



Best cuisines of North and South India

EATING IN NORTH INDIA

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Meats form the backbone of Kashmiri cuisine. While dishes such as yakhni (meat in a curd-based sauce made mildly minty with fennel) and rogan josh (rich, red mutton curry) are well known, others like gushtaba (pale meatballs in saffron-yogurt curry), rista (meatballs in a red gravy) and tabak maas (fried lamb's ribs) are gaining popularity. Kashmiris also love their breads – naan, thick, flaky baquer khani with morning and high tea; and as a small meal in itself, nutty, raisin-y lavasa.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Traditionally, the highlanders of Himachal Pradesh are meat eaters. Their staple diet consists of coarse grains like buckwheat, millet and barley accompanied by lentils and green vegetables. Influences of the trans

Himalayan region are borne out by thukpa and momos. A popular delicacy of the lower hills is the siddu aka sidkoo, depending on the location.

UTTARAKHAND

Those in the foothills have easy access to fresh produce – mandua (buckwheat) ki roti, gahat (or kulath) paranthas prepared from a little known legume called horse gram and relishes made of sesame and hemp seeds. In the highlands, the locals enjoy sun-dried meats and home brewed liquour. Meals are usually accompanied by chapattis made of barley and mandua.

PUNJAB

The legendary Punjabi hospitality makes low-fat Punjabi meals unimaginable. Amritsar churns up a galaxy of gourmet

specialities: gulabi chai, butter-laden lassi, chaat-papri, kulcha-chana, puri-choley, bhatti murg, fried and tandoori fish, tandoori chicken, phirni and gulab jamuns. Winter ushers in sarson da saag and makki di roti, served with dollops of home-made butter and lassi (butter milk). In Patiala, choley-bhature, puri choley and revri-gajak outlets dot its many bazaars. Chandigarh remains a melting pot of sorts, its cafes, restaurants and fine-dining spaces conjuring up rich Mughlai gravies, Chinjabi (Chinese and Punjabi) and decent multi-cuisine fare.

Delhi

This city of foodies superbly combines the best of north Indian culinary traditions, whether it is Punjabi or Mughlai. For those looking for a more global experience, a number of gourmet restaurants offer a range of international cuisines. The city's food experience is incomplete without trying the paranthas of Gali Paranthewala in Chandni Chowk.

UTTAR PRADESH

Rich Mughlai and Awadhi cuisine can be had across much of Uttar Pradesh, with the

best restaurants usually attached to top hotels in the big cities. The capital Lucknow offers the famed tunde and galawat kebabs and dum biryani. Among sweets, the pedas of Mathura are much sought after. And then there is paan usually eaten after meals, sold at wayside stalls, but most famously, in Varanasi.

RAJASTHAN

A trip to Rajasthan is incomplete without trying the range of kachoris available everywhere. Another great snack is the mirchi vada, a speciality in Udaipur. Also try the dahi ke batashe that Rajasthan seems to have perfected. For vegetarians, dal-batichurma, gatte-ki-subzi (a curry made with besan), ker sangri (a grass found in the desert regions), kadi, bajre ki khichdi, moong dal ka halwa and lapsi are the big draws. Traditional Rajasthani thalis are available in many restaurants. A fiery laal maas is the non-vegetarian part of the cuisine. If you like spicy food, opt for junglee maas or skewered meat called sula.





EATING IN SOUTH INDIA



KARNATAKA

Pandhi (pork) curry and other non-veg delights of Coorg are just as special as the crisp dosas of Udipi and vadas from Maddur. Don't discount staples such as chirroti (fried puffy pastry usually served with milk), bisi bele bhath (a lentil and rice combination), akki rotti (rice pancake), khara bhath (semolina upma), kesari bhath (sweet semolina) and ragi mudde (millet balls).

KERALA

Here, you can choose from elaborate vegetarian sadyas (a large feast), non-veg delights from Syrian Christian homes and Mappila food from the coast. Then there are favourites like puttu (steamed rice flour and coconut), kadala curry (black gram), idiyappams (string hoppers), idlis, dosas,

sambhar and the classic appam-stew combination. There's also plenty of fresh catch - shrimp, crabs, cuttle fish, sardines, mackerel, tuna, prawns, rays and even shark (although it's being hunted to extinction).

TAMIL NADU

Vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike can savour an assortment of dishes from different types of pongal (a rice preparation) to chicken, mutton and fish cooked in spices common to that region.

ANDHRA PRADESH

The first dish that comes to mind when one talks of Andhra cuisine is the aromatic biryani from Hyderabad; the spicy 'meals' are a close second.