

I'll come straight to the point: Chef Kunal Kapur will play with your tastebuds like a concert pianist, caressing each key, softly, and then suddenly away up-tempo; creating melodies of taste that will enchant your palate.

There really is a difference between an excellent chef, and one who can combine flavors and textures with an innovative approach like you've never experienced before.

As you book a fine-dining evening at Namak, prepare to be taken into culinary territory that you have not explored before - it's an adventurous journey, beyond what your mouth and brain can expect. You read Chaat on the menu.... no, this is beyond Chaat. You think you might like some Kadai chicken? What arrives at the table is a provocation, and at the same time an invitation to let go of inhibitions, and cordially follow the good Chef into his jungle.

You won't regret the exploration - happy gourmet journey!



The ambiance is splendid, and also comfortable - this aspect of Namak by Kunal Kapur is to be expected, actually, since it is hosted at the Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi - and nobody blends luxurious sophistication with genuine warm comfort like the Dusit can.

The service is genuinely caring - and knowledgeable! It is obvious that they are involved and a valued part of your dining experience. Again, this is normal for the Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi.



Naturally, the restaurant has evolved to seamlessly cater for your safety and distancing was excellent.

All your needs and preferences are catered to.



The menu is brilliant, and also always evolving - I would advise you to simply follow the recommendations of the service staff. They inquired as to our tastes, with interest, and you could see they were mentally taking notes so that their suggestions would hit the sweet spot.

And then sit back and relax, and let the journey of discovery begin.

Overall, the cuisine is Indian, as is Chef Kunal Kapur - and proudly so. And so his inspiration is his culture, and the dishes are recognizable as Indian delicacies, don't get me wrong - he's not throwing together ingredients at random - but, at the same time, each dish starts from cultural roots, and then grows and blooms taking on a life of its own.



And so the tiny Kulcha takes on the stature of the elephant...

And the humble *chaat* becomes "Oops! I dropped my Chaat!"



A superlative dish - a must-try.

Not only served theatrically, which was a delight in itself, but the flavors - oh, the flavors!



And then the other starters appear, and you start to lose your mind - the flavors are playful, and teasing, and your palate tries to follow, but it is like chasing a butterfly. Layers upon layers of different hues and textures, and aromas, and you are holding on for dear life as you ride in Chef Kunal Kapur's carriage at full gallop, ecstatically moving your spoon from one appetizer to the other!



Prawns on a bed of activated charcoal with spuma and fish roe, a fresh and sexy pomelo salad, and two soft bao tacos will keep you busy and out of trouble.

The attention to detail is incredible, and everything is just perfection.







Although I am a writer, and a restaurant reviewer for over 12 years now, I am not able to accurately capture the experience in words - the flavors kept shifting, kept playing hide and seek with me, fabulously - and all I can say is most of the time my eyes were closed, and my throat was humming with pleasure.

Ah! I forgot!

The drinks came early, as a welcome - and they were actually the introduction to the evening, anticipating the kind of flavor-journey that would follow:





In between courses, a minute sorbet is served to cleanse the palate - but even that is a formidable creation, with black salt and herbs that tingle and trumpet on your tongue.



And perhaps this little morsel is where I can try explain the philosophy of flavors that Chef Kunal Kapur entertains at Namak.

The sorbet is cold, obviously, and the juice is crystalized ice, so it is gritty in texture, initially - and it melts as it passes the lips. And it is sweet, a natural sweetness, from the fruits; but also tart, and those two flavors battle it out on your tongue, and as the melt occurs they intensify - and then the salt kicks in, and it is earthy, a deep wholesome saltiness; but there is more, another flavor, maybe two, pirouette in the background: I can't quite place them... it's an umami kind of taste, it flirts with me; and it's nutty as well, and then the waves subside, and you are already looking forward to the next spoonful.

Such is dining at Namak by Kunal Kapur - and that was just a tidbit of sorbet in between starters and mains!
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The mains arrive, and the elephant looks on - and I think I saw her wink at me cheekily!



I'll leave the rest to your imagination, and so that when you visit Namak, you will have the pleasure of your own dining experience.



Dessert didn't fail to impress, and dipping the little cone into the strip of magic, with those green emeralds of who-knows-what Chef sorcery, was a lovely ending to an epic meal.

And despite the intensity of the actual flavors, combining and competing with each other the whole evening, the overall feel is one of contentment and ease. And also a little disappointment that three hours had already passed, yet you are fully satiated but also would like to continue forever!

As you leave, you are already planning the next visit.



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