Blue Nile, located in Seattle’s First Hill neighborhood, offers traditional Ethiopian cuisine in a not-so-traditional restaurant setting.

The food was interesting, flavorful and different from what is typically served in ethnic restaurants.

Meals are brought served on top of very thin bread instead of a plate. Each diner is given the same bread to eat his dish with. There is no silverware in sight.

The bread has a slight sourness to it that adds a little more kick to the already flavorful dishes it’s served with.

The restaurant has a combo option, with which a group can order smaller samplings of several dishes, which I would definitely suggest ordering.
The smaller combo, enough to feed at least two, possibly three people, comes with three meat dishes and three vegetable dishes along with bread for each person.

There is also a larger combo offered that can feed four to five.

At about $18 and $25, split between a few friends, these combos offer a highly affordable meal out.

I would highly recommend the “Green Chicken,” a marinated chicken and spinach dish, and the “Lamb Tibes,” served in a creamy, spicy red sauce, for meat eaters.

The “Cabbage” is also savory and more filling than one might expect. It consists of perfectly flavored cabbage and potatoes.

The food at Blue Nile was nothing short of excellent; however, the ambiance made me uncomfortable enough to consider leaving shortly after arriving.

Five minutes after sitting down, a man I assumed was a “regular” approached our table asking for a cigarette.

I was even more uncomfortable with the fact that a TV was on, playing a horror film quite loudly, as a homeless man sat drinking a glass of water intensely watching a man saw off his own leg.
I wasn’t sure I’d be able to stomach a new cuisine in such an environment, but luckily, the waitress scolded our smoker friend, and the TV was turned off before our food came.

I’m assuming the homeless man and horror film were not regular fixtures at the restaurant, but I wouldn’t come back to find out. Even though the food was flavorful and interesting, there are several Ethiopian restaurants within blocks of Blue Nile that I’d try before going back.

456 12th Ave. (12th and Jefferson)
Seattle, WA
(206) 320-8501
www.bluenileseattle.com
Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 2 a.m, Monday-Sunday
Alcohol: Wine, Beer
Payment: Mastercard, Visa, AmEx,
Parking: Street parking
Disabled access: Yes