

5 May 2010

INDIAN RESTAURANT CRACKS DOWN ON CALORIE COUNT

You can have your curry and eat it, according to Nottingham's Curry Lounge, following its results from a six month project that has significantly reduced the number of calories on its menu.

The Nottingham restaurant is set to launch new dishes as part of a wider campaign to promote the health benefits of Indian cuisine, as it is often deemed as high in fat and calories in today's ever-increasing health conscious society.

The Tandoori Salmon starter for example, is now 90 calories due to its steaming and tandoor cooking methods, followed by the Lamb Seekh Kebab at 174 calories per portion.

Lamb Rogan Josh has a calorie decrease of 21 per cent, now containing 372 calories, whilst the Chicken Tikka Masala is just 285 calories per portion - a decrease of 20 per cent compared to the dish before the clamp down on energy values. Chicken Korma also underwent a 20 per cent decrease, now at 405 calories per portion.*

Not only have the main menu ingredients and cooking methods been tweaked where possible, the Curry Lounge has also added a healthier low-fat section of mains, cooked with zero butter and only a miniscule amount of olive oil - all for the more mindful diners and exercise buffs that may be on a diet or following a healthy eating plan.

The research, testing and final outcomes were undertaken by students from Nottingham University's food research team, who were asked to measure the calorific and nutritional values on the entire menu.

"It was a really interesting exercise, and one that we all took very seriously, especially as being in the kitchen with such fine Indian food makes for larger waistlines!" said Arfan Razak, owner of the Curry Lounge.

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"I'm pleased to say that we've succeeded in lowering the calorie content in most of our dishes, but more importantly, we haven't lost any of our tremendous flavours, or compromised on the use of quality, fresh ingredients, or even altered our traditional cooking methods - so now we can offer our health conscious customers a better, informed choice."

As a result of this project, the restaurant was also able to compare and contrast its dish suitability with the mainstream Indian and Western ready meals that are available from major supermarkets.

Notoriously indulgent and creamy, the Chicken Korma ready meal came out at 356kcal in Asda for 450g; 618kcal in Somerfield for 450g; 703kcal in Sainsbury's for 400g; and 720kcal in Tesco for just 350g. Interestingly, Sainsbury's Be Good to Yourself Chicken Korma meal contains 403kcal, due to the skimmed milk and low-fat yoghurt and fromage frais - a similar value to the Curry Lounge's 405 calories.

"The supermarket findings were a real shock, particularly when you scrutinise the nutritional information and come to realise that the average meat content is only 22 per cent of the whole dish - so it seems that you certainly get more meat for your pound sterling when dining out!" Raz concluded.

To find out more about the Curry Lounge, visit www.currylounge.co.uk

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*All Curry Lounge calorie values are based on a 400g portion to provide direct comparison with the supermarket products. Actual portion sizes may vary in the restaurant.

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About the Curry Lounge:

Promising traditional Indian and Punjabi cuisine freshly cooked to order, The Curry Lounge has been praised by the toptable Top 100 Dining Awards 2009 as one of the top 10 restaurants that offers the best value meals when dining out in the UK.

Having opened the first Curry Lounge restaurant in Nottingham in 2007, the brand has gone from strength-to-strength since its appearance on Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares series.

Restaurant owner Arfan Razak (better known as Raz) is the brainchild behind Curry Lounge Ltd, and has set up a franchise venture that reaches right across the globe. It's this entrepreneurship that got Raz noticed when he came in the top five of the Midlands Business Awards' Entrepreneur of the Year category in 2008.

The Curry Lounge has also been voted Best Indian Restaurant East Midlands 2008 by the Customer Excellence Awards in recognition for the quality of the food, service and authenticity.

Located in Nottingham's city centre, The Curry Lounge caters for dinner, corporate events and special occasions. Visit www.currylounge.co.uk for more information.

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Picture caption:

The Curry Lounge now offers a healthier low-fat selection of mains.

