic jus and Madagascar pepper. The appetizers follow suit, from rich foie gras served with peanuts, grapes and toast, to butternut squash soup enlivened by curried granola, oxtail and a dash of lime (a must-try). The steak menu is sourced from across the globe, with the best cuts of USDA approved prime, Argentine Hereford and Australian Angus. It's the attention to detail from the kitchen which really give the steaks here the edge. The bustling show kitchen features a custom chargrill, which meant that our steaks (a fillet and a striploin) were cooked to absolute perfection – with a charred crust giving way to succulent meat just oozing with flavour and just rare enough. There's also a great selection of alternatives if steak's not your thing, from barramundi and brown butter to unguent risotto, topped with a summery selection of vegetables.

If you have any room left (or like us, have eyes bigger than your tummy), don't miss dessert. We just couldn't resist the soft malted chocolate terrine (fuelled by our serious Maltoser addiction at Grazia HQ) and the cute cheesecake lolly pops, sweetly perfect portions of vanilla, cherry puree and dulce de leche.

*Hunter's Room & Grill, The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi, 04 399 4141



THE BIG BUFFET:

STK

STK IS A STEAK RESTAURANT with a difference, and always keen to try something new, we were there to give it a go! Taking place in MED at Media One every Thursday night, it combines an eclectic buffet for starters, followed with huge cuts of meat for mains and a decadent array of desserts. Grab a prime table on the terrace to make the most of the cooler weather, and after your meal, the package (ranging from Dhs249 to Dhs399) includes access to M-Dek so you can carry on the evening's festivities by partying until the early hours.

Eager to roam the buffet as soon as we arrived, there was ample choice, including salads, cold pastas, carpaccios, prawns and soups, with plenty of fresh-baked bread to keep us going until it was time to dig in to our mains.

And oh, we wish we'd saved some more room. The waiter led us to a block which was home to three enormous slabs of meat – you choose the cut and size that suits your appetite, and it's then whisked away to be barbecued on the terrace to your exact liking.

Aware that we'd be dancing off the calories later in the evening, we didn't miss dessert – the crème brulee was deliciously creamy, the crunchy sugared topping giving way to velvety vanilla custard, while the oozing chocolate pudding was rich and sinfully moreish. We'll definitely be making a return visit.

*STK, Thursdays at MED, Media One Hotel, 04 427 1000



Hunter's is surely one of Dubai's classiest steakhouses

COOKING THE PERFECT STEAK

Want to try it at home, but haven't a clue where to start? Follow our tips to cook your steak to perfection, every time

- Opt for a thicker, more muscled cut such as rump, which is firmer to the touch, full of flavour, and less prone to drying out than smaller cuts
- Don't cook straight from the fridge, allow it to settle at room temperature for 20 minutes or so before you begin cooking
- Using a griddle or a frying pan, heat the pan until it is very hot but not quite smoking (this is easier to achieve over gas). The steak should sizzle when it hits the pan
- Oil the steaks rather than the pan to ensure that you don't use too much
- For a rump steak which is approx five to six centimeters thick, use the

following time as a guideline: for medium, cook on high for three to four minutes. Reduce the heat and continue to cook for another two minutes. Turn the steak and cook for a further six minutes. Reduce or increase the times depending on your preference.

- To measure 'doneness', press the steak with your finger – a rare steak will be very soft, the more well done it is, the firmer to the touch it will be
- Always rest your steaks, never serve straight from the pan. Remove to a warm plate, cover with foil, and rest away from the hob for up to ten minutes before you serve ■