

There's something pure and magical about dining vegetarian, especially considering that this is an omnivore writing - indeed, if it fits on a plate, and isn't moving, I'll try it!

Still, despite the obvious benefits of a vegetarian cuisine, the apparent limitations in available options holds me back... I mean, one can only choose from within the salad section of the menu?



Not so where Indian cuisine is concerned!

In fact, vegetarianism has been practiced in Indian culture for thousands of years, and the immense creativity in the selection of vegetarian dishes is magnificent.

And so please allow me to invite you to Rangoli...



A humble restaurant, impeccably clean, and fantastically delicious.



Rangoli is authentic Indian, and in fact is a well-loved and popular restaurant with three locations in Dubai.

Not only will you and yours enjoy a delightful and healthy meal, and leave with change from 100 in your pocket, but the genuine and friendly warmth of the Rangoli ethos will brighten your day.

The drinks are prepared on the spot, mostly from fresh fruits, with several options of *lassi*, the drinking yoghurt.





As you can see, we're not talking paper cups, cafeteria-style, though of course home delivery and take-away are possible - for a small family-run restaurant, Rangoli impressed with little touches of care.

Similarly, if you were to start by popping a few *Pani Puri*, as I'd recommend, you'd notice the quality in their preparation right away.



Served family-style, in that each can make their own, to suit their own preference of flavors, look closer at the light crispiness and freshness of these little beauties:



As a side-note, I'd praise the diminutive *pani puri*, the beloved Indian snack or appetizer, because in that little sphere of delights is a very accurate representation of Indian cuisine in general, and as an art form specifically.

You see, once you close your eyes and let the flavors loose on the palate, you realize that Indian culinary art is a mandala of numerous different colors, each performing its role, and bouncing off the others - the crunchy *pani puri*, in its simplicity, reveals a universe of flavors, from tart to spicy, deep yet elusive umami from the mung beans, a pleasant saltiness, and a teasing sweetness of date water- all in one little ball of foodie heaven, a mandala of flavors.

Such is a *pani puri* at Rangoli.

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Don't rush it... let it guide your senses.

And that fundamental concept of numerous tidbits of delightful contrasting yet complementary flavors is enhanced a thousand times more if you choose to sample Rangoli's legendary *thali*!



Prepared in Gujarati style, from India's north-west region, Rangoli's *thali* is a masterpiece of culinary culture, served on a tray - in this case, even with a sexy *chaat* in the center.

Oh, did you remember this is all vegetarian?

So much for being stuck to the sad salad section of a menu!

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Here we are overwhelmed with delicious wholesome plant-based foods, and honestly, meat is the last thing on the mind. In fact, its absence is welcome and liberating - the foods are light and fresh without the heavy artery-clogging animal fats and greasiness on the tongue.



But vegetarian fare is boring, you thought? Consider again... within that one *thali* are millennial recipes composed of scores of ingredients, herbs and spices - and each little bowl is a miracle into itself. A supremely delicious and nutritious *thali*.

See for yourself.







In itself, Rangoli's *thali* is a full meal - and it's unlimited - but if you are dining in company and want to sample cuisines from other regions as well, maybe add a traditional *Hyderabadi biryani* and perhaps another dish to accompany it, and now you have a feast on your table!



And every mouthful was delicious - and so it's no surprise that Rangoli comes highly recommended within the Indian expat community in Dubai.



And then of course come the desserts!



The *thali* already includes two portions of sweets, so that would normally be enough - above a snaky *jalebi* in the photo - but I wasn't dining alone, and so we added a couple more.



Above a refreshing version of *ras malai*, and of course, below, we couldn't miss trying Rangoli's version of *gulab jamun*.



Actually, I'm ready for a visit to Rangoli next time even just for the sweets... no need to ask twice!

Overall, Rangoli is a jewel of a restaurant - I believe its secret to success lies in its family-feel approach, where you are guests, but family guests; and that founding principle then transfers into the choice of best ingredients, their careful preparation, and ultimately into kindness in presentation at the table - indeed, you feel the pride of traditional cooking at Rangoli.

Oh, and did you remember that it's vegetarian? No? Well, we actually forgot after the first few bites...



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