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DINE & DELIGHT THIS VALENTINE'S DAY!

Where to go for a Love-Filled Feast



Culinary Maestro

Awadhi Tales with Master Chef Farman Ali



GASTRONOMIC TRAILS IN VARANASI

The street food of this temple town

THE SPLENDOUR OF SAA

Malnad cuisine at Kimmane Luxury Golf Resort

By Bindu Gopal Rao



Located at the foot of the Western Ghats, the city of Shivamogga (erstwhile Shimoga) is often thought of as a gateway to Malnad. A recent visit to the nine-hole golf retreat, Kimmane Luxury Golf Resort, was an excellent showcase of the culinary treats of Malnad at the inhouse restaurant Saa.

Seat with a View

The expansive restaurant that has 60 covers has undulating views of the golf course, a large expanse of tree covers and is perfectly framed by the majestic hills of the Western Ghats. With a combination of indoor and alfresco seating, the airy space is done up in hues of olive green and brown merging the colours of nature effortlessly. While this space also serves buffets for breakfast as well as lunch and dinner (based on occupancy), it is also the in-house fine dining restaurant where you can sample a variety of food, the specialty being the local Malnad cuisine.

Flavour First

What makes Malnad cuisine flavourful is that it is ruled by local and seasonal vegetables that are extensively used especially like Colocasia leaves and bread fruit that find their way to the dishes when they are available. **Chef Arun Kumar Acharya** who works here explains that these leaves are found on trees that are grown near Thirthahalli (a city about 30 km away) which is the more authentic one that is used regularly. "Using these leaves, we make Kadabu, Thalipatu, and Akki Roti. Thalipatu uses dill leaves, and onions and is served with a horse gram sprouted gravy, called Hurali Kattu," he explains. Badnakkai Gojju, a brinjal based preparation, Bendakkai Huli, a sambar made with lady fingers and Malnad Style Vegetable Curry are also local dishes that are a must for vegetarians. The cuisine is also rich in non-vegetarian fare and dishes like Kodi Veppudu, Kozhi Melagu Fry, Mutton Sukka, Mutton Milagu Fry, Chicken Varutha Curry and Hasuru Mamsa Saaru are popular. The best accompaniments to these dishes are the Neer dosa, Raagi Mudde, Akki Roti, and steamed rice.



Wide Choice

One of the must try dishes at breakfast is idli. If you are wondering, how different can an idli be - it is an item that must be eaten to experience the difference. Shaped in the shape of small katoris, these are special idlis, typical of the region made with Salem rice (that is soaked longer) and urad dal (soaked for lesser hours). The combination results in the fluffiest idlis that will melt in your mouth. Turmeric leaves are also used in the cuisine and when they are in season, they are used to make a dessert with rice that is wrapped in the leaves. Kotte Kadubu is also a dish that is popular as it is a form of idli made inside a jackfruit leaf cup. Sabsige Vade is a signature dish here - this is a dill leaf fritter that is usually deep fried with chana dal and other spices. Some must try dishes include the Paneer, Mushroom Ghee Roast, Chicken Fingers - made with a puree of curry leaves paste and Shira, a dessert that is quite popular here. Most curries have a coconut base and are similar to the Mangalore region. "We do not use any readymade masalas here. We make the masala fresh and use it as the flavour is very different. The food here is mostly healthy; we use ingredients like lemon, ginger, and mint," says Acharya. A meal at Saa is a must to experience the Malnad flavours - when are you going?

