

# Tandoor

## *A Sacred Communion Nourishing Body And Soul*

If you have that sudden craving for authentic and healthy Northern Indian cuisine in a relaxed and friendly setting where the dining experience is both an exotic journey and a feast fit for a king, then you've come to the right place at Tandoor. Named after a type of clay oven used in Northern India, the word immediately conjures up images of delectable slow-roasted meats and flat breads. Head chef and owner Poonam Maini believes that it is her destiny to serve mankind as a chef and as a restaurateur. Inspired by her father, who was a passionate cook, she learned all her culinary techniques from her parents. Straight from the cookbook of Poonam and her family, all the dishes at Tandoor are based on time-honored traditional family recipes. Aromatic herbs and spices are specially selected for both their flavors and for their Ayurvedic healing properties.

Our evening meal started with a silver tray of 3 appetizers: Vegetable Samosas, crisp pyramid-shaped pastries filled with potatoes and peas; Aloo Tikki, spiced potato patties fried to a golden brown; and Pakora, a delightful union of fresh onions, green peppers, potatoes, and spinach dipped in chickpea flour batter and fried till golden brown. Accompanying the appetizers were dipping sauces—Tamarind Sauce, Coriander and Mint Chutney, and Sweet Mango Chutney. These traditional sauces cut through the oil in the fried starters to



bring out their best flavors. Ideal for countering the heat and spice in our appetizers, Raita, a cool and creamy yogurt dip containing cucumber and mint was offered to us to cleanse the palate and prepared our senses for the dishes to come.

Our first entrée was a most delicious and nutritious vegetarian



dish called Saag Paneer. Cubes of home-made Indian cheese, paneer, swim in harmonious delight in fresh creamy spinach. This is a highly popular dish that is served in every Punjabi restaurant and in Indian temples. Flavor enhancing spices used here include turmeric, coriander, cumin and garam masala, which is an aromatic bouquet of cinnamon, cloves, green cardamom seeds, and black cardamom seeds. Garlic naan and the floral fragrance of steamed basmati rice that accompanied our Saag Paneer heightened our enjoyment of this beautiful dish. Tandoor's unique combination of traditional aromatic spices used made this version one of the best that we've eaten.

Poonam had us try her Papadom, crisp pepper-spiked lentil crackers usually served roasted or fried. Tandoor's version was not oily at all and we found ourselves becoming quite addicted to its salty and spicy crunchiness.

We've heard that fans of Tandoor come from far and wide for her house favorite, Chicken Makhani, popularly known as



Butter Chicken. It was easy to see why. A Northern Indian specialty, Poonam has white meat chicken cubes marinated overnight, roasted in the tandoor, and folded into a rich and creamy tomato-based makhani sauce. While Poonam's recipe remains a fiercely guarded secret, we could detect butter, heavy cream, honey, green cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and garam masala merging with the holy trinity of ginger, onion, and garlic that gave her Butter Chicken an irresistible flavor and a subtle sweetness that is virtually impossible to resist. If you have to order just one dish for the rest of your life, this is it!

Sizzling on a hot plate, our gracious host presented her Tandoori Platter—a sampler assortment of roasted specialties that included Chicken Tandoori, succulent chicken on the bone marinated overnight in Tandoor's house yogurt and a spice and ginger-garlic paste mixture; Seekh Kabab, minced lamb marinated overnight in a bouquet of aromatic herbs, onion paste and fresh spices; Chicken Hariyali Kebab, white meat chicken marinated with freshly ground cilantro and mint in house-made yogurt and spices; and Tandoor Shrimp, marinated in mild spices, house yogurt, and ginger-garlic paste, skewered and slow roasted in the tandoor.



Indian cuisines are famous for their desserts. Sweet offerings are often offered to the gods and consumed at holy festivals to ensure a sweet life and a fruition of prayers for the devotee. We made sounds of pure delight as Poonam presented us with her famous foursome! Gulab Jamun, round dumplings made from fresh condensed milk, fried till golden brown

and immersed in saffron flavored sugar syrup. Rasmalai, sweet and tender dumplings of cottage cheese served in sweetened milk flavored with rose essence, pistachios, saffron, and cardamom. Mango Ice Cream, creamy ice cream made from real Indian mango pulp. Kheer, Indian rice pudding, pan roasted basmati rice cooked in milk flavored with saffron and cardamom. While these Indian desserts may be found in almost every eatery that serves Indian cuisine, Tandoor's sweets were several notches above many that we've tasted. Their flavors were more intense, their textures were creamier, and yet subtle on the taste buds and did not overpower our senses with cloying sweetness.

Our dining experience at Tandoor was far more about eating out. It was totally about the sacred communion of honoring our bodies and giving thanks for the opportunity to nourish our physical and spiritual selves with healing herbs and spices. All throughout dinner, we felt the authentic soul of the chef radiating through the flavors, aromas, taste, and brilliant colors of the dishes presented. Poonam's vibrant energy imbued the space with a sweet and



sacred vibe that made us all feeling inspired and grateful for a most wonderful dinner that's filled with divine love. We believe our gracious host has fulfilled her destiny

Tandoor is a proud sponsor of ShareCare Global. The restaurant donates 10 percent of its gross sales to this charity in India. *Don't forget to let them know Kim and Sandra sent you!*

### Tandoor

8453 Cooper Creek Blvd  
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www.tandoorsarasota.net

### Lunch

Daily 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

### Dinner

Sunday - Thursday 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Friday - Saturday 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM