

# Deseret News

## Dining out: au naturale

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"This will be great," my husband said sarcastically as we drove toward Sugar House's au naturale restaurant, which features organic, naturally raised, sustainable food. "It'll be, 'Here's a sprout and a tofu chip. That'll be \$10.'"

But he was singing a different tune half an hour later as he bit into a pulled-pork sandwich and French fries.

True, the sandwich was on a nutty whole-grain bun, and the fries were "oven-roasted" rather than cooked in oil. That's kind of how it is at au naturale: healthy twists on classic food and a reasonably priced menu that's got something for everyone, even health-food skeptics.

I liked looking over the menu to find au naturale's take on fast food: burgers of Angus beef, turkey or veggies, with house-made ketchup on whole-grain buns. Sweet-potato fries (oven-roasted, of course) topped with chicken chili and cheese.

And the sides range from sliced apples and a veggie tray to parmesan lavash chips and edamame.

The kids' menu at au naturale is nicely approachable, with roast turkey or grilled chicken sandwiches, plus hamburgers and cheese pizza. With those main dishes kids can choose sliced apples or fries, plus milk, juice or soda (besides the typical Pepsi products, there's Blue Sky natural soda on the fountain).

All the kids' meals were good, though my youngest daughter's personal-size cheese pizza was a bit overcooked. The turkey sandwich had lots of super-fresh, thin-sliced turkey, lettuce and tomatoes on a whole-wheat bun, and the chicken sandwich had big slices of juicy chicken breast and the same fixings.

My son shared with me a cup of that chicken chili, beautifully seasoned and thick with black beans, corn, ancho chiles and tomatillos. I suppose it's really more of a stew, but it's a very good one.

I also had the grilled veggie and goat cheese sandwich, wrapped in spinach lavash flatbread at the recommendation of the enthusiastic young woman who took our order. I was glad, too: lavash is a fat-free flatbread that was firm, chewy and a great way to hold in my sandwich's highly savory, slippery fixings. The sandwich was huge, so I took half of it home to finish later.

Then there was my husband's pulled pork sandwich, overstuffed with piles of dark, juicy pork in a tangy barbecue sauce. He had it without the coleslaw that typically tops the pork, which I think would make it even better.

The au naturale menu features other comfort food, too, including chicken pot pie topped with mashed sweet potatoes and parmesan and a black-bean burrito with roasted yams, brown rice,

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grilled peppers, onions, jicama, chili sauce and Mexican cheese. There's also flatbread pizza, lots of salads, even sushi.

And there are desserts. We sampled the acai berry frozen yogurt, creamy and fresh-tasting with the mouth-puckering flavor of acai (despite its purported massive health benefits, I'm not a fan of the taste), plus several house-made cookies: rich double chocolate chip, crisp reduced-fat chocolate chip, chewy oatmeal raisin and delicate, surprisingly good sugar-free lemon.

Sandwiches and pizza \$7.49-\$11.99, salads \$5.79-\$7.99, soup \$3.59-\$5.99, sides \$1.49-\$5.99, specialties \$6.39-\$7.79, kids' meals \$5.99, desserts \$2.29-\$3.49.