

Kishmish caught my eye when it was awarded the top award by BBC Good Food ME for homegrown food, and I really got interested when I found out it was Afghan food!

How often do we hear of Afghan food as a world-wide cuisine?

And my mind was blown!

Just look at that hearty, soul-satisfying soup!

The bread is baked on the premises, with flour coming from Afghanistan, and it lies in wait in the dish, so that when the delicious soup stock is poured over it, the bread absorbs all that goodness - an incredibly tasty and filling lamb soup, with generous and superbly prepared root vegetables.

The Manager explained that the tandoori oven is at the heart of the kitchen, but also all the other preparation and slow-cooking takes place from scratch, on the premises.



But one delightful dish a restaurant does not make - at Kishmish every single dish that came to our table was fantastic!

Afghan food, where have you been hiding all my life?

But I suspect that as for all cuisines we were experiencing not only ethnic recipes, but clearly a level of cuisine meant for royalty or beloved family members!



Fried okra like you've never been fortunate enough to try before, and served with uniquely-tasting pickles and a delightful chili sauce (I want that recipe!)

With the okra came an eggplant dish that brought tears of joy to my eyes - slow-cooked to perfection, and combined with a rich tomato paste, it was pure heaven scooping it up with the freshly-baked Afghan bread...



This dish, called Barta on the Kishmish menu, will remain engraved in my memory and palate. Simply aubergine, coriander, spring onion, garlic, yoghurt, and kourout, which I believe is a kind of whey - a stupendous dish.

For this alone, I now want to visit Afghanistan!

But at Kishmish, the surprises weren't finished yet...





Kishmish at Dar Al Wasl Mall, Dubai

The ambiance is airy and blessed with natural light, and very cleverly decorated to make the most of the dancing light.





As I looked around, I realized that Kishmish operates at a level above a restaurant – in its deep psyche, it is actually serving as an unofficial representative of Afghan culture: because food is culture.

Like an informal culinary ambassador, Kishmish presents an experience that I suppose few people can delight in outside of Afghanistan itself. I'm not sure how many Afghan restaurants are in UAE; but dedicated and devoted to extremely high quality gourmet food, I believe Kishmish is unique.

And it's not pretentious, in a way that they are trying to embellish their ethnic cuisine, to impress with dishes that are trumpeted and glitzed to portray a glossy and unrealistic image – no, I got the sense that we were enjoying honest, traditional, real Afghan food, like one would find at a fine family banquet, perhaps at an important celebration.

The mains were also fantastic!

And besides the great selection of grilled meats, and rice dishes, this little gem shone brightly:



Apparently this is street food... if that is the case, I want to live on that street!

Mantu are simple dumplings, steamed, stuffed with a delicate mixture of minced lamb and vegetables, and I think mint, and topped with yoghurt.

Simple, but so amazingly delicious.



And under the rice, a lamb shank that has been slow-cooked for hours on end, so that the meat just falls off the bone and into your mouth on its own...

And as an indication of the care that goes into Afghan hospitality, look how lovely their tea was:





Overall, I delight in “discovering” excellent restaurants and then recommending them on weekenduae – and in this pursuit I am fortunate to visit some of the most delicious eateries in UAE, and beyond.

I have no hesitation to place Kishmish at the very top of my dining memory – perhaps it was the excitement of sampling an unknown cuisine, or maybe just the mood on the day, or simply a match between my personal tastes and the cuisine – or it even could be that in a previous life I was an Afghan! – but I was absolutely won over by Kishmish in all regards.

Kishmish is a must-try on the Dubai restaurant scene.



Rated **4.1** 281 votes
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