

Emirati Iftar at Al Rimal Restaurant at Erth Abu Dhabi (previously the Armed Forces Officers' Club)

An Iftar dining experience truly representative of the Emirati nation is surprisingly hard to find.

And to experience Emirati culinary delights one must go where the Emiratis are - and besides their private family homes, the UAE Armed Forces serve as the family for the whole country.



In fact, the historical Abu Dhabi Armed Forces Officers' Club welcomes the public - while it was used exclusively by members of the UAE Armed Forces and their families until 2003, thanks to the visionary leadership of His Highness, late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan's, the marvelous complex was transformed into a sports and entertainment resort, and now re-developed into Erth - a proud window into Emirati culture, including culinary excellence.

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Inspired by UAE Heritage, Erth and Al Rimal restaurant provide guests with unique memorable experiences in traditional Emirati hospitality and rich culture.

And quite simply, the food was supremely delicious, and the whole ambiance quite spectacular as well as comfortable.



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Al Rimal restaurant is spacious and resplendent with all amenities,

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featuring an outdoor grill area, constantly barbequeing tasty kebabs and morsels of meat, poultry, and fish.

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And as we found with every single dish we tried, even considering the Iftar buffet must have presented 100 or more options, the flavors were exceptional.

They sure can cook at Al Rimal!

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And this is a good moment to pause, and consider exactly what is Emirati cuisine?

Because you may rightly point out that the grilled meats in the photo above can be found throughout the Middle East... but I think I may have found an answer at Al Rimal.

You see, modern UAE encompasses hundreds of nationalities, who together form the social fabric of the community. And so their sincere contributions become part of the Emirati success story, including their culinary traditions. Indeed culture is constantly evolving - it is dynamic and alive: it is the past reflected in the present, and looking forwards toward the future.

And so at Al Rimal, when you taste a super-delicious, top-quality morsel - that is the pursuit of excellence - copyright Paolo Rossetti, ask first for reproduction of contents (text, photos, etc.) - prosett@weekenduae.com

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and that is Emirati at the core.

This pursuit of excellence from many different countries does not detract from Emirati culture; on the contrary, it enriches and enhances it.

And At Rimal, you can taste the excellence in the grilled meats!



Also in the sushi...



Wait! Sushi is Emirati now?

Well, obviously not originally - but if you ask an Emirati university student what her favorite food is, you would be surprised to learn that it may be sushi, or spaghetti, or biryani... but actually there's no surprise. Those are dishes she's been eating since childhood!

And just as adapting to the use of smartphones, or embracing football as a favorite sport, or collecting old American cars as a hobby, Emirati culture defies narrow definitions.

But all with an Emirati flavor... with proud roots of heritage which frame and guide innovations, like a compass.

And so at Al Rimal we go from a cart of traditional Arabian sweets,

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to a fabulous rendition of Mensaf,

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to juicy sushi,



to a Pani Puri created for you on the spot,

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by this gentleman:



But I see you are not convinced... Pani Puri is Indian, you exclaim!

Yes, of course - don't worry, nobody is trying to steal it away.

I wish you could taste that delightful Pani Puri, as was handed to me at Iftar in Al Rimal. Here's how it went: the Chef at the station has before him platters upon platters of spices and herbs, as you can see in the photo. He politely inquires as to your preferences, listens carefully and blinks a few times as he programs the pathway he will take in creating a bespoke and customized Pani Puri - just for you.

And it was amazing as it hit the palate! The flavors swirl around, playing with your tongue, and teasing the taste buds - absolutely delicious, perfectly memorable, and totally Emirati.

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It was simply Pani Puri at a level of excellence.

Try it.



Overall, the Al Rimal Iftar was marvelous in all regards, and I definitely know where to go for Eid celebrations!

The food was delightful, at a very high level - all of it, every single bite - and the ambiance was relaxed and comfortable, yet also luxurious in pursuit of excellence.

For a dining experience representing the excellence of Emirati culture, look no further.

