

VALUE MEAL



Joe Trevino

The Pita Jungle's Mediterranean roasted chicken pita, priced at \$5.45, is a tasty and filling value meal, according to our critic. Take in any dish at the vegetarian-friendly restaurant with business and hippy-types alike.

Great food, cool vibe — have it all at Pita Jungle

By **ADRIENNE FRANK**
Get Out

Several members of the waitstaff at Pita Jungle went to my high school. Eight years ago, they weren't cool. (I'm allowed to say that because I was a band nerd.)

But somewhere along the way they developed this really hip aesthetic. If the cheerleaders and jocks are now driving mini vans and wearing elastic waist-banded everything, these folks are today's "cool kids," decked out in Urban Outfitter wears and sporting hairdos and hair hues that most of us could never pull off.

The feel of Pita Jungle, a vegetarian-friendly eatery with a delightful Mediterranean-inspired menu, is much the same. Subtly hip, arty, laid-back — it's cool in the sense that it's not *trying* to be cool. (Unlike those aforementioned cheerleaders.)

The walls of the airy, open space — which features exposed duct work and concrete floors — are lined with colorful works from local artists. Moby's "Play" dances throughout the restaurant, which also features a twinkle-lit patio overlooking the community lake.

It's a relaxing yet distinctive space. And on this afternoon, it's packed with corporate types in suits to those whose "uniform" includes peasant skirts and flip-flops.

The deal

Where: Pita Jungle, 1949 W. Ray Road, Chandler, (480) 855-3232

What: Mediterranean roasted chicken pita (\$5.45)

Although I'm tempted to just order Pita's incredible roasted bell pepper hummus for lunch — as I've done so many times before — I opt instead for something that covers more of the food groups, the Mediterranean roasted chicken pita sandwich (\$5.45).

The enormous sandwich — big enough to share, along with a plate of that tasty hummus — is similar to a shawarma pita, stuffed with perfectly grilled marinated chicken breast, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, pickles, garlic sauce and tahini. Although it's a bit messy, the sandwich is filling and fabulous: Bursting with flavor and not too hard on the heart, either. (Sides here include mixed beans and brown rice — no fries or onion rings.)

The verdict: I still can't decide if I'm hip enough to eat at Pita Jungle. I don't drive a mini van, but I don't have a tattoo, either; perhaps I'm still in band nerd status. But hey, even a band nerd needs her shawarma and roasted bell pepper hummus — high school hierarchies be damned.