



Restaurant Review of The Crab House

The Crab House, San Francisco

Posted by Editor from [The Food Channel®](#)

I'm a "best of both worlds" sort of person. So when I'm offered a choice, my response is always, "I'll take both."

That's why, when I learned that I could add the fresh Dungeness Crab to the Zuppa di Pesce at the [Crab House](#) in San Francisco, I was able to have the seafood stew I love, with the crab while it was in season.

While you can't always judge your actions by the locals, I believe that when you are out of town you have a moral obligation to look for a local restaurant. In my case, I wanted something casual enough for a solo diner, but upscale enough to experience more than the businesswoman's lunch.

So, with a specific request for seafood, I asked around for a few recommendations. From the hotel concierge to the information desk at the conference, to the cab driver and the trolley driver I found a common name emerged: The Crab House at Pier 39.



See if you can visualize Pier 39, first. It's part New Jersey Boardwalk, part Branson Landing, featuring the resident Hard Rock Café and other evident tourist hot spots. Mini-sugared donuts are sold hot in a cone, crepes are made fresh in front of you, and you get an amazing view of the Bay leading straight to Alcatraz.

The Crab House was literally above the tourist fray, up a flight of wooden stairs and tucked around the corner. An open pit fire warmed the room, and they had my reservation and a nice table by the window. Linen tablecloths mixed with bibs for those eating the crab.

The menu featured the crab, but I was craving the seafood stew I'd had on a previous visit to San Francisco, at a restaurant called Little Joe's, on Broadway. Sadly, I found it had closed its doors a year ago, but the Crab House didn't disappoint. It had the Zuppa di Pesce with all the smells and flavors I

remembered. Besides, I didn't feel like cracking crab legs and working so hard for my food, when I could have the crab added to the stew and get the best of both worlds. I added the garlic bread on my waitress's recommendation, so that I'd have something to mop up every last drop of the soup.

It came served in a tureen, with a gravy ladle for a spoon, for \$19.95 plus \$5.95 for two huge slices of Italian style garlic bread. In the stew, which comes shells and all, were whole shrimp (tails on), lobster, mussels, crab, and tasty flakes of fish. One bite, and all the chill from the Midwest's icy weather melted away and I was finally warm again!

There is a little bit of skill required in eating soup with your fingers, in order to pull the meat out of the shells, and my waitress brought extra napkins "just in case." With each savory spoonful, I relaxed a little more, listening to the chatter of others who had found their way to Pier 39.

You could also choose salads, such as a Foggy Wharf Crab Salad for \$16.95, pastas such as Clams with a Garlic Shallot Sauce for \$17.95, or lobster tail that, at a firm \$29.95, didn't have to fall back on "market price" as it would have to in the Midwest. A prix fixe menu was offered with salad and cheesecake plus two pounds of the Killer Crabs for \$49.95. Desserts include a lemon torta della nonna or a tiramisu, each for \$6.95.

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