



>> The Treesome Café has a lovely décor, but some of their dishes were disappointing

A COMFORTING RETREAT

The Treesome Café manages to strike a balance between a cosy atmosphere and peppy music. They score high on ambiance, but Shirley Mistry tells you if their food and drink match up

The Treesome Café is not an establishment that you can spot from a mile away, especially with the awning they have in place to protect their al-fresco section from the rain. Walk in, and you're glad that hordes of people can't spot it, because you're going to want to have the cosy interiors all to yourself. Once you enter the indoor area, warm, earthy colours wash over you, with the wooden seating, turquoise accents and olive walls, working as the perfect accessory.

We started our meal by sampling the Dark Knight (₹350) and Mexican Guava Twist (₹350). The Dark Knight is a delicious drink, made with dark rum, muddled ginger and ginger ale. The dark, smoky-spicy flavours in this drink was our

favourite, but the Guava Twist was nothing to write home about. We also tried the Watermelon & Basil Martini (₹410) and Paradise (₹410). The martini was so smooth, it made it to a close second on our list. Paradise, a combination of malibu, tequila, passionfruit juice and pineapple juice was good, but too sweet.

We tried small portions of a variety of appetisers to accompany our drinks, out of which only one stood out. The Mahim Junction Kheema Pav (₹250) was exemplary, with hot, buttery pavs accompanying the spicy, dry kheema. We also tried Sausage Fest (₹240), a stir fry that combined sausages with schewan sauce, coconut and curry leaves — which was the undoing of this dish. The Rugged

Mexican potato skins (₹200), Gabar Singh (₹175) — a spinach, cheese and chilli crostini and Beer Batter Onion Rings (₹165) were run-off-the-mill.

Our main course included Indo-Italian Canneloni (₹310) and Mr. Anthony's (₹290). The spiced pumpkin, cauliflower and ricotta canneloni, topped with a cheddar sauce was nice, and we enjoyed the familiar flavours of Mr. Anthony's, a Goan prawn (or fish) curry too, but wished that they had used a little less garlic.

We moved on to the Hazelnut Mousse Torte (₹215), a delicious, rich and gratifying combination of nutella, dark chocolate, whipped cream and crunchy hazelnuts. But, halfway through, our hostess insisted that we try the Butter Chicken Risotto (₹345), their best selling dish. We weren't too keen on the idea, but we are so glad we gave it a try, because the dish is splendid — we're definitely going to head back for more. The music, service and drinks are wonderful at The Treesome Café and the risotto redeemed any earlier misses for us.

Where Jewel Shopping Center, 7 Bungalows, Andheri (w) **Meal for two** ₹2,500 **Alcohol** Yes (pint of beer from ₹185 onwards) **Contact** 9920600789

FAST FOOD, JAPANESE STYLE

For budget-conscious diners, Aoi has always been the go-to joint for a quick, delicious sushi meal. But, do their newly introduced pizzas add to their appeal, or fall flat? Rhea Dhanbhora finds out

Aoi is known for its contemporary Japanese food, so for those looking for an authentic Japanese experience, this may not be the perfect place to visit. But if you want affordable sushi and meals that are easy on the palate, the restaurant serves up several delicious dishes. On the whole, it's a good place for a quick meal with friends or a quick sushi and sashimi fix.

So, when we heard that they were now offering okonomiyaki, we were itching to try the Japanese pizza, an edgy take on the usual fast food, with a cabbage and spring onion base. Aoi now also serves Chirashizushi (scattered sushi), tacos and a Ramen Soup Meal.

We first tried their new sushi variations, including vegetarian options with cucumber pickle and avocado. They were delicious (try the tempura prawns and wasabi, as well as the salmon), if you're not judging them on a world sushi scale. On the other hand, the Chirashizushi is brilliant. We loved the Salmon Ceviche, lemon, onion, capers, coriander & green chilly (₹600),



>> We loved the new variety of sushi at Aoi

complete with a sprinkling of seaweed on top. The Japanese tacos were just alright for me, but my dining companion, always slightly suspicious of Asian fare, was more than happy with them. We also suggest trying the Jalapeno beef bulgoki (₹300), which I lapped up, and the Aoi special crispy tofu taco, with house salad (₹300).

The Wakame Ramen bowl (₹450) had a generous dose of seaweed, the yummiest season greens we have ever tasted (including pak choy that I couldn't get enough of) and silky Japanese tofu floating effortlessly in the soupy meal. Finally, we were treated to the 8-inch pizza (₹600), with Japanese mayonnaise and molten cheese forming the base of the pizza. We tried one with guacamole, grilled shrimp and pickled cucumber, as well as one with spinach, mushroom and tomato. The vegetarian pizza was average as the base was tastier than the topping.

Don't miss out on favourites such as the appetising Miso soup (₹160) and Donburi (₹450 onwards) bowls. And, if you've got space for dessert, try the chocolate sushi. But, don't skip the green tea cheesecake — we haven't had a green tea dessert that is so good in a while!

Did the new menu blow us away? Not really. The pizzas are great, but only if you're looking for something out-of-the-box. The delicious scattered sushi combines a meal with my love for sushi in one, easy-to-eat bowl. As steadfast fans, we're just happy that they've got more options for us to dig into the next time we visit.

Where 1, Gloria, St John Baptist Road, Near Mount Mary Steps, Bandra (w) **Meal for two** ₹1,700 **Alcohol** No **Contact** 26552101/ 26552201



>> If you like your coffee mild and sweet, Halli Berri is worth trying out

HELLO HALLI

Coffee brands are a dime-a-dozen, but not with such interesting names! Rhea Dhanbhora sees if Halli Berri passes her coffee test

Brewed at a café, picked up on-the-go from a coffee chain or made at home — a blend that is invigorating, but still comforting, is hard to come by. If instant coffee powder doesn't make the cut for your strong cup of coffee, Halli Berri (the name isn't actually an ode to the Hollywood star, but a derivation from words in the local language that roughly translate to local/village berry/coffee), a coffee company based out of Chikmagalur in Karnataka, may be the answer to your prayers. They offer a superior blend of coffee at an affordable price and coming from Karnataka, a region that takes coffee-drinking very, very seriously, we had high hopes for this robust, 100% Arabica coffee, available in resealable 200g packs. Arabica contributes to some of the best tasting coffee in the world, but this one fell short of my expectations. It may have been a personal preference, because the coffee got rave reviews when it was tested around me, and the aromatic coffee (had black and strong, just the way I prefer my brew) makes for a good, mild midday cup of joe, but for a coffee kick, this didn't do the trick for me.

If you like mild coffee and your caffeine cravings are supplemented by a love for all things sweet, this coffee is for you. There's nothing wrong with the blend — it's richly blended, sweetly flavoured and deeply aromatic, but it's not for me. We'd love to try the other blends at their coffee estate to see if there's anything that they have on offer that's more up my alley.

Price ₹195 for 200g **Where** Nature's Basket stores across the city and www.halliberri.com.