

**Bonefish Grill in Asheville Citizen-Times and Take5 Blog, Asheville, NC, 9.19.08**  
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## Great service, tasty cuisine highlights at Bonefish Grill

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**Ambience:** Entering the nondescript, strip-mall location, the interior of Bonefish is a pleasant oasis — warmly appointed with wood features, shutters and softly painted walls. The background noise never seemed overwhelming despite a nearly full house on our Monday evening visit.

**Bar:** Keeping in step with the balance of its menu, Bonefish offers a broad but not overzealous wine and cocktail list. We especially enjoyed the house-made sangria (\$4.80), prepared with fresh squeezed citrus, a rainbow of fruit garnishes and our choice of white or red wines. Bonefish offers more than 10 martini recipes and the standard fare of national beers with Heineken and Corona tossed in for a nod to imports.

**Appetizer:** The restaurant excelled here with generously portioned appetizers at quite reasonable prices. My cup of corn chowder with lump crabmeat (\$5.70) was served piping hot with a thick, hearty texture, plenty of crab, and the obvious sweetness of fresh summer corn. The saucy gulf shrimp (\$7.90) was my companion's favorite, a balanced blend of spicy soothed by a light tomato, garlic and feta sauce. The serving was large enough to make a meal unto itself or, as in our case, well suited for sharing. Lastly, the crab cakes (\$10.90) were as all good crab cakes should be — full of tender crab, lightly seared, with just a hint of a fresh, salty aroma.

**Entrée:** Following the stellar appetizers, the entrees at Bonefish have a tough act to live up to. I chose the 8-ounce filet mignon (\$21). This true center-cut scored high on two of my three criteria; it was very tender, very juicy, but without that explosion of flavor I hoped for. Still, paired with fresh seasonal vegetables and potatoes au gratin, it was a quite satisfying selection. My friend enjoyed the longfin tilapia, (\$14.40), lightly blackened and topped with a warm mango salsa. Tilapia has a clean, sweet taste and a slightly firm, flaky texture. I was fearful the combination of fish, seasoning and sauce would compete rather than compliment. However, that was not the case. The folks at Bonefish pay attention to well-developed recipes rather than haphazard abundance, evident in the delicious unison achieved from a variety of flavor sources.

**Dessert:** Though the bananas foster (\$6.90) offered no "flambé" tableside performance, it was quite elegant with just the right balance of sugar, cinnamon and butter. Topped with big scoops of vanilla ice cream, it was easily a dessert to share. The same holds for the macadamia nut brownie (\$5.70). It was twice the size necessary and complemented with a delicious raspberry sauce and fresh whipped cream.

**Service:** While the food was superb, our evening was made truly special by our waitress, Michelle. She had tasted virtually everything and was able to determine our preferences and make appropriate suggestions. In addition to an impressive command of the menu, Michelle was observant — effortlessly noting when we required attention as well as when we desired privacy.

**The verdict:** When dining out, there is a comfort in knowing what to expect. Bonefish captures that steady comfort in a unique way, combining creative recipes with a predictable professionalism. If funky and eclectic is your goal look elsewhere. However, if you enjoy old standards prepared with a conservative degree of flair and served with knowledge and politeness, Bonefish should be your choice.

Final rating: 4 out of 5 stars.