

An exotic meating

Imbiss' new joint at Colaba takes the term meat lover to a new level and is definitely not for the squeamish. **Rhea Dhanbhoora** tells you what makes it stand out

>> Imbiss' warm interiors are as inviting as their large portions. Try the pork knuckle (inset) which was cooked to tender perfection



Madhuriya Saikia | HRM

If you're idea of a good meal includes seafood risotto or a vegetable curry, stay far, far away from Imbiss, which doesn't serve a single vegetarian dish. This little gem is a meat lover's paradise! While I was excited to visit a place where chicken wasn't the only non-vegetarian item on the menu, since I found Imbiss' Bandra sibling underwhelming, I had prepared myself to be disappointed here as well.

I started my conversation with cheery owner Peter Mawiong over a delicious German Schneider beer (₹500), accompanied by Slim Jims (₹250) — fermented meat sausages that take 25 days to produce and are well worth the wait. We learned that it's not just exotic meat (duck, sausages from across the world, emu, rabbit, oxtail... you name it) that they serve up but also exotic cuts of otherwise popular meat, which is why all their pork dishes are different from the run-off-the-mill fare found in the city.

After a good conversation, we started our meal with a warm, comforting Hungarian Wurstchengoulash (₹185). The name might be a mouthful, but just a spoonful of the sausage stew will make pronouncing it worthwhile.

If you can't decide what meat is your flavour of the day, the Spicy Beef, Bacon & Duck Cakes (₹225) are a good choice. The little round cutlets are soft, tangy and delicious — served with a piquant mustard dip. The Romanian Pork Cordon Bleu sounds like a dreary twist on the chicken version, but is nothing like it. It looks like a toasted sandwich, but the mixture of cheese, ham and herbs was delicious. You can't visit Imbiss and miss out on their Pork Spare Ribs (₹450). The tender pork slides right off the bone and the sauce is divine.

Whether you like tongue or not, you must try their Roast Tongue (₹225). The oxtail is also delectable. We were full to bursting, but were told we couldn't leave without trying the Chorizo Rice (₹200) and we're glad we didn't! Topped with a duck egg, the spicy sausage was generously mixed with flavourful rice. For bread lovers, the Sliders (₹200) are a good option — but they weren't our favourite part of the meal.

The Jagerschnitzel (₹225) was also great, the mushroom sauce flawlessly prepared — but the crumb fried treat was too heavy for my liking. We thought nothing could top all this, but then out came the Eisbien (₹300) — a German speciality. The pork knuckle was cooked to tender perfection and the accompaniments and sauce made for a heady treat.

When you visit, which you should, remember to ask for the Imbiss Times. A black and white spreadsheet designed and compiled by Peter himself. It's filled with witty quotes, tips, meat facts and quirky articles about why life without meat is incomplete. There's too much to say about and taste at Imbiss so I'll be heading back to scourge through more of their meaty menu and taste the emu.

Even if you live in the suburbs, skip past Bandra and head over to their Colaba outlet. It's worth the ride and the parking trouble — but be prepared to gain a dress size while you're there.

Where Imbiss, Pipewala Building, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba
Meal for two ₹800 (without alcohol)
Alcohol served Yes (Beer pint: ₹200 onwards)
Contact 22020455

A whole new world

The iconic restaurant Gaylord has a refurbished **Bake Shop** and garden seating area and is all ready for Christmas, finds out **Claudelle Monis**

The sinful aroma of freshly baked bread wafting out of the Gaylord Bake Shop makes it difficult for passersby to walk on without stepping in. "When the place first opened in 1956, the Bake Shop didn't exist," says Noel D'Souza, general manager of Gaylord. "We had one counter selling Kwality ice-cream and another selling pastries. Over time, we decided to opt for a 'Bake & Show,' where the area, which is now the Bake Shop, was divided into two — one part was the baking area, where bread and cakes were baked, while the other was for customers to buy our products," he adds.

A far cry from the two counters, stands the revamped Gaylord Bake Shop which is stocked with a variety of baked goodies, from bread and cakes to cookies and even exotic sweet treats, such as Apple Strudel and Baklava. In fact, the Bake Shop and the external seating were refurbished just two months ago. "The onyx tabletops have been replaced with ones made of ivory coloured marble and the ceiling sports wooden beams and fans with an antique twist to them," says D'Souza. The iconic chairs, however, have been retained, because of their customers' fascination and fondness for them.

The redone Bake Shop looks brighter and spacious. And with Christmas around the corner, the poinsettias nestled on top of the shelves and the decorations on the glass wall help spread the festive cheer.

The easiest thing to spot on entering the Bake Shop is the Christmas hamper. Made in three different sizes, premium, medium and small, the hamper is stuffed with plum cake, jujubs, marzipan, milk cream, guava cheese, cookies, a chocolate Santa and other goodies.

However, the plum cake is the star of the festive season and according to D'Souza, they sell between 2,000 and 3,000 slabs during this period. "We mix the batter six months in advance and let it mature, so that it can taste as rich as it should," he says.

Gaylord ensures that the Christmas spirit is showcased through their regular cakes as well. "We dress up all our cakes during Christmas," says D'Souza. "Even our popular Chocolate Truffle cake has been given a twist and for macaron and chocolate enthusiasts, we have now introduced macarons in various flavours, as well as Belgian chocolates. For those looking to feast on a typical Christmas cake, we have the Plum Cake with Marzipan. Most of the decoration on the cake is sourced from Modacor in Italy and is completely edible," he adds.

D'Souza is expecting the restaurant to be packed this Christmas and New Year, as it usually is every year. "We've already opened reservations for these days and we're filling up pretty quickly," he says. And what exactly can patrons expect on the menu through this season? "We have a special Christmas menu which is completely different from last year's and the year before. We never repeat our dishes unless they're Gaylord favourites," he says. "This year, diners can look forward to Maraschino Prawns, Coulibiac of Salmon, Tuscan Mille Feuille and Christmas specials such as Roast Turkey, Sizzling Pork Chops, X'Mas Medley (made of turkey, chicken and lamb), Pomfret Rechaedo and the traditional X'Mas Plum Pudding."

With Gaylord's expecting an overfull house, how will they manage to keep all their patrons happy on the New Year's Eve? "We accept reservations and then co-ordinate with our diners on the day about their location. If they are very late, we assign their table to a walk-in customer but tell them that they need to finish before the specified time. As most people come a long way, they don't mind finishing up early," says D'Souza.



>> Gaylord's Plum Cake with Marzipan (in the picture) is a very popular treat during Christmas. Their seven layered Opera cake (inset) is also a must-try

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