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Naan for Dummies

I often find myself cruising down G Street in downtown Davis on a humid Friday

evening with my friends leeching a ride off of me and the static of the radio roaring in the

background. We continue to drive further ahead, and the sight of the unflattering green

brick building with its intriguing letters spelling, "Kathmandu Kitchen" and below it, "A

Nepalese-Indian Cuisine," immediately stirs up visions of sizzling tandoori chicken and

hot naan, an East Indian flat-bread that is made in a clay oven. My "inexperienced"

friends tend to opt for the cheaper and unpalatable Raja Indian Cuisine, but what they do

not understand is that the naan at Kathmandu Kitchen is incomparable to any other Indian

restaurant. There is something truly magical about the triangular shaped pieces of naan

that are brought to each table. Each slice is carefully crafted, keeping the eater in mind,

so that you will not have to waste time peeling off the burnt patches, you will not find

yourself choking since there is just enough butter to swallow it with, and most

importantly, by the time you grab for that last savory piece, it will not have transformed

into a hardened mass in which your jaw will be overworked; all of which are crucial to

the true naan experience.

Customarily, Indian restaurants will serve naan that resembles black craters on its

crag-like terrain, which is a product of being overcooked in the oven. This usually

creates a tension in the air, sort of like a draw in an old Western, when the crisp, ash-

clustered bread is brought to the table. Everyone around the table glares at each other

intensely to see who will reach for the first piece of un-burnt naan, if any. This type of

duel is often nerve wrecking when trying to eat. Fortunately, Kathmandu Kitchen does not let this become an inconvenience to its customers. Instead, they simply provide naan that slightly puffs and browns the sides, which gives it a light smoky flavor. Not only does this goodness leave your mouth watering for more, but it also assures your brain that you will not have to worry about unnecessary carcinogens that are a consequence of burnt food.

Aside from cancer-causing agents in those dark spots of naan, there is also the possibility of heart failure from a lavish amount of butter. Many Indian eateries drown their food with excessive amounts of oil and butter because it makes it so tasty, while others, at the opposing side of the spectrum, do not use enough. Kathmandu Kitchen is somewhere right in between; it uses the ideal amount to leave you satiated and your blood vessels unclogged. The ghee, or clarified butter which is used extensively in Indian cooking, is evenly diffused across its area which makes each bite as good as the next. You will not find yourself wiping off the butter smeared all over your face or gasping for a sip of water to wash down your dry naan because at this eatery an adequate amount of ghee hugs only your throat as it slides down.

After time, even with all the butter, naan at most restaurants becomes impenetrable and lifeless. The zest and liveliness is dampened by the coldness, the air-ballooned pockets are deflated, the elasticity is worn, and metal teeth are required to bite through and chew. Most people find such food distasteful and often leave it withering away on their plate. At Kathmandu Kitchen, you will rarely see an unfinished scrap of naan. This is not because those who eat there are necessarily hogs but rather because it is difficult to see such a scrumptious morsel go to waste. If I am too stuffed to finish the

last couple of pieces, I take them home with me and the following day, they will still retain their rich flavoring and soft texture.

Why increase your chances of cancer, heart disease and chipping a tooth for naan? Naan is good, but not that good. You should not have to use the butter on the naan as a replacement for WD-40, play Frisbee with your leftover naan, or watch an innocent naan be cremated. All these atrocities can be avoided by simply choosing Kathmandu Kitchen. So, do not let your friends tell you otherwise!