

Regional Specials

The Cuisine of Bengal

July 2024

APPETISERS

Kakrar Vada - £9.50 g, s, m

Golden crab-claw meat cakes, with fresh coriander, ginger and green chillies, served with a pickled tomato and shrimp chutney

Beetroot Chaap - £7 V m

Light batter fried beetroot cutlets spiced with ginger, green chillies and nigella seeds served with coriander chutney and chilli pickle

MAINS

Chingri Malai Curry - £14 d, s

Black tiger prawns simmered in a sauce made with coconut milk, onions, tomatoes, and green chillies

Posto Murgi - £13.50 m

Traditional Bengali chicken curry made with poppy seed paste, ginger, garlic and a home ground spice blend

Phool Gobhi Jhal - £9.50 V

Cauliflower in a black cumin flavoured coconut and onion masala

Masoor Dal - £8 V m

Red lentils tempered with panch poran-five spice blend, onion, garlic, tomatoes, and green chillies

DESSERT

Darjeeling Tea Crème Brûlée - £7 d, e, g

Crème brûlée infused with tea from North Bengal served with cardamom shortbread

V – Vegan, e- egg, g - gluten, d-dairy, s - sulphide, m – mustard

All prices include VAT and exclude a 12.5% optional service charge

All dishes may contain traces of nuts

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The region of Bengal is one of the most densely populated regions on earth, with a population density exceeding 900/km². Most of the Bengal region lies in the low-lying Ganges–Brahmaputra River Delta or Ganges Delta, the world's largest delta. In the southern part of the delta lies the Sundarbans-the world's largest mangrove forest and home of the Bengal tiger. Though the population of the region is mostly rural, two megacities, Kolkata and Dhaka, are located in Bengal.

The Bengal region is renowned for its rich literary and cultural heritage as well as its immense contribution to the socio-cultural uplift of Indian society in the form of the Bengal Renaissance, and revolutionary activities during the Indian independence movement.

The food of this region has an emphasis on fish, vegetables and lentils served with rice as a staple diet, Bengali cuisine is known for its subtle (yet sometimes fiery) flavours, and its huge spread of confectioneries and desserts. Fresh sweet water fish is one of its most distinctive features; Bengal's countless rivers, ponds and lakes teem with innumerable varieties of fish such as rohu, hilsa, koi or padma. Prawns, shrimp and crabs also abound. The use of spices for both fish and vegetable dishes is quite extensive and includes many combinations not found in other parts of India. Examples are the onion flavoured kalonji (nigella or black onion seeds), radhuni (wild celery seeds), and five-spice or paanch phoron (a mixture of cumin, fennel, fenugreek, kalonji, and black mustard seeds). The trump card of Bengali cooking probably is the addition of

phoron, a combination of whole spices, fried and added at the start or finish of cooking as a flavouring special to each dish. Bengalis share their love of whole black mustard seeds with South Indians, but unique to Bengal is the extensive use of freshly ground mustard paste.

