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DINE



TRADITIONAL MEETS TRENDY AT BUKHARA

November 11, 2015 by Jonathan Meyer

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As you walk up the pedestrian-only zone of Church Street in Cape Town, you're met with a sign at the entrance to Bukhara that states rather boldly: 'Arguably the finest Indian cuisine on planet Earth'.

After trying out Bukhara's new summer menu, I'm inclined to agree.

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The Venue

Nestled between Greenmarket Square and the Cape Town High Court, the Church Street venue of Bukhara is the group's flagship branch, having opened its doors in November 1995. Two decades later, Bukhara is an institution in the Cape, with outlets in the V&A Waterfront, Grandwest Casino and Stellenbosch.

Once making your way up a short flight of stairs you're immediately struck by the size of the restaurant's inside dining area. There's outside balcony seating as well, but my partner and I opted for an inside table, as the spring air was a bit chilly. We also wanted a clear view of the restaurant's glass-encased kitchen area.





The Food

Bukhara offers exactly as you might expect from an Indian menu, with all the favourites prominently on display. The Butter Chicken (R134), Lamb Rogan Josh (R179) and Prawn Curry (R214) immediately caught my eye, but upon further inspection, I found an oddly-unique tapas section. Dishes like Koliwada Maachi (lemon salmon), Peshwari Channa (curried whole chick peas) and Adhraki Murg (ginger chicken) intrigued me, and I was easily convinced by our attentive waiter, Clint, to opt for a selection of tapas instead of my traditional go-to Indian meals.



Let me be honest with you from the start and say the tapas option is not cheap. It's R495 for two diners, but I will now be the first to say that once the food is on the table you'll soon realise how you're actually getting incredible value for money.

For starters we were brought a bowl of Aloo Chat – cubed potatoes mixed with an assortment of spices and vermicelli. It was the perfect accompaniment to the first course of Chicken Shami Kabab and Koliwada Maachi, both of which simply melted in my mouth.

Clint hastily brought the next round of dishes, a Chicken Malai Kabab and a Chicken Chili Kabab – each good on their own, but great in combination with the assortment of sauces we now found on our table. At this stage we were already feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the volume of food being brought to our table – I thought tapas was supposed to be little tasters! But Clint assured us he would keep an eye on us and allow us the necessary time to truly enjoy each dish.

Out of the curries that next arrived, the Adhraki Murg stole the show for me. It's a ginger chicken dish that blended perfectly with the fluffy Jeera Pulao (white rice) that Clint stealthily-slid onto our table just moments before.

At this point I must also note that none of the dishes we'd tasted thus far were 'too hot' or 'too spicy'. They all just seemed to work well together, in a combination of flavours and tastes that I was able to replicate again and again thanks to the 'build-your-own-meal' nature of tapas.



A glass (or two) of house white was just what I needed to feel truly relaxed throughout my Bukhara experience, and then I came face to face with a dessert board the likes of which I'm sure they write songs about. Delectably-thick Lindt chocolate mousse, homemade mango ice

A glass (or two) of house white was just what I needed to feel truly relaxed throughout my Bukhara experience, and then I came face to face with a dessert board the likes of which I'm sure they write songs about. Delectably-thick Lindt chocolate mousse, homemade mango ice cream and a saffron-infused carrot concoction were almost too good to be true. There's even a selection of cocktails and Lassi (yoghurt drinks) on offer, but I could not fit another thing into my mouth.

The End

For over 20 years, Bukhara in Church Street has been supplying residents of Cape Town with a traditional Indian experience, but with a clear intention of staying trendy. From the large wooden doors on the bathroom stalls, to the cosmopolitan lounge music playing in the bar, to the crisp white crockery and the delectable treats thereon, a visit to Bukhara will leave you with no doubt that the sign outside their front door was completely right.



OF NOTE

Where 33 Church Street, CBD (24-hour parking in Burg Street)

Cost See the [menu](#)

Contact +27 21 424 0000, capetown@bukhara.com, www.bukhara.com

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