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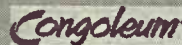
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DINING ABOUT

Many of us are old enough to remember the family restaurant where mom and dad could take the whole family for a home-style meal. The menu offered familiar foods prepared in familiar ways. Importantly, the cost for the family to eat was very reasonable.

Amid the more recent fast food and gourmet restaurants, some old-fashioned family restaurants still exist. Here on the Crystal Coast, Cox's Family Restaurant is one such down-home example. The restaurant has served breakfast, lunch and dinner to coastal patrons since 1976, featuring good country cooking at what it calls the "right price."

At Cox's, breakfast is served all day. The breakfast menu, with its long list of traditional favorites, is intended to accommodate every down-home taste. Eggs are the staple fare, served fried, poached or scrambled. They may be accompanied by meat options, such as country ham, corned beef hash, smoked sausage, pork tenderloin and ribeye steak, not to mention long-time favorites bacon and sausage. Other familiar additions include hash browns, home fries and, naturally, grits. Biscuits, a Southern down-home staple, may be ordered alone; with eggs, cheese, country ham or pork tenderloin; or smothered with sausage gravy. Omelets are available too, filled with cheese, bacon, ham, steak or assorted vegetables (onions, mushrooms, peppers and tomatoes). If your taste leads you away from egg dishes, hot cakes, French toast, muffins, pastries and waffles are available as well. The cost of breakfast items ranges from \$1.25 to \$9.25, with most selections less than \$5.

The lunch menu at Cox's centers on sandwiches and burgers that have long been family favorites and that often bring back memories of the good old days. They range from BLT to turkey club, from grilled cheese to barbeque, from country ham to ribeye steak and from a hot dog to a tuna fish sandwich. Burgers include the double cheeseburger, the patty melts and seafood burgers made with crab, oysters, scallops or shrimp. These items are priced below \$5, closer to \$3. For a small up-charge, French fries and coleslaw may be added to make most lunch selections deluxe.

The dinner menu at Cox's presents customers with a long list of food options. Among them are Southern preparations such as country fried steak, ham steak, fried chicken, liver and onions, country ham, barbeque and the fisherman's platter of fried clam strips, flounder, oysters, scallops and shrimp. Each fisherman's platter component may instead be ordered singly as a full dinner. Beyond these traditional favorites, the menu also offers veal parmesan, grilled pork chops and ribeye steak, among other selections. Each dinner includes two vegetables, chosen from a list of more than 30. Among them are potatoes (fried, mashed, scalloped, baked, hash browns and even "tots"), sweet potatoes (baked and "sticks") and yams (candied, of course). Additional vegetable options—rarely found today on restaurant menus—include butter beans, collards, creamed corn, turnip greens, fried cabbage, fried okra, fried squash, pickled beets, rutabagas and string bean casserole.

Dinners are very modestly priced, with most non-seafood items costing about \$6, some only slightly more, and a ribeye (large size) steak dinner set at about \$11. Seafood choices typically range in price from about \$7 to about \$12. Both the range of choices and the cost of full dinners seem to distinguish Cox's as a family-friendly restaurant reminiscent of days (almost) gone by.

No restaurant like Cox's would develop a menu without a selection of traditional desserts, especially pies. Cox's gives patrons a (difficult) choice among apple, pecan, lemon meringue, French silk and Reese's peanut butter pies. (Well, maybe the Reese's pie isn't traditional, but a little innovation never hurts!) Additional offerings are chocolate cake, pudding and, of course, Jell-O. The desserts are generally priced at about \$3 or less, with the come-lately Reese's peanut butter pie costing \$3.75.

Cox's Family Restaurant is located at 4109 Arendell Street in Morehead City. The restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner each day, opening at 6 a.m. and closing at 9 p.m. from Monday through Saturday. Sunday hours are 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. The telephone number is 726-6961.



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