

## Dining at the Fair

### Moroccan Pavilion's Restaurant Offers Exotic Dances and Varied Menu

By CRAIG CLAIBORNE

IF there is one restaurant at the fair that has the carnival-like atmosphere commonly and often affectionately associated with less stilted fair enterprises of the past, it is probably that of the Moroccan Pavilion.

The entertainment, from nautch dancing (don't tell Robert Moses) to mimes, is accompanied by native instruments and it is at once hypnotic, narcotic and deafening.

The entertainment is of a sort that could be expected in some sleek nightclub—if they still exist—in Casablanca or Oran, though in this age of the topless bathing suit and evening gown even the shimmy seems a trifle sedate.

Before the sun goes down, it is obvious to the casual observer that the Moroccan dining room was furnished with a carefully guarded purse. The backless seats, for example, will never win prizes for comfort.

Behind the bold-colored and artificial-velour banquettes there is unpainted plywood, and even the pointed arches in traditional Moroccan design have an amateurish jigsaw cut-out look. When darkness settles, however, the atmosphere takes on a deceptive and welcome authenticity.

The food at the Moroccan Pavilion is, for the most part, commendable and cordially recommended. Although it may seem unaccustomed to the average American palate it is insinuating and will probably prove beguiling to almost any palate, adventurous or otherwise.

There is cous-cous, the altogether delicious cereal dish that is to the Moroccan diet what rice is to the Orient. This is a sophisticated dish, to use a term in its original sense.

Cous-cous, which resembles cracked wheat in texture, is served at the pavilion in traditional style with either lamb or chicken. With either it is cooked and garnished with a mélange of chick-peas, raisins and vegetables such as zucchini and carrots.

The initiated will request pepper sauce on the side. This is a palate-burning and some-

what dry blend of hot red peppers, garlic, cumin and vinegar.

Another native entree is chicken Dejaj, a fantasy of chicken, excellent unstuffed olives, cooked lemon quarters and a pure butter sauce.

Baby lamb Tajine is also listed on the menu as a national dish. This is a combination of young lamb braised with prunes, hard-cooked eggs, sliced onions, parsley and sesame seeds. If this sounds odd and unpalatable, don't believe it.

Any of these dishes are served in a complete menu and the cost is \$4.95. Other facets of the meal include a rather ordinary green salad seasoned with cumin or coriander or both, a soup of ground chick-peas or lentils in puree and a cunningly sweet if somewhat tough Moroccan pastry. The beverage that accompanies the meal is a powerfully sweet mint tea and that too, oddly enough, has its charm. There is an à la carte menu with main courses priced at \$3.95.

For those who consider such feasting a touch too exotic there is an American dinner with steak, lamb chops or roast beef. The cost is \$5.95.

For someone who recalls with the keenest affection a mountain lodge in Switzerland in both winter and summer, the restaurant of the Swiss Pavilion is an equally keen disappointment.

There is no mistaking that some of the food is good. The fondue, for example, is excellent and so is the Bundnerfleisch or dried beef of the Grisons. But the cost!

The former, made with Gruyère cheese and a little white wine, is currently \$4.50 (when the fair opened it cost \$3.50, which seemed excessive) and the dried beef is \$1.25 for a very small portion.

Aside from cost, however, the main courses sampled recently are far more disappointing. The minced veal Zurich-style had been cooked too far in advance and the baked chicken with alpine herbs was dry and too uninspired for elaboration.

The menu is all à la carte and the cost of main courses is from about \$4.50 for the fondue to \$4.95 for a platter of cold meats.