

CEIA

MAY 2024



ALL ABOUT AVAKAYA!

The spicy mango pickle of South India

Culinary Maestro
Chef Cyrus Daniels

The Master of all

A tête à tête with Gary Mehigan

From London to Melbourne

A GASTRONOMIC WORLD JOURNEY AT PLAKA

Chef Ajay Chopra's global gems

By Bindu Gopal Rao



A name that needs no introduction, Chef Ajay Chopra the affable and amiable chef opens his first outpost in South India with Plaka, located in the Mall of Asia. Plaka opens its doors to the denizens of Bengaluru with an eclectic menu inspired from Chef Ajay Chopra's many travels. This is his second restaurant after Delhi that focuses more on street food culture, but this outlet is all about taking a gastronomic journey across the world on your plate.

Plaka means plate and this is the first restaurant he is doing as 'by Chef Ajay Chopra'. "After putting much thought, I came up with the concept of presenting my journey over the last 25 years as a chef - as someone who has travelled, cooked, and eaten different dishes for 25 years. And how do I present all of this on a plate? That is why the plate became very important for me. In my mind it was 'around the world in 80 plates' and every menu has about 80 dishes. In all the places I have travelled I have not just picked up flavours but have also picked up techniques."

Keeping that ethos in mind, the menu here is vast with something for all. The Bar Tapas has a selection of small bites, and the Fatteh, a Middle Eastern delight with crispy pita, creamy yogurt, chickpeas, and aromatic spices that blends perfectly to make for a wholesome appetiser. The Dynamite Prawns has prawns coated in a zesty dynamite sauce, is a bold new take on the popular seafood dish. There is a selection of DIY Grazing Boards that come with healthy options as well. Guac Is Life, for instance, has avocado guacamole, tortilla chips, smoked tomato salsa, Pico de Gallo, and sour cream. The Hawker's Trolley has a selection of fusion Indian street food that includes Kaju Mattar Ki Dahi Lukhmi, a combination of masala lukhmi, lapetu chole, fluffy dahi and arrays of chutney. There are Taco Babs that bring tacos and kebabs in interesting flavours and Plaka Grills, that have the best of Lebanese and Turkish kebabs served in flatbread, grilled pepper, tomato, sumac onion, and pickled vegetables. Pizza, Pasta, Biryani, and the Chur Chur Naan Board that comes with fluffy tandoori naan torn and crisped up, green salad, raita, papad and pickle make for a hearty meal here. Round up the meal on a sweet note with Chocolate Overload, a two-layer chocolate pastry that has a delicious orange compote and rich chocolate sauce.

Chef Chopra explains that the food served here is different as it is backed up with travel, experience and flavours coming from the region specified. "The idea is to bring authenticity, flavour, and taste together. I understood that for food to become a memory it must check two buttons - taste and texture. We are in a mall located next to a restaurant that serves Indian food, so I focussed on my journey from the Middle East, America, Italy, Southeast Asia, and some part of India. So, I have taken the Gundu Pulav and made it into a Potlam and it has resonated with the guests. I have taken care that all items on the menu are so tasty that anyone who orders will never repent as to why they ordered it. If I am signing off on a menu, it must be a signature dish and that's the whole idea of Plaka," he concludes.

- Meal for two: Rs 2000++
- Address: 3rd floor of Phoenix Mall of Asia, Yelahanka
- Timings: 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.