

5 Napkin charms on Lincoln Road

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5 Napkin Burger, the first one in Florida, serves burgers, shakes, sushi, salads, and comfort food like mac and cheese and chicken soup.

The new 5 Napkin Burger, just south of New World Center, brings overdue charm to the long-ignored east end of Lincoln Road.

On the ground floor of the yellow Art Deco Lincoln-Drexel Building, the trendy bar and grill offers big, comfy booths and a wall of windows overlooking the people parade. The heavy, dark wood bar and tables impart Old World appeal, while the music (Florence + the Machine, Joy Division) is earnestly young.

But it takes more than killer tunes and atmosphere to be a contender in South Florida's sizzling Burger Wars. With patty prices double the cost of Shake Shack at

the other end of the mall, 5 Napkin sets expectations high, particularly with a name that conjures juicy, chin-wiping flavor.

Which is why we're renaming the place 1 Swipe Burger.

One pass of our white cloth napkin is all it took to tidy up after eating the restaurant's namesake burger, 10 ounces of griddled ground chuck inside a cloud-soft toasted bun with Gruyere cheese, caramelized onions and rosemary aioli. Better than your average burger, but it still didn't live up to its billing. We asked for medium; it came out gray and dry in the middle. Instead of overflowing with sweet, buttery onions and seasoned mayo, the burger had teaspoon-sized toppings that produced nary a drip.

The bacon Cheddar burger was similarly dry and crumbly, the bacon flat and nonfatty, planked across the top like a sun-charred tourist on the beach.

Fortunately, burgers aren't the only offering at this New York export. Starters are adventurous and globe-trotting (if small), from pork taquitos to Vietnamese spring rolls.

Our deep-fried pickles and pastrami – house-made pickles wrapped around deli meat and fried in a light batter – looked desolate, with four spread out on a rectangular platter atop a small bed of sauerkraut. We would have liked more dipping choices than the two thin lines of spicy mustard oil on the plate.

Comfort food — from chicken and matzo ball soups to fancy macaroni and cheese and beer-battered fish and chips — rounds out the eclectic menu, which also includes an amazing 80 beers, 50 wines, 40 bourbons and 10 signature cocktails.

In addition to 10 burger choices (including versions made with turkey, ahi tuna, lamb and vegetables), carnivores can get a half-pound hot dog and a 12-ounce strip steak, with béarnaise sauce and thin, crisp fries.

We were eager to try the knish-like tater tots after hearing raves about the deep-fried scoops of mashed potatoes with scallions and Swiss cheese, but the crusty-outside, mushy-inside side dish left us wishing we had tried the onion rings instead.

On sushi-centric Lincoln Road, the six choices of rolls here (surprise, there's a sushi chef, too) don't disappoint. Our California Rainbow was packed with crab, tuna, salmon and yellow tail, with fresh mango, cucumber and avocado.

Although heavy on mayo, the three chunky lobster roll sliders, served on delightful, flour-dusted white buns, were a light, cool treat, with buttery Bibb lettuce and a mound of bread and butter pickles.

There isn't a dull choice in the five salads, which range from a crumbled burger version on chopped greens to a peanut chicken with radishes, apples and cucumbers. Our grilled chicken paillard salad made a nice, light meal, with red and white endive, grapefruit segments, red onions, fennel and a heap of thin French green beans tossed in a tomato and lime vinaigrette, but our thinchicken breast was burnt.

The best desserts here come in a cup. The fun "s'mores" milkshake included two giant toasted marshmallows floating in graham-flavored vanilla ice cream. The salted caramel shake needed more salty sweetness, but the peanut butter-chocolate was just the right fusion of flavors. These shakes are so filling that two can share, especially when the waitress is nice enough to bring the brimming milkshake cup with an accompanying malt shop-style glass.

Take care pouring. You might need another napkin.