

Maramia Café: Kenafeh Review, A Sweet Taste of Home

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You may have heard of Kenafeh, the most nostalgic, comforting, and cheesy Palestinian dessert. As a Palestinian living in London, I have been searching for an authentic piece of Knafeh that genuinely felt like home here.

This dessert is a staple in every Palestinian childhood. I remember wandering around my family's Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, looking for the Kenafeh stalls while my aunties shopped for food. Although times were tough for us, these were golden moments in my childhood, and the taste of this dessert brings me right back to them.

Authentic Knafeh is a rich dark orange, almost red. The pastry is soft and smooth. The syrup is poured on top, allowing it to melt into your mouth. When you cut a slice of Kenafeh, you should be able to create a long cheese pull. It will be soft and stringy, whilst the copycat will be hard and chewy. Knafeh is originally from Nablus, so we use Nabulsi cheese for the middle. This was also where the Guinness World Record for the longest Kenafeh was set, a small moment of pride and celebration for many Palestinians.



The search for the perfect slice of Kenafeh was hard but worth it. The search ended when I visited a small Palestinian-owned restaurant named Maramia Cafe. The restaurant itself is very small and romantic. The lights were dim and old rustic candles decorated the restaurant. Historic Palestinian artworks are on the walls, showcasing our beautiful culture and resilience.

My cousin took me to the restaurant as she swore it tasted just like back home.

I spoke to a girl I later discovered was the owner's daughter. She explained their family history and that they have the same restaurant in Gaza. Experiencing a restaurant that is back home, with the same Levantine vibes, made me warm inside. Palestinians are denied entry into their homeland all over, so being able to experience this atmosphere was special.

Photograph taken by Israa Elmousa



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The sweet pastry arrived and lit up our tables. As soon as I took my first bite, I felt the pastry melt into my mouth. That was the first time since leaving Lebanon that I tasted Kenafeh, which made me long for what I had left behind. I finally found my home away from home.

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