



'Chula' on King Street

CHULA

Most Indian restaurants these days serve pretty decent food. Most people these days have a favourite Indian restaurant, which in my experience tends to be pretty close to where you live. So, if the Chula isn't one of the closest to you, why should you try it?

Well, there's the food. Here they push the frontiers of Indian food beyond the small nuances of individual restaurant recipe interpretation (the likes of Onion Bhajis, Samosas, Kormas, Dhansaks and Tikkas which all taste slightly different in different places) to create a new experience for British palates. Whilst they still have the familiar named dishes on the menu, many were completely new to me.

Which is why you need to spend a little more time in this restaurant before you order. No hardship here though, as courteous and attentive staff are happy to take your drinks order.

I found myself in the Chula with my wife after an early evening social function. She was anxious that I should visit after she had discovered the buffet lunch there a couple of weeks before.

For starters, I had 'Aloo Nazakat', described on the menu as potato barrels stuffed with cheese and nuts encrusted with sesame and layered with roast tomatoes. My wife chose 'Pan Seared Prawn and Lotus Leaves'. Neither dish seemed typical of an Indian bill of fare but both bore the spicy trademark that food of this country promises.

For the main course, our eyes settled on the Chula Specials section of the menu. The 'Chicken Qureshi' for me, named after the head chef Qureshi who, I was told, has co-authored a book on Indian food. My wife opted for 'Braised Lamb Shank', not particularly Indian sounding but described as shanks marinated in yoghurt and ginger and braised in an onion sauce. I won't try to describe the tastes of these dishes. What spices were used and in what combinations I have no idea. My tongue however, sent clear messages to my brain that I was enjoying some very tasty things!

My conclusion, Indian food with a difference and it's definitely worth coming here to taste the offerings of a chef who is passionate about his menu and committed to creating innovative dishes with Indian spices. Will this

restaurant turn into your favourite Indian? I don't know. But I do know I will go back again to try something else new.

Another reason you might go there is to see the rather strange, presumably traditional, table and seating at the back of the restaurant. The word seating is used very loosely. I imagine that if you are able to assume some sort of cross legged or kneeling position in the first place, you may only experience modest discomfort during your meal. However, as I'm not currently taking an exercise class and working on my suppleness, when I tried it (albeit full after my meal) it didn't work for me.

by Harry Smith

Chula Ratings

Category:

Indian Restaurant

Ambience:

Very welcoming and cosy

Service:

Attentive and polite

Food Quality:

Excellent and differentiated

Value for Money:

Good

Overall Rating:

A memorable Indian experience

CHULA RESTAURANT, 116 King Street, London W6 0QP

Tel: 020 8741 7000

www.chularestaurant.co.uk