

ORIENTAL FARE

From Japanese katsu to fish in Hubei style, enjoy the very best of Asian cuisine at the Residency Tower

by Navamy Sudhish

Prawns dynamite is not your standard starter. Plump juicy prawns come buried in Sriracha mayo, slightly sharpened with Thai chilly seasoning. Chef Sanoj Somasekhar proudly introduces it as a fusion dish, a delicacy he concocted from the homegrown flavours of oriental cuisine. From Japanese katsu to Fish in Hubei style, the Pan Asian Food Festival going on at The Residency Tower doles out an exotic spread, rich and authentic. "The festival has in store a spectrum of unfamiliar flavours. And all the herbs and spices used for the festival are flown in from various Asian countries," says Siju Thilak, general manager.

We start our dinner with Laksa chicken soup - wiry glass noodles in a bowl of flavoursome brew. Tangy and moderately thick, it's crammed with chicken, mushroom, cucumber and pineapple. A signature Malay preparation with a

slight Chinese twist, it has a unique zest that we instantly like. "The basic ingredient is dried shrimp paste. Then, Thai ginger known as galangal and coconut milk are used to balance the taste," explains the chef. Next arrives street chicken satay, sticks of skewered chicken with peanut-butter sauce. "It's the Thai and Malaysian equivalent to Kerala parotta. You will find arrays of it in all the street food joints there," he says.

Next we bite into java grilled fish in red hot sambal salsa. Yummy fish fillets with a faint smell of kaffir leaves covered in sweet-and-sticky salasa, it turns out to be a real treat. "It's basically an Indonesian dish and the sauce we use requires great expertise to prepare. It's a blend of honey and Hoi-sin sauce, sprinkled with chilly flakes and cayenne pepper," he says. We also taste kapitan, the creamy Malaysian chicken curry with candle nuts, and roti canai, the authentic Malay bread made with margarine, milk and refined flour. "Kapitan is a balanced mix of Thai red chilly paste, lemon grass and coconut milk," the chef adds.

And the best thing we try is Beijing sizzling plate - chicken, bokchoy leaves, tofu and broccoli

heaped over a bed of Jasmine rice on a wooden hotplate. "We use plum sauce for this particular dish which lends it this special-sweet-and-sour edge. Oyster sauce is another key ingredient," informs the chef.

We wind up our meal with chocolate volcano, a delicious piece of dark chocolate cake with ganache filling and vanilla ice cream.

The festival is on till December 13.

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