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At Lorenzo's market in North Miami Beach, they do the Italian cooking for you

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Veal parmigiana

Supermarkets these days don't just send you home with the ingredients to make dinner. More and more, they're sending you home with dinner — prepared, heated and ready to eat. Before them all, and still going strong after more than 60 years: Lorenzo's Italian Center in North Miami Beach.

In the middle of the store, flanked by hanging hams and rows of wine, is a cafeteria dishing up old favorites: sausage and peppers, veal parm and specials such as tilapia in buttery lemon sauce. Peer through the steam table glass, tell the server what you want, and watch as it's piled on top of spaghetti.

The line starts with a freezer of desserts. Pick a spumoni (frozen orangy goodness) that serves four and proceed. Select a salad (tortellini, chickpea and several others), then head to the hot food.

Daily specials come with spaghetti, a side salad (mixed greens, garbanzos and creamy Italian) and a hunk of crusty bread. Each platter easily serves two.

The tilapia was heavenly, with a soggy but light breading that soaked up the sauce. Specials also included a brick of veal parm and chicken sorrentino wrapped around prosciutto and eggplant.

A la carte pasta dishes include stuffed shells, meat lasagna and spaghetti topped with meatballs or sausage. At the end of the line: a glass case with calzone, stromboli and pizza (10-inchers and slices).

The staff packs the messy meals tightly to avoid leaks in the car. Because the melted cheese and tomato sauce can make meals indistinguishable, labels would have been helpful.

There's nothing daring or trendy in this old-fashioned fare served up in the middle of a market — unless you count that all the new markets are now doing this, too.

Laurenzo's Italian Center, 16385 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach; 305-945-6381; specials

\$8.99, eggplant parmigiana \$7.99, lasagna \$6.99, pizza \$8.99.

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