

Royal Indulgence

Posted on



Colombo'

s latest destination for exquisite North Indian cuisine, the Maharaja Palace takes you back through time into the grandeur of ancient Mogul palaces, the opulence of artistic North Indian décor and the mouth-watering Lucknawi savours found nowhere else in Sri Lanka. Within mere months since opening its doors in style, the restaurant has increasingly captured the hearts of gastronomes and ardent fans of Indian cuisine in the country.

Words Kamalika Jayathilake **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda

The splendour of the majestic interior ornamented by beautiful Mughul furniture enriched by golden chandeliers and distinctive traditional décor affords the perfect setting to taste the delectable range of scrumptious dishes offered at the Maharaja Palace.

Maharaja Palace Takes You Back Through Time Into The Grandeur Of Ancient Mogul Palaces

Authentic Mughlai food celebrated globally for its richness enhanced by an assortment of aromatic herbs and spices is prepared using essential flavours such as garam masala, saffron, mixed spices, cinnamon, cardamom, mace and nutmeg with generous amounts of ghee, curd, milk and fresh cream.

The Awadhi Lucknawi Cuisine At Maharaja Palace Ranges From Very Mild To Spicy Delicacies Giving The Characteristic Aroma Of Whole And Ground Spices That Enhance Their Royal Savours.

M Abubakar is the Executive Chef at the Maharaja Palace and reigns its royal kitchen by expertly guiding his well trained staff of six Indian chefs with his experience spanning well over two decades in the Holy City of Medina, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Following the distinct style used at an imperial Mogul kitchen, the Awadhi Lucknawi cuisine at Maharaja Palace ranges from very mild to spicy delicacies giving the characteristic aroma of whole and ground spices that enhance their royal savours.

“We make everything here at the restaurant; our curd, paneer (cottage cheese) as well as ingredients used for our desserts are all freshly made at the restaurant,” stated M Abubakar fondly known as Chef Abu. “The ghee (clarified butter) and most of the vital spices we use are especially brought down from India,” he added. What is more, the restaurant does not offer pork or beef dishes and uses only halal-certified products. It also completely avoids the use of monosodium glutamate (MSG) so that the food is not only delicious but also healthy.

The Maharaja Palace menu boasts of an extensive array of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian appetisers and main dishes, Indian breads and rice, beverages as well as desserts. Traditional mild salted or sweet lassi blended with sugar and fruits, come in the popular flavours of mango, strawberry and avocado and is an element not to be missed. The restaurant also has a range of scrumptious vegetarian, chicken and seafood appetisers in the likes of Khumb Nawabi, Tandoori Aloo Ghobi or Chicken Hazarvi Kabab among a host of others uniquely prepared with creamy yogurts, cheese, cream and aromatic Indian spices.

Some of the most sought after mains at the restaurant include the delightful biryanis, other popular rice dishes and crispy fresh Indian breads such as naans, rotis and parathas. The Mughlai ‘Dum’ style of cooking over a slow fire is also used for some of the opulent signature dishes offered at the Maharaja Palace, such as the Chicken Dum Biryani, the Mutton Dum Biryani and the Vegetable Dum Biryani, all cooked in steam, in a covered pot

with a blend of Indian spices to create the distinctly exquisite aroma.

Some of the popular Maharaja Palace signature delicacies include Butter Chicken, Mutton Korma, Tandoori Chicken, Tandoori Prawns, Chicken Hazarwi Kabab and a variety of similar mouth-watering Lucknawi specialties. “The paneer dishes prepared with homemade cottage cheese are the highlight of the vegetarian range at the Maharaja Palace featuring variety and authenticity in taste for the vegetarian,” stated Chef Abu elaborating on their taste. Desserts at the restaurant begin from regular ice cream to authentic sweet treats such as Gulab Jamun and Kulfi, an Indian variant for ice cream in a choice of malai, strawberry, pistachio, or mango.

The family restaurant is indeed a palace with its spacious interiors capable of accommodating 80 guests on the ground floor itself and another 50 in the separate private dining rooms on the first floor. The five private dining rooms thematically coloured and furnished add more glamour while the two lounge rooms and waiting area offer convenience to guests.

The majestic white halls of the restaurant intricately hued in gold and a touch of colour, the large wooden stairway, distinctly Mughal architectural designs such as the carved archways and pillars and the beautiful marble floors not only take you on an exquisite culinary adventure but also a truly royal experience.

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