

# Eating Out FIT FOR THE GODS

A rare fine-dining restaurant from ISKCON, which specialises in satvik cuisine



**What:** The Higher Taste

**Where:** ISKCON Temple Complex, Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road, Bangalore; Contact: 080 22766501

**Ambience:** Contemporary interiors with traditional Indian motifs lend a neo-classical look. Dark tropical wood, multi-hued upholstery, a water cascade and comfortable seating.

**Service:** Very friendly and warm.

**Cuisine:** Satvik—pure vegetarian, sans onion and garlic.

**What we ate and drank:** Despite the absence of onion and garlic, the food is aromatic and tasty. The unusual recipes have evolved from research and experimentation at the ISKCON Foodlab, revealed executive chef Aditya Fatepuria. He explained that satvik cuisine uses fresh ingredients—garden-fresh vegetables, freshly ground spices, etc—all prepared and eaten within three hours, so there is no reheating. Satvik food creates positive vibrations, nourishes positive thoughts and keeps away tamas (base qualities). For this elaborate menu, the Foodlab has even

engineered non-vegetarian recipes from India and other countries into their vegetarian versions.

Two crispy starters—inji vadai (vadas made of ginger flakes, lentils and a spice mixture) and kavipoo varuval (spice-marinated cauliflower florets coated with batter and deep-fried) went delightfully well with the mocktails—Radha Rani's favourite (a blend of litchi, cranberry and strawberry) and smapanam (a traditional palace drink, made of fermented dates, jaggery and cashews).

The soup, nellikai charu, was a piquant combination of garden-fresh gooseberries and lentils. For those who believe that vegetable biryani is an oxymoron, the kaikari satham is quite a surprise! Vetrilai thakkali satham, an unusual pulao of tomato and betel-leaf, was delectable. Served on the side were the raja bhojanam (rich curry of cashews, pistachios, almonds, ghee, pepper, etc), zafrani kofta (nut-stuffed paneer ovals in a creamy, cashew-based gravy), bukhari dal (smoked lentils)

and pallipalayam kaikari masala (mixed vegetable masala). All delicious, except the Punjabi chhole (chickpea curry), which were undercooked. There were varieties of paniyaram (dumplings), idiyappams (string hoppers) and paranthas (flaky pancakes) to choose from. We loved the higher taste speciality dosa (crispy, with special ingredients) and ragi dosa (made of ragi millet), a local speciality. We sampled a spoonful of every dessert—elaneer payasam (tender coconut with coconut milk), amrithavadai (lentil dumplings with condensed milk), theyn kinnam (tapioca and honey pudding), nendrapazham dosai (sweet mini-dosas of tropical bananas) and two types of halwas—paruthipal and black rice, both of which used jaggery. All very authentic!

**What we would eat again:** Everything!

**Price points:** The buffet costs Rs 330 per person, all inclusive. A la-carte meal for two, with mocktails, would cost Rs 1,000 approx. ●

—Aruna Chandaraju

