



Large movie posters adorning the wall add a retro feel

The ocean breeze mingled with the tantalizing aromas that wafted through, creating a blissful blend that made our mouths water. We were comfortably seated on the deck of The Fat Crab restaurant, situated facing the turquoise waters of the beach in a quaint corner on Haig Road, Kollupitiya, awaiting to indulge in the glorious decadence of mouthwatering seafood delights.

Words Hansani Bandara | **Photographs** Isuru Upeksha

One is first escorted to the wooden platform of the restaurant through an arched doorway, followed by a flight of stairs. The simple combination of black and timber take dominance in decorations and creates the perfect setting that is reminiscent of a retro diner. Large movie posters adorn the wall behind the bar counter with a burst of colour that complement the all black setting. It is informal and tells you that it is the kind of place where you can just 'roll up your sleeves and dig in' to taste and savour the food with each bite. And as you wait to indulge in what will possibly a feat to remember, you get to watch the horizon embracing the setting sun painting patterns in the sky with yellow and crimson hues.

This restaurant has been known for its delectable Sri Lankan lagoon crab dishes, cooked to perfection and savoured by many who have patronised The Fat Crab over the years. And now, while the crab would still be the king of the menu, a fish head curry has been newly knighted to take the restaurant's guests on a rather different gastronomical journey. With its Malaysian and Singaporean origins, this new entrant too grabs its share of limelight alongside the famed crab, as a promotional offering. The fish head curry composes itself with a mix of traditional spices that add flavour to the Red Snapper or the Seer fish head curry. Okra, aubergine and tomato are also added to the curry to accompany the fish and this dish is served with the optional sticky rice or *kade paan* (wood-fired oven bread). Apart from this, the menu presents a plethora of dishes to suit any palate. Such options include a good variety of prawn, lobster, freshest of fish, chicken and steak dishes with myriad of pasta specialities.

"As far as The Fat Crab is concerned, it is a labour of love and we have been doing it for three years. It has always been about the food. We are very popular, especially among tourists because of the open air concept. We try to keep it simple and informal because we want our guests to feel comfortable and enjoy," said Athula Senanayake, Managing Director of Don Stanley's Group and the Founder of The Fat Crab.

The place livens up at sundown since that is when The Fat Crab is best visited. Groups of twos and threes, including families come to indulge in the scrumptious seafood. The atmosphere transforms as light music plays in the background and dusk slowly settles in ushering the twilight. Trains would hurry their way through the snaking tracks in front of the restaurant, painting a beautiful picture in the backdrop of the setting sun. You sit back, relax and wait for The Fat Crab to take you on a one-of-a-kind gastronomical journey. And mate, is there a better way to end the day?

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