

Taking orders - Masala Zone

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Truly great Indian food that's amazing value is the speciality of this seven-branch chain, which is part of the same group that includes the legendary Chutney Mary, Veeraswamy and Amaya. Editor-in-chief Helena Lang visited the newly revamped Soho branch for a curry night with friends.

What is it?

Buzzing, busy and contemporary, this is a no-flocked-wallpaper zone – **Masala Zone** prides itself on its street-inspired menu and friendly hospitality.

Where is it?

In a small street – Marshall Street – tucked behind Carnaby Street bordering Soho and the West End proper.

Who would love it?

Too noisy for romance, this is a restaurant for those who want to let their hair down, eat delicious food and to hell with the consequences.

What's on the menu?

Kick off with some 'street chaat and grazing food' – small bites to munch on over a cocktail while you plot your main course. Our dahi puri (£4.95) were crisp orbs of yumminess filled

with chickpeas, yogurt and sharp tamarind; Chettinad pepper chicken (£6.50) was a generous portion of peppery breast meat; spicy squid bhajias with Achari chutney (£6.75) was a tub of crispy treats. Main courses included Coondapur duck ghee roast with dosa (£14) and chicken Mangalore (£10.30) in a rich chilli, coconut and tomato sauce.



Spicy squid bhajias



Dahi puri

The dish we would order again?

String hopper seafood biryani (£15) was a total surprise. Spicy, but subtly so, and made with fine hand-pressed idiappayum rice noodles rather than rice, it was heaving with prawn and squid. A bowl of deliciousness.



Next time we would try...

Slow-cooked lamb shank Kolhapuri (£16.50), which is braised for six hours in a spicy marinade before hitting the grill.

About the Author



Helena Lang

Helena has been Editor-in-chief of Sainsbury's magazine since 2009. Her (honestly, difficult!) job involves planning and organizing the magazine's pages and what goes online and making sure the food team triple test a huge chocolate cake at least once a week.