



**COASTAL AFFAIR:** The interiors of Karavalli are inspired by a traditional Mangalorean house, and feature antique furniture and seafaring maps



**FOOD SPECIAL BENGALURU**

# COSMO CUISINE

## THE CITY'S APPETITE FOR GOOD FOOD

HAS RESULTED IN A REMARKABLE BLEND OF  
TRADITIONAL EATERIES AND NEW-AGE DINERS

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Koshy's is a landmark restaurant at the junction of MG Road and St Mark's Road, functioning out of the same premises for more than 70 years

**B**engaluru is a foodie's paradise because one can sample all the major world cuisines here besides, of course, all the major Indian ones. I was intrigued when I heard that there was food from Nagaland also available in the city. Obviously, this means that the city is truly cosmopolitan in its people and eclectic in its taste. This also means that it is a tough job to identify which places have an identity of their own, serve quality food and offer a great ambience. Finally, we managed to pin down a few places that have all of the above, and a little more. One of the hallmarks of a good food place is its vintage. With that as a benchmark, we started with Koshy's.

## KOSHY'S

THREE FOREIGN TOURISTS HAD FINISHED their meal and were on their way out while we were waiting for our turn. 'The food is great!' they suggested. The mere mention of the promise of a great meal increased our excitement manifold! The board outside highlighted 'fish and chips,' so we knew one of the must-orders for first-timers like us had to be that. Now this specialty is available in two kinds – the very British one which is battered-fried, and the Indian (read Malayali) one where the fish is well-seasoned, marinated and then fried. The accompaniments remain the same – lots of potato chips, some fresh cucumber, carrots and cabbage alongwith the sauces and chutneys.

Koshy's is a landmark restaurant at the junction of MG Road and St Mark's Road, functioning out of the same premises for the last more than 70 years. They opened shop in 1940. There would hardly be anyone who hasn't had a meal, a cup of delightful filter coffee or a sandwich in this iconic place. At any given time, it is full of people, and it is open from nine in the morning until midnight. There is no air-conditioning, and no piped music playing here, yet people from all strata of society – students, intellectuals, couples to tourists – they are all there savoring a slice of heritage for Koshy's claims to have even served Queen Elizabeth II and Jawaharlal Nehru.

## TANDOOR

IN THE YEAR 1981, MR CHADHA SET UP Tandoor on MG Road to

give Bengaluru a taste of true Punjabi food. In the early years, he often cooked the food himself. But the taste of good Punjabi food – sans the red, chilly hot, oily look – lingers on, and has made a niche for itself not only in the hearts of the Punjabis but also the general food loving folk in the city. In fact, while we were there, a large number of foreigners were also seen enjoying a meal. According to Raj Singh, Executive Director, "They love the food we serve, especially the butter chicken, the *tandoori* kebabs and *naan*."

We ordered the house favourite: burra kebabs and butter chicken along with *tandoori roti*. The butter chicken was boneless with my kind of spice levels, and a refreshing taste.

## CHUNG WAH

THE OLDEST CHAIN OF CHINESE RESTAURANTS in the city, Chung Wah maintains the highest standards and is the reason why food at all their outlets is unfailingly good. I am told that they are the only Chinese diner where the noodles and sauces are made inhouse in their central kitchen.

We ordered the Mongolian chicken and the Hakka noodles while we got the steamed chicken rice – fresh vegetables and chicken cooked in a light chicken broth, served with steamed rice – packed. It is the perfect meal on a cold winter evening.

The Mongolian chicken had lightly pan-fried pieces in a spicy sauce, quite different from the normal 'sweet n sour' Chinese flavours. The noodles were good, and one could understand why they are so popular – treading a fine line between the regular commercial noodles and the much finer vermicelli, they were *al dente* and smooth without the usual starch one feels in noodles.

## MAVALLI TIFFIN ROOMS

CARE FOR A SLICE OF HISTORY OR A WEE bit of heritage close to the famous Lalbagh Gardens, alongwith traditional



**IT'S A TREAT:**  
(Clockwise from left) Filter coffee maker at MTR; Hong Kong chicken at Chung Wah; *dosas* at MTR





## check it out

- **Koshy's**  
No. 39, St Marks Road  
Tel: 080 22215030
- **Tandoor**  
4th Floor, Oasis Centre,  
Koramangala  
Tel: 080 41747008-10
- **Chung Wah**  
45/1, Leo Complex, Resi-  
dency Road Cross  
Tel: 080 25580708
- **Karavalli, Taj Gateway**  
Gateway Hotel,  
66, Residency Road  
Tel: 080 66604545
- **MTR**  
#14, Lalbagh Road  
Tel: 080 22220022
- **Rajdhani Restaurant**  
UB City Mall, 24 Vithal  
Mallya Road  
Tel: 080 22133400-01
- **Sanadige Restaurant**  
Crescent Road  
Tel: 080 41291300
- **Vidarthi Bhavan**  
Gandhi Bazar Road  
Tel: 080 26677588
- **Empire**  
Church Street  
Tel: 080 25593743

### FAVE CORNER:

(Clockwise from top) The regal interiors of Tandoor; inside Koshy's; the high-rise of dosa plates at Vidarthi Bhavan

Kannadiga food that has not changed in decades? The Mavalli Tiffin Rooms, popularly known as MTR, was set up in 1924, and has seen more historical/political hiccups than culinary revisions. The vegetarian *thali* here (for Rs 135) is complete value for money. Eat as much as you want, and ask for seconds of the dishes you like. There's barely any unfinished food in the *thalis* here. Says something about the place, doesn't it?

## KARAVALLI, THE GATEWAY HOTEL

THIS IS PROBABLY THE BEST RESTAURANT where food from the entire Konkan belt is served. For the uninitiated, that means the area that starts from Goa and ends at Kerala. The cuisine has a couple of common factors – sea fish, including crabs and prawns, loads of fresh coconut and fiery spices! An interesting blend of Arabic, Portuguese and native cuisines, the food is exotic, to say the least. Of course, restaurants like Karavalli moderate it to give you the best of these regions. They take pride in serving fresh food – I am told there are no frozen ingredients used here.

We had the Karimeen *pattichathu* which had delicate fillets of black pomfret, marinated in spices, wrapped in banana leaves and shallow fried. Then we had the Alleppey fish curry which had pieces of seer fish in a curry made of fresh coconut, raw mango and ginger. The appams and steamed rice were the perfect accompaniment to the curry. The *appam* extremely light, soft and fluffy in the centre and crisp on the edges.

## RAJDHANI

UB CITY MALL HAS A VERY INTERESTING RECENT entrant to the food scene – Rajdhani – offering the culinary delicacies of Marwari, Rajasthani and Gujarati cuisines. It offers you a grand dining experience. The best dishes are the *kachori*, *masala roti*, *dhokla*, and *chole bhature*. The Rajasthani *thali* gives you a taste of *gatte ki sabzi*, *kadhi*, and *dal bati choorma*.

## SANADIGE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

SANADIGE, LOCATED IN GOLDFINCH HOTEL, IS ONE of the finest seafood restaurants in Bengaluru, and serves a wide variety of coastal cuisine. You will love the seafood here, all the more for its presentation, and the fish is fresh. The menu is a

seafood lovers' dream with servings of an eclectic blend of India's coastal cuisine – Goan seafood, Maharashtrian delicacies, marvelous Malayali fare, and Mangalorean seafood preparations cooked to perfection. It is this exotic mix that works best for the restaurant. Sanadige is an absolute must-try.

## EMPIRE

EMPIRE IS DEFINITELY A LIFE saver for city's party-goers. Highly recommend-

ed for its non-vegetarian recipes, this place serves some heart-winning dishes – Grilled chicken, shawarma, Chicken tikka masala, kebabs and Mutton keema *dosas*. After a party or pub-hopping spree, you may find that there aren't many options to eat out in Bengaluru, that is, if you discount the round-the-clock five-star diners. But in the age of the Empire, you needn't be disheartened for this eatery runs throughout the night. The restaurant in the hotel at Church Street on Residency Road (there are others at Koramangala and Central Road) is by far the best.

## VIDYARTHI BHAVAN

LOCATED NEAR GANDHI BAZAAR, this eatery is symbolic of 'old Bangalore.' Vidarthi Bhavan, ever since it started in 1943, has been best known for its masala *dosa*. The waiters running around with stacks of plates piled high up on one arm is a common sight here, and is, sort of, associated with the place. If you are a diehard foodie and are exploring options for breakfast or lunch, go for small and rather crowded place without as much as blinking. But keep your calorie-counting habit out at the door. One item on the menu that you shouldn't miss here is the ghee-fried dosa with its potato masala filling, and served with coconut chutney – worth piling on all those calories! ■

