

Ocean Prime at CityNorth

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Already a hit in Florida and Michigan, Ocean Prime is now making waves at Phoenix's CityCenter of CityNorth with it's supercool surroundings and lengthy bill of steaks and seafood.



Though it might be a fresh face in the Valley, Ocean Prime, which opened in the fall at CityCenter of CityNorth, is actually the fifth of its kind in the nation, with locations interspersing Florida (Tampa, Orlando and Miami) and Detroit. Rather than calling itself a seafood restaurant or steakhouse, Ocean Prime prefers the title of supper club, as entertainment is part of the draw to this sleek hot spot. Live piano music provides ear candy in the laidback cocktail lounge, while rich woods, curved walls, circular mirrors and a smattering of blue lights prove to be a feast for the eyes. The standout scene is the covered indoor/outdoor patio that features a palm tree that juts through the white ceiling. As a whole, the atmosphere gives off a futuristic (thanks to the blue lighting and bold mirrors) Rat Pack vibe.

To start, we sampled the surf and turf appetizer featuring sea scallops and boneless short ribs, which were incredibly tender and melted in our mouths. As for additional starters, diners can also order selections from the raw bar (like a shellfish sampler) as well as a few old-fashioned favorites, including truffled deviled eggs and cheddar fondue, among others. Ocean Prime also has several à la carte sides, half of which are dedicated to irresistible-sounding potato dishes, like candied yams with marshmallow brûlée and jalapeño au gratin. We devoured the sea salt-vinegar fries which were substantial in size but still crispy.

As for entrées, Ocean Prime provides its patrons a multitude of choices. During our visit, there were a staggering 17 seafood selections and eight meaty options on the menu. The jumbo lump crab cakes with asparagus and sweet corn cream were quite good, as was the ginger salmon served alongside stir-fried snap peas and soy- butter sauce. The salmon dish, though, could have been prefaced with "jumbo" as well; we were only able to consume about half of the fish. Among the offerings on the bill of beef, there was a 22-ounce porterhouse and an 18-ounce rib-eye—driving home the notion that bigger is better at Ocean Prime. We were quite pleased with the downright burly 16-ounce Kansas City strip, accompanied by Champagne vin blanc.



Be sure not to order up dessert at Ocean Prime if you happen to be dining alone, as the sweets we dug into were also behemoth in size. Luckily, the magnitude of each dessert was backed up with good flavors. The Baked Alaska, an old favorite, offered a little bit for everyone: pound cake; toasted meringue; strawberry jam; fresh raspberries; and vanilla, chocolate and black raspberry ice cream. Each forkful was unlike the last, picking up a different flavor and texture. The chocolate-peanut butter pie was also large and lip-smacking and consisted of peanut butter mousse encased in bittersweet chocolate ganache. The dessert menu also boasts a ten-layer carrot cake, if sizable sweets are your thing.

Before your steak and seafood cravings kick in, do keep in mind that the prices at Ocean Prime are quite steep, even for a high-end establishment. A 12-ounce bone-in filet will cost you \$43 while the Chilean sea bass is listed at \$36. This goes for the cocktails, too. Berries & Bubbles, a concoction of Belvedere Citrus Vodka, crème de cassis, marinated blackberries, house-made sour and Domaine Chandon Brut, was an eye-popping spectacle—as the name suggests, the cocktail actually bubbled as it was prepared tableside—but rings in at \$16. However, at Ocean Prime, it might just be worth doling out for the supercool, see-and-be-seen atmosphere that happens to come with a side of tasty surf and turf.