

India À La Carte

Posted on



A generous Thali that promises a passage to India

Thalis at Havelock Town offers you the subcontinent on a platter.

Words Yomal Senerath-Yapa | **Photography** Vishwathan Tharmakulasingham



Perumal Gajendran, Managing Director

With an appetising clang of dishes heard in its name, Thalis is a calm place where you can sit back and unravel the intricacies of the vegetarian but thickly flavoured world of Indian cuisine. Inside, Indian music concocts with soulful, tinkling tones, a series of nostalgic images of idyllic Jaffna and South Indian landscapes: palmyra, sand dunes, gopurams.

But Thalis does not limit herself to South Indian fare. The two parts – North and South – of the diverse subcontinent share the menu, each contributing a selection of exotic dishes, making up amply for the lack of fish or meat (and, indeed, eggs). Also, Thalis is the only restaurant in Sri Lanka to serve Jain food, which is probably the most spiritually motivated diet in the world. The Jains ensure that they avoid what seem so harmless to us: the homely onions, garlic, carrots and even potatoes.

Thalis is part of Vasanta Bhavan, the vegan restaurant chain holding its own amidst the cosmopolitan, sophisticated palates of Dubai, Doha-Qatar, Sharjah, India and even London. As such, they take pride in their culinary team, coming from the length and breadth of India including Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

The Thalis menu is understandably rambling, seeing as they represent an almost unimaginably vast geographical spread. In pride of place are the platters that give the restaurant its name: thalis. The South Indian 'thali' comes with sambar, kootu, porial, wathal, kulmboo and moong dhal. The North Indian thali offers three staples

- rice, pullao, chappathi - with a soup, four curries, curd and dessert. There is also the Thalis' special thali, a blend of north and south, a wonderful hybrid meal quite a feast.

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The South Indian special menu is a celebration of Indian cooking. It has filling idlys, uttappams, pooris, vadais, chappathi, paratha and more than 20 varieties of dosai. The side dishes menu offers more than 30 savoury preparations to add taste to the staples. But if you are not in the mood to partake a heavy meal, you can avail yourself of the rotti menu, which has light naans, kulchas, rotti and parathas.



The modern exterior of Thalis

The Chindian (Chinese-Indian or Chinese vegetarian) menu promises an interesting culinary sojourn, with such beautiful amalgamations of the Far East and Southern Asia as Paneer Manchurian and Spicy Noodles. They also offer fresh salads made of fruits and vegetables.

It's surprising to know that Thalis is just one year old, considering the prodigious

reputation that has grown around the restaurant. Among the credentials they have garnered is an 'A' for Food Safety Excellence from the Colombo Municipal Council, and the best commentaries come from diners. Thalis has already become one of Colombo's most popular Indian restaurants, a favourite among Sri Lankans as well as European and Indian visitors.

The banquet hall in Thalis is secluded space for private parties, meetings and discussions. They also cater for home parties, and undertake home delivery and special food orders.

Open from 11 in the morning till 11 in the evening, Thalis has a very spacious car park for the convenience of diners. Having weathered the crucial first year brilliantly, Thalis looks forward to diffuse the flavours of the subcontinent among a wider clientele, making the uninitiated discover and fall in love with this savoury, colourful, spicy cuisine as diverse as its country of origin.

**155 Park Road,
Colombo 5
(+94 11) 258 6000**

