

Dining out

Bur Dubai

... a melting pot of cuisines and flavours

By Shailaja Desai

A drive down Bur Dubai will take you on a delightful culinary revelation. A multifaceted area where old world charm infuses with modern day glitz, it boasts cultural diversity, and is a melting pot of cuisines and flavors. This is reflected in its myriad choices of restaurants, street cafés and franchise chains, and various hotels catering to visitors.

More importantly, it is a treasure trove of hidden gems offering a thrilling array of food choices guaranteed to satisfy the palates of all types of diners. MyGuide delves deep into the streets and alleyways to let you in on some of the best dining experiences that this part of the city has to offer.

Sub-Continental cuisines

Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor at the Melia Hotel Dubai is the stunning and contemporary addition to Kapoor's Dubai restaurants. This fine dining destination caters to a sophisticated and international palate, and showcases Kapoor's exquisite creations, more aptly termed as Progressive Indian, as they infuse traditional flavors with a twist. "This is representative of Indian cuisine today and perhaps the future, too," remarks Master Chef Sanjeev Kapoor.

New on the block is the recently opened Maharaja Bhog, a premium vegetarian thali concept outlet offering a delectable selection of Gujarati and Rajasthani dishes. "The restaurant opened its doors



recently, and has been well-received by foodies looking for good vegetarian fare,” says Mihir Salla, the restaurant’s managing director.

It’s Fussion, a restaurant under the same umbrella, on the other hand, serves a variety of Italian, Chinese, Mexican and Indian dishes all under one roof, a unique concept as it is very rare for one to find vegetarian Mexican by itself. New kid on the block Mahesh Lunch Home in Karama specialises in serving up scrumptious seafood dishes.

If you are looking for the weekend South Indian fix, then look no further as this part of town has a number of places like Kamat, Venus, Sangeetha, Aryaas, Saravana Bhavan and Calicut Paragon.

Office-goers and residents alike find Curry Leaf, located in the food court of the Musalla Tower, a hotspot for Sri Lankan cuisine. Their food is inspired by different ethnicities, and they use an exotic blend of indigenous ingredients and cooking techniques with influences from Indian, Portuguese, Dutch, Malay and a host of other world food traditions. This place gets an authenticity certification for cooking up some finger-licking delicacies.



“We have some very regular customers and do home deliveries as well,” says Mr. Foster, the manager.

Indu Jain, a resident of Dubai, says, “Although we live in the Emirates Living area, we do occasionally drive down to some old favourite places in Bur Dubai. Kobe Sizzlers is worth the drive, and my sons enjoy the veg *shashlik* and veg sizzlers with garlic sauce. For Indian fine dining, we quite like the ambience at Asha’s in Wafi.”

If you are craving for the sight and flavour of a platter of delectable *biryani* enough to make any foodie go weak in the knees, head over to Daily Restaurant, a popular restaurant group in Dubai with its first branch established in Karama. They serve up Pakistani and Indian cuisine, and their house specialties include *nihari*, a large selection of barbecues, *biry-*

anis and a range of curries.

Other restaurants that also specialise in Pakistani fare are Ravi Restaurant, Shehar-e-Karachi and Karachi Darbar.

Pan Asian delights

If you re looking for Southeast Asian brunch options, Sizzling Wok at Citymax Hotel in Bur Dubai offers a wide array of Pan Asian fare served in a vibrant atmosphere.

Divya Rehgarh, a foodie at heart and a resident of Bur Dubai, rates Kris with a View at the Park Regis Kris Kin Hotel as the family favourite for Southeast Asian fare. “They have a delightful a la carte selection of Thai, Chinese, Malaysian and even Arabic dishes,” she says.

Lemongrass is another favourite with residents around the Oud Metha neighbourhood. This authentic Thai restaurant offers casual dining set in



a modern Asian setting. They offer an assortment of creamy Thai curries, salads and crunchy stir-fries, making it a popular spot for lunch and dinner alike.

Now if you imagine having a little bit of Singapore street food in Dubai, then you could get your foodie fix at the Singapore Deli – a treat for Malaysian, Singaporean and Indonesian cuisine. Although a stark contrast to ritzy places in Dubai, do not let the no-frills ambience fool you as their hot bowls of *laksa*, *char kway teow* and *nasi lemak* will keep you coming back for more.

Restaurants specialising in Chinese cuisine include Chinchaus Restaurant and China Valley in Karama, U&I Restaurant in Mankhool and China Town on Khalid Bin Al Waleed. Red Dragon Chinese, meanwhile, is a popular spot for Chinese-Indian

fare. “We serve authentic Chinese dishes which are very popular with our regular Indian as well as western clientele,” says Mahesh Gianchandani, the restaurant manager.

For a taste of Philippine cuisine served in a relaxed casual setting, you may head out to places like Max’s Restaurant at the Spinneys building, Chowking and Cabalen’s Binalot in Karama, Barrio Fiesta in BurJuman, and Pita located close to the BurJuman Metro Station.

Japanese food lovers can get their sushi and bento fix from one end of the price spectrum to the other in places like Yakitori, Benshi, Tomo, Teppanyaki House, Sumo Sushi & Bento, Age-mono and Fujiya.

K-Pop fans can eat al-Korean at Hyu Korean Restaurant, Seoul Garden, Old Palace, KimChikin, Dae Jung Kum and Mannaland.

Some restaurants also serve Asian and continental fare together, some with a mix of Chinese, Indonesian, Thai, Italian, Arabic dishes and what-have-you in their menu. Just like cuisine-specific outlets, there’s an innumerable number of dining places in this group you can always explore.

International fare

For a memorable experience, Bateaux Dubai luxury dinner cruise is a much sought-after dining and cruising destination. The dinner cruise serves up an international gourmet cuisine and an extensive selection of fine beverages whilst cruising on Dubai Creek. The cruise includes live entertainment, personalised service and panoramic views of the city.

How about having your next special dinner at Picante? This authentic Portuguese restaurant with a homely feel offers some



of the finest seafood and grilled meats, with a focus on traditional recipes including peri-peri flavours.

Other restaurants in this category you might want to check out include Tirquaz Bistro and Garden Lounge, Docklands – Grand Excelsior, Ocean Cafe, and Bastakiya – Arabian Courtyard Hotel and Spa.

For dining in a more casual setting, sample Italian cooking in places like Pizza Express, Sbarro, and Little Italy. There's also Medzo, Zucca and Biella Ristorante at Wafi, Ciao Ciao at Lamcy Plaza, and Mamma Italia in Meena Bazaar.

Street food and cafés

The ever popular street cafés seem to form a large part of the dining scene in Dubai. And if you're a glutton for street food, then look no further. From *pani puris*, *momos*, *kathi* rolls and eggs cooked in various styles, these dining outlets

seem to have carved out a niche for themselves.

A great place if you are in the mood for some dumplings is Yalla Momos. Momos are served steamed or fried to be spiced up with hot chili tomato dip. They would even do an apple-cinnamon version to satisfy your sweet tooth.

On the other hand, for an “eggstra-ordinary” experience, Raju Omlet hits just the right spot. This unique joint has a variety of eggs-only dishes on the menu. Choose from fried eggs, boiled eggs with *masala* to chili omelettes and *paneer bhurji* as a veg option, then conclude your meal by downing one of their many delightful teas.

To satisfy your Persian street food cravings, a visit to Special Ostadi is a must. This family-run restaurant of 35 years serves up Iranian kababs – probably the best ones in town, so be

sure to check them out.

“There is much more to Indian cuisine than just curries. *Chaat*, which is Indian street food, is sure to tickle your taste buds,” says Pankaj Agarwal, owner of Bikanerwala which specializes in special Indian sweets and snacks. Traditional *mithai* are their mainstay, and their sweets made from *chenna* (cottage cheese) are unparalleled in flavour and very popular.

Talk of *chaat*, and you shouldn't miss the likes of Chhappan Bhog, Puranmal and Bombay Chowpatty.

With its multitude of dining options, Bur Dubai is quite a foodie paradise. And don't limit yourself to this already-long list, because there really is a whole lot more this place can offer – whether you are out for a quick bite, or want fine dining fare, this place is sure to satisfy everyone's taste buds.