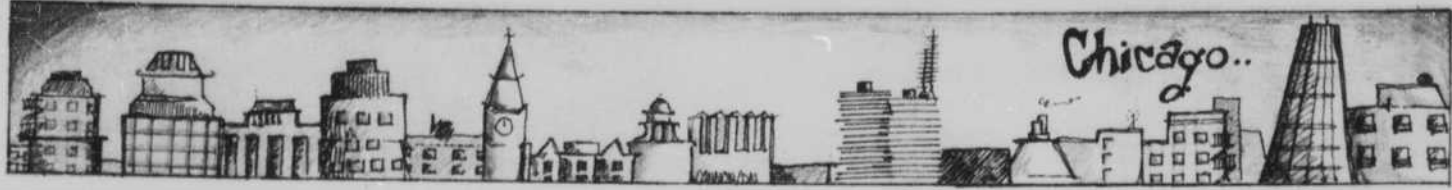


# diversions



Connie Sheehan/ Daily Nebraskan

The double-decker tour bus totes tourists around downtown Chicago, giving them a two story view of Chicago's architecture and street life.

## Chicago offers myriad of cultural tastes

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Diversions Reporters

As with any city of its size, Chicago offers a smorgasbord of tastes for your buds.

With that in mind, it should be reasonable to assume that the emphasis is on red meat -- considering the city flourished because of its cattle industry.

And, too, Chicago has an inordinate amount of Italian eateries, relative to other ethnic foods. These places range from the corner hole-in-the-wall where the smells of sausage and sweat are indistinguishable to the places where only railroad owners can get a reservation.

Chicago has a formidable Italian community -- remember the Mafia -- and the quality of Italian food there reflects this. In other words, the chances of getting authentic Italian food in Chicago, unlike any experienced around Lincoln, are great.

The starting point for Italian food was across the street from the

Art Institute of Chicago. Mama Mia! Pasta, 116 S. Michigan Ave., specializes in fast food Italian -- not a new idea, but the trick is.

The line was long but moved fast. You place your order at the beginning and convey down the counter, watching your food being prepared along the way. Everything is homemade -- sauces, pasta,



pizza and soup. The sauces are pre-made and sit warming. The method of cooking the pasta is primarily what keeps the line moving.

The pre-measured pasta order is separated into individual baskets and lowered into a cooker similar to a deep fat fryer but filled with boiling water. When done, each plate is filled according to the order on the tray. Among the sauces, one could choose from Marinara, Carne, Zucchini al Pomodoro,

Clam and Alfredo. The pastas ranged from semolina to spinach to tomato-basil and whole wheat.

All dishes came with Italian bread -- thick and heavy, which was perfect for cleaning off your plate and filling you up. Besides the pasta dishes, there was a wide variety of salads, sandwiches, pizza and two to three specials a

Superior St., provided an unexpected feast. Repeatedly ranked as the number one pizza in Chicago, you really must see it to believe it.

The first things you see, however, are dark, dark, graffiti-ridden walls. The atmosphere would be okay except for a bunch of really loud kids out past their curfew.

If you can find your way around the maze of small rooms to your table, you will discover that the help is friendly and willing to make suggestions. Ours suggested the appropriate pizza sizes in relation to the most for the best price.

We started the meal out with a pitcher of beer. Maybe it was because it was late on a Friday night, maybe not, but the beer was flat and warm. Oh well, we didn't really come for the beer anyway. A side order of garlic bread did get us back on track. It was crispy and spiced perfectly.

The pizza took a while -- about an hour. But when it arrived, it was well worth the wait. From the list of ingredients on each pizza, it seemed to be a Thanksgiving din-

day. An added bonus was a selection of beers and wines.

The prices were fairly reasonable ranging from \$1.60 for a slice of New York style cheese pizza to \$4.95 for the special of the day.

### Viva Italia

Our next sampling of Italian cuisine came later in the day, much later -- 11 p.m., which seemed to be as busy a time in Chicago restaurants as 6 p.m. is in Lincoln.

Gino's East Pizzeria, 160 E.

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