

Culinary Journey at Vasanta Bhavan and Ponnusamy Restaurant



Appetising vegetarian Thalis are a specialty at Vasanta Bhavan

This popular South Indian chain of restaurants is the place to appreciate the authenticity of exotically wholesome and spicy Indian food.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardene | **Photographs** Vishwathan Tharmakulasingham

Spicy, tangy and aromatic. Indian cuisine consists of all the qualities of pungency that enlivens any meal with a cocktail of spices, aroma and flavours. Striking and vibrant in appearance with its large array of curries, flat-crepe like crispy dosai varieties to cake-like soft idlis and layered flat-bread parottas, Sri Lankans and visitors to the Island can embark on a culinary journey at the Vasanta Bhavan and Ponnusamy restaurants situated in the comfortable and tranquil surroundings of

Horton Place, Colombo 7. Vasanta Bhavan is a pure vegetarian restaurant, open from breakfast to dinner, while the Ponnusamy specialises in Chettinad vegetarian and non-vegetarian food and serves lunch, evening tiffin and dinner. Together they offer a variety of flavours; a taste of India.

Situated side-by-side, the two restaurants serve the most familiar Indian food to a variety of specialty dishes that are unique to this South Indian chain, which also operate in India, Singapore, Dubai, Muscat and the USA. The ambience in the two restaurants is simple, sans extravagant decor, the clean marble floors, white walls and appropriate lighting offer a relaxed dining experience. The menu is richly varied, carefully prepared by authentic Indian chefs to recipes that have lasted for generations and been mastered through the ages.



Ponnusamy and Vasanta Bhavan are located side by side in Colombo

Vasanta Bhavan serves cuisine that reinforces the character of Indian food as one of the best and favourite foods for vegetarians; it fuses spices so carefully that the paneer, green peas, mushroom and cauliflower and even the bland spinach is tossed and immersed in spices and sauces that make them scintillatingly delectable side dishes to accompany naan, rotti and parotta. If you ask the stewards and the chefs at Vasanta Bhavan, they will guide you to try out something unique and different like Rava Dosai, Onion Dosai and Adai Aviyal, a protein enriched dosai made from a variety of pulses accompanied by a curry of mixed vegetables. The dishes - Madras Meal, the South Indian Thali, the North Indian Thali and the Vasanta Bhavan Special, served on a stainless steel platter for lunch is a wholesome meal, a combination of a variety of delicious dishes.

Sambar, rasam and pickle with dry and soupy vegetables served hot and fresh can be downed with Sweet Payasam for dessert. Of course there'll always be room for a tumbler of Vasanta Bhavan filtered coffee from India. However, the menu also includes a variety of rice and vegetable biryani dishes, soups, snacks, raithas and salads and even kottu for dinner. Lassi or fruity beverages are ideal to beat the heat. Vasanta Bhavan serves many of these delights at the weekday vegetarian breakfast buffet.

Spicy, Chettinad cuisine served at Ponnusamy offers a true taste of this South Indian culinary delicacy. It gives life to a culinary tradition that is synonymous with spicy food, a gastronomic experience of a lively cuisine as 'homemade' authentic Chettinad spices mixed and matched into a variety of starters, Biryani, vegetables and meats is served with gusto. Anbu Selvam, Master Chef of Chettinad food at Ponnusamy highly recommends mutton for a change; Mutton Gola, Mutton Brain Fry, Liver Fry, Kidney Fry, soup and mutton biryani. Chettinad flavours are used to make the most succulent chicken, and variety of seafood, and if you're an intrepid foodie looking for novelty, then Chettinad cuisine at Ponnusamy will not disappoint.



The restaurants' team

The flavours of the spices, freshly ground black pepper with cumin, coriander, ginger and garlic seep so well into the meats, the pieces will simply melt in your mouth! Chettinad fare at Ponnusamy is a long repertoire that allows their patrons to relish the legendary gastronomy of the Chettiars.

Both restaurants accommodate up to 100 guests while a separate Party Hall can seat another 100 guests quite comfortably for official and family occasions. With ample parking, Vasanta Bhavan and Ponnusamy are not only perfectly paired in location, they give life to a rich tradition of Indian cuisine; leave any foodie spoilt for choice.

19/1 Horton Place, Colombo 7

Vasanta Bhavan: (+94 11) 266 5598

Ponnusamy Res.: (+94 11) 266 5599

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