

Kolkata's new fine dining restaurant is all about fresh, local produce

Grace at Kolkata Creativity Centre is the newest kid chanting this mantra

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PUBLISHED: JUL 12, 2019 | 18:28:00 IST



There's high art on the walls and edible art on the plates at Kolkata's newest restaurant. Nestled in a quiet corner in the recently-opened Kolkata Creativity Centre (KCC), Grace is a progressive vegetarian restaurant that serves up a modern take on the sattvic diet. "Focusing on fresh, seasonal produce is of utmost importance to the sattvic diet, but we want to present food in a way that the new age diner can interpret it," says Ritabrata Biswas, head chef at Grace. "Highlighting vegetarianism as an ecological need going forward, Grace offers a café-style ambience with a fine dining experience, while encouraging a sense of organic creativity."

Set inside KCC, the 70,000sqft multi-disciplinary interactive art space, the 36-seater restaurant mirrors Scandinavian design principles with minimal colours, clean lines and lots of natural light. There are also incredible works of art that dot the walls, all sourced from the Emami Art collection, from the gallery space on the ground floor. "When we started toying with the idea of an eatery, we were sure to have something unique that would seamlessly blend with the aesthetics of KCC. The name 'Grace' germinated from our intent to offer a sense of grace in everything—from the soft hued ambience to the menu and even the final plating," says Richa Agarwal, KCC's Executive Director and CEO, Emami Art.



On the menu are dishes that highlight local ingredients and produce such as Hooghly cheese and arugula, featuring the region's very own smoked Bandel cheese, alongside greens sourced from markets close by. There's also the Bengal black rice, cooked with thyme and shallots and served with a green Thai curry featuring bright local veggies. The dish that's stealing the spotlight however is the Beetroot medium rare, a delicious salt baked beet that resembles a steak. "Our USP lies in the progressive vegetarian menu which is a combination of locally produced ingredients prepared and presented in a global format," While the response has been encouraging, Agarwal admits that a restaurant like this in Kolkata was a bit of a risk. "Bengalis love their traditional recipes, so Grace pushes the boundaries a little bit, but ensures the flavours are close to home." At the restaurant, the humble papdi chaat takes on a healthy avatar as the Baked Papri, that's served topped with droplets of coriander wasabi, sweetened yoghurt, and dried kashmiri rose petals and sprinkled with spinach and chaat masala. The idea of highlighting produce is evident in the restaurant's mushroom risotto that stars a trio of fungi—guchchi, porcini and button mushrooms. "The earthy flavours of the mushrooms all come together when cooked in arborio, and finished with pecorino," says Biswas.

To wash down the food, sample the restaurant's range of mocktails with indigenous ingredients—the Jugalbandi that features the region's famous Makaibari tea is just one example. "At Grace, we want folks to sip and savour not just the food, but the colours and flavours all around them," says Biswas.



grace

The word 'grace' is a beautiful one, isn't it? It's a word that's often used to describe a person's natural beauty or a moment of perfect timing. It's a word that's often used to describe a person's natural beauty or a moment of perfect timing.

Why are we vegetarians?

Essentially, it's about ethics, health and compassion for the planet. It's about making choices that are good for you, good for the planet, and good for the world.

A more ethical and health-conscious choice is to eat a plant-based diet. A plant-based diet is a diet that is based on plants and is free from animal products.

777, Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, Anandapur, Adarsha Nagar, Kolkata. Meal for two: Rs2,400.