

Tikka Darbar restaurant is not a fancy place, but it delivers a sincere dinner for hungry people at a great affordable price - this is the place to go enjoy a table-full of modern Pakistani, Indian, Chinese dishes that will cost you less than one fancy main dish at a nearby hotel restaurant.

And it's delicious, too!



It offers a well-developed menu of regional favorites, including a variety of grilled meats and kebabs, several tasty biryani rice variants, and many combinations of noodles.

Simple, but effective - and loved by all!



Tikka Darbar also does a roaring delivery trade, thanks to its enviable location in Al Khalidiya near the British Embassy, but we preferred to sit and enjoy our meal upstairs, in the very tidy and surprisingly spacious upstairs.

As you enter, the two young ladies who greet you are in charge - and they make sure all is kept neat and clean, with due precautions for covid. You can actually feel a woman's supervisory touch in the restaurant, and it is a very welcome feeling. I'd say to restaurant owners in UAE that they should consider female managers more, and not automatically place a man in the position - at Tikka Darbar, not only were the ladies conscientious and professional, but their attention to detail was excellent.

At this price point, you normally get grunted at when you order, and then plates are sort of dumped onto your

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table, with a greasy thumb tucked in for good measure - you know what I mean!

But look at Tikka Darbar...



Fresh salad, well washed and fully drained, crisp and healthy!

And nicely presented at the table...

In fact, we were very pleasantly surprised!



We ordered a simple variety, and we were impressed with every dish.

As we tasted and had a closer look, the portions were generous, and the ingredients stood out for their quality. Readers of weekenduae will know that I rarely mention the price of items, since my focus is on the food, and the judgment of price is relative and left for the consideration of who is paying - but for Tikka Darbar I'll make an exception because their prices really set the context for its excellence.

Consider that the grilled meat dishes are 20-25 dirham, and the vegetarian dishes range from 10 to 15!

A lovely and thick nan bread, baked on the premises, is 2 dirham... I remember these prices in UAE from the year 1999, but I haven't seen even their shadow recently!

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And it wasn't a miniature, either - a proper, full-sized, tandoor-baked Shinwari-style bread. Make sure you ask for it fresh and hot!



For the rest, see for yourself:



Gorgeous serving of noodles and chicken, from the “Chinese Corner” of the menu - AED 20.



Good chunks of juicy chicken breast, and a nice balance of flavors, including some acidic notes to off-set the stir-fry - this dish was prepared by a cook who tasted along the way and made adjustments as required: not simply following a set routine of splashing in sauces at random and then slopping it onto a plate for service. Also, not spicy at all, for any of you who fear the chili; but I'm sure you could request it to your preference.



The biryani was also generous in portion size, and there are 13 options for rice dishes on the menu, none of them reaching 30 dirham.

Ours was a regular chicken biryani, but we noted also two other menu sections which in retrospect we wish we had ordered, and which we will return to try at the next opportunity! They are the Shinwari Specials (some of which are 'on demand' so you should probably phone in early to place your request), and the Mutton Special section, where I see the prices climb up to 50/100 and carry exciting names such as Dumba Namkeen Karahi, and other platters of delicacies!

But, for today, just plain chicken biryani, please...

...although it seems that even normal plain is somewhat special at Tikka Darbar!



Served with a large bowl of raita yoghurt, the biryani was flavorsome while not overpowering - a fragrant balance.



Again, good chunks of chicken, and an excellent value for the price. Also 20 dirham.



Creamy cheesy chicken breasts rounded up our order, and this also was tasty and combining quality ingredients into a delicate balance of flavors - impressive!



All in all, considering the bill total came well short of 100 dirham, and for a very pleasurable and satisfying meal, Tikka Darbar's value was excellent and deserving of a recommendation.

When you want to take the family out on a budget, and enjoy the occasion, and come home holding your full bellies with glee - think of Tikka Darbar.

And when you get home after a hard day's work, and the last thing you want to do is cook, maybe give them a ring and see what they can send you for a hearty Pakistani / Indian / Chinese dinner in the comfort of your own home.

Or if you're on your way home from the nearby corniche beach, with a car-full of big hungry teens, and yet
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don't want to plonk down several hundred dirham to feed the famished horde - Tikka Darbar will take care of that for you!

Overall, we were very impressed with Tikka Darbar, where budget-friendly is really an understatement, and exceptional value for money is served for all.

