



**Iskcon job** *The Higher Taste*

22, 5th Cross, 24th Main Road,  
JP Nagar 2nd Phase (6532-9999).  
Call 96861-78000 for home  
delivery. Daily noon-3.30pm,  
7-10.30pm. No cards. \$

## West

### **Annapoorna**

The staff looks after regulars fondly, but tends to be brisk and businesslike with the newbie. However, they warm towards you when they see you prepare the banana leaf expertly and serve yourself a portion of the mutton biryani. The rice is splendidly spiced and the pieces of mutton are massive. There are the usual pudis (chutney powders) and pickles on the table but all you need is the raw cut onion and the lime wedges. The onion cuts the fatty flavour of the rice and the lime perks the whole ensemble up. But try this combo in size "small" – the "large" biryani will easily feed a small taluk. The biryani itself does not really need any dressing up – not even the raita. The restaurant also serves up an excellent mutton fry. The same cuts of meat found in the biryani, this time in an onion masala fry. 122, 6th Cross Gandhinagar (2291-2755). Daily noon-3.30pm, 7-10.30pm. No cards. \$

### **Bhairava Hindu Military Hotel**

Bhairava first started selling mutton kheema ("khaima") and

the one item of food that baffles most immigrants, ragi mudde, 19 years ago. This tasteless sphere of ragi, or millet, often confounds first-timers because no one really gets why a dark, bland morsel of steamed millet must be dipped in the hot sauce that accompanies it and swallowed whole. Why not chew it? One view is that the steamed millet is not really the point of the dish – it merely acts as a vehicle to transport the dense flavours of the sauce, which is usually a thin curry made of lentils and various greens. The kheema is minced meat balls that are served in thick gravy. These are a study in fiery contrasts: they break easily, revealing notes of cardamom and clove, both quickly yielding to the searing spice of chillies.

81, Rajkumar Road, 33rd Cross,  
Rajajinagar (no phone). Tue-Sun  
1-4pm, 7-11pm. No cards. \$

### **CTR**

The primary emotion that permeates through Central Tiffin Room is eagerness and anticipation for the benne (butter) dosa. Quick-digging into the dosa is exciting, because, unlike the regular darshini fare, it is not all one texture: the dosa is crisp, but has little speed-bumps of fluffiness, with the palya squeezed in at just the right time, retaining its own character of pungency. The accompanying chutneys – coconut and coriander – go perfectly well with the dosa; the flavours and textures are distinct. Because the dosa is smallish and not too heavy, you will be tempted to order a second one.

7th Cross, 3rd Main, Margosa  
Road, Malleswaram (2331-7531).  
Daily 7.30am-12.30pm,  
4-9.15pm. No cards. \$

### **Coastal Express**

This restaurant has a fast-growing tribe of fans who swear by it. The frenzy is prompted in no small measure by the kane masala fry and you too will be converted at first bite. The chilli masala that coats this fish is a deep red and is freshly ground every morning. There's a hint of lemon to it – the reason why they don't serve wedges of lemon with the fish. We love the pomfret naked fry and the prawn curry is a great reason to order up a plateful of pundi (steamed rice balls flecked with grated coconut) –

perfect sponges to soak up the spicy gravy.

6/4 Sivananda Complex,  
Sivananda Circle, Kumara Park  
East (2235-5095). Daily  
11.30am-3pm, 7pm-11.15pm.  
All major cards. \$\$

### **Mudde Madappa**

You don't go to Mudde Madappa for love and reassuring words of amity. You go for the mudde (ragi ball) and the rasam, which is sublime – sour, spicy and thick with the combined juices of tomato and onion. There is a process to the consumption of a meal here. Instead of staring uncomprehendingly at the square, domino-sized piece of wood on the table, you pick it up sagely and insert it beneath the far end of your plate so the ragi ball remains un-doused in rasam. You break off bits of the hot ball, fashion them into smaller globules, dip in the rasam and swallow – god-forbid you chew; hell hath no fury like a Madappa wronged.

Sagar Complex, 5th Main Road,  
Gandhinagar (2226-4708). Mon-  
Sat noon-3.30pm, 7-9pm, Sun  
noon-3pm. No cards. \$

### **The Higher Taste**

Higher Taste, the new restaurant at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness complex, carries forward the gastronomic impulses of the non-sectarian religious organisation that it represents: use of fresh produce, minimal processing and marked by the absence of any pungency; you'll find no evidence of onions or garlic. Try the soup: nellikai charu. It is not very often that you'll get to taste gooseberries in soup and when you do, the experience can be surprising. The berries can easily be mistaken for slightly greenish wedges of radish. They are crunchy at first bite and do not betray a hint of the sourness that they are famous for – instead, what you get is a dense, full-bodied taste with just a fleck of lemony aftertaste. Also recommended are the inji vadai, deep-fried dal cakes. While these are standard fare in most south Indian restaurants, the vadai at Higher Taste throws a surprise late into the plot with a few fennel seed bursts.

Iskcon Temple, Hare Krishna Hill,  
Chord Road (2276-6501). Daily  
11.30am-3pm, 7-10.30pm.  
Temple timings daily 4.15-5am,  
7.15am-12.50pm, 4-8.20pm.  
All major cards. \$\$