

**Refreshingly Straightforward
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Food – Ambience – Service – Value
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If you're looking for an egg roll or inexpensive, deep-fried seafood, Egg Roll Lady and Fish Shack is the place to go. If you want anything else, including vegetable matter of any kind besides coleslaw, this is not the place for you.

Egg Roll Lady and Fish Shack has only three tables, but despite its small size the atmosphere is bright and cheery. The walls are painted a vivid green and are adorned with paintings that seem to have been done by someone in the family. A portrait of ducks is accompanied by the photograph that inspired it, giving you a window into the workings of the artist. The staff is helpful and friendly, and there is a general intimacy granted by the coziness of the quarters.

One reason for the establishment's scale is that food is primarily served as take-out, and even if you specify "for here," your meal will arrive in styrofoam. If you order the Special Shack's Platter (\$18.95), which features haddock, shrimp, scallops, clam strips and clam belly, all fried, plus fries, you'll be glad it comes pre-packed, because there is no way that you can eat it all. In fact, you'll barely be able to see your dining partner over the staggering mound of fried marine life that you'll find before you. After eating as much of it as he could, this reviewer still could not manage to close the styrofoam container's lid. When I tried to move the parcel by grabbing its lip, the piece of it that I had between my fingers broke off, so great was the opposing weight of its contents.

The menu is so limited as to be almost comical, though there is something refreshingly straightforward about its shamelessly simple offerings of fried seafood, plus the occasional appearance of chicken, which is also fried.

Besides sides and sauces, there is only one menu item that is not or does not contain something fried, and that is the garden salad (\$4.95).

Here there are no confused high concepts, no daring failures or thoughtless marching in step with the fads of the day. There is only the chicken tender plate (\$8.95), clam roll (\$7.95), fried shrimp by the pint (\$11.95) or quart (\$22.95) and so on. For dessert there is cheesecake (\$1.99) and, incredibly, fried dough (\$3.49), presumably for that rare individual who could finish his or her meal and still have an appetite for yet more crispy batter. Beverages include canned and bottled sodas, iced tea and water.

Though the menu doesn't leave much to the imagination, it is hard to imagine being disappointed by this eatery. The concept is so crystal clear and the execution so unambiguous that one's expectations can only be met.

The batter, especially the beer batter, is flavorful and crunchy, and the restaurant is small enough that you can hear your food sizzling while you wait the brief amount of time it takes to be prepared. Clearly, everything is cooked to order. Even the coleslaw is good, and tinged slightly pink by the addition of red cabbage.

But it is the egg rolls that are the star of the menu. Made in-house, these Vietnamese-style rolls differ from their Chinese cousins in width (these are thinner), thickness of wrapper (again, thinner) and filling (better). The Egg Roll Lady stuffs hers with pork, chicken, egg and clear, fine rice noodles. They are nearly perfect, if not perfect. It makes you wish that there were more Vietnamese specialties, perhaps some of which might not be fried?

If only there was more Egg Roll Lady, a little less Fish Shack.