



food & drink

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS, CHENNAI  
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INDULGE

the digest



ID mix

Vegnation presents an ongoing Independence Day buffet special at all its branches (LB Road, Thiruvanniyur and Nungambakkam). Veggie lovers will enjoy this spread, for the great mix of Chinese, Indian and Continental fare (think wontons and tandoori nuggets). Bring the kids along to view the interesting Independence day-themed fruit and vegetable carvings. Till August 31. Priced at Rs 239 for lunch and Rs 299 for dinners on weekends. Details: 43090607/43178283



Speak Italian

An Italian food festival is underway at The Cream Centre. Begin your meal with the signature Parmesan Cream Cheese Potato dish, before digging into the Lasagna Forno, popular with regulars. Pizza fans have their pick from the Spicy Italian Pizza to the Mushroom, Spinach and Feta Pizza. Don't miss the Dark Italian Chocolate Explosion, which is exactly what it sounds like (think crispy and soft dark chocolate served with roasted cashews and vanilla ice cream). Priced at Rs 200 onwards. Details: 43561777



For pizza addicts

Italia at The Pod gives the pizza special status, with a promotion that starts on August 18. Choose from the classic Margheritas or order the more exotic versions featuring scallops, lobster, caviar and truffles! We'd go for the Pescatora (Rs 850), which comes with Arctic scallops, lobster, prawns, semi secco cherry tomatoes and pesto. Details: 42955555



first taste

Pics: P Anand Kumar

Perfect after some splurging or movie viewing, Fuego at Ampa Skywalk offers fusion dining and comfort desserts



Coming up

**Estia:** A Mediterranean speciality restaurant with cuisine from Spain, France, Italy, Lebanon, Greece, Turkey and Morocco. Scheduled for the third week of the month.

**The Attic:** An all day dining multi-cuisine restaurant, serving a la carte and buffet with a seating capacity of up to 100 guests. Scheduled for the end of the month.

**A meal for two:** Approximately Rs 1,000. Fuego is located on the third floor of Ampa Skywalk. Details: 40402626



# Perambore bake, anyone?



FUEGO (pronounced 'feo', Spanish for fire), a restaurant that is pitched as a fusion grill, is the latest addition to Ampa Skywalk. Located next to Landmark, the interiors are minimalistic and dominated by the show kitchen, where most of the action is. The menu is exhaustive yet not too voluminous — I notice old favourites, tweaked, and a smattering of innovative starters and mains. The *laksa chicken tikka* marinated with Malaysian *laksa curry* paste is a must try among the starters — distinctive yet mild. According to me, the mushroom *milagai podi* is the pick of the starters — the sautéed mushrooms go belly up and are then gratinated with a perfect blend of cheddar and chilli powder; similar to the quintessential chilli cheese toast. I also tried the *paneer tikka* marinated with the olive-based *tapenade*, which was a tad too mild to seep into the paneer.

Chef Ravinder, the man behind the food, has a decent kitty, spanning 10 years in the food industry (Trident, Chennai, Holiday Inn, Ooty and Something Fishy, Chennai). As for the food, the interesting fusion flavour was conceptualised by Kadir Andavan, Director, Food and

Beverage, Auromatrix Hotels.

The mains at Fuego are wholesome and come loaded with pasta or rice, mashed potatoes and a salad. The sesame ginger chicken that combines a hint of ginger with a sesame-based glaze and a dash of lemon is terrific. A thumbs up to the citrus seafood kebabs — the prawns, squid and bass retain their original flavour and juices and are grilled just right with a hint of citrus. The vegetable bake that comes with a cheeky name ('Perambore' Bake) is baked in a



creamy curried sauce that reeks of curry powder but is still worth a shot! Fuego will soon add emu meat, specially imported from Australia, which is already winning fans for its low-cal and high-protein benefits. The gelatine-free chocolate mousse and the warm apple crumble served with caramel sauce are the best ways to end your dining experience here.

—Ashwin Rajagopalan



SPY

The city awaits the launch of yet another bakery. La Chocolate Patisserie, near Don Bosco School in Egmore, is scheduled to open soon. Watch this space