



Welcome to

# MASALA ZONE PICCADILLY CIRCUS

*Masala Zone Piccadilly Circus has opened in one of London's most historic dining venues, the 1873 Criterion restaurant building in the heart of Piccadilly Circus*



The opulent, palatial interiors of the newly opened Masala Zone Piccadilly Circus ooze rich sophistication. Enter and behold a Victorian-era shimmering golden ceiling and be surrounded by striking Indian flourishes, such as beautiful Indian lamps, atmospheric artefacts and dramatic floating wall panels. Combined with the warmest of welcomes, Masala Zone Piccadilly Circus is very special indeed.



INTERIOR IMAGES © PAUL WINCH/FURNISH; FOOD © DAVID ROBERTS

But even with such eye-catching interiors, and a vibrant all-day buzz, it is the food that is the real star here. Freshly prepared by skilled, regional chefs, the cuisine is unique, at times playful and reliably, delectably, authentic.

## MODERN INDIAN STREET FOOD

The keenly priced menu introduces the visitor to a series of small plates of modern Indian street food that are perfect for grazing. Dishes include crunchy chaats with yoghurt and tamarind, golden crispy wheat puris filled with mash and spices, photogenic onion flower bhajias ready to be dipped in chaat chutney, gently spiced lamb sliders and Chettinad fishcakes.

Leave space for one of its famous thalis. The mixture of curries, vegetables, dal, raita and

rice is an explosion of flavours, all spectacularly served on a traditional steel platter. Alternatively, try a house biryani. The Hyderabadi Mumtazi vegetable biryani is a family recipe where fluffy mounds of buttery rice are studded with pomegranate seeds and toasted cashews and garnished with fresh green herbs, saffron and turmeric. The traditional Lucknow lamb biryani combines lamb and spices slow-cooked with basmati rice until the flavours infuse and the rice is cooked perfectly.

There are curries of course, with each one telling a story of its journey across India's diverse regional cuisine. The Bihari fish curry is a sophisticated curry of tomato, yellow and black mustard, yoghurt, coriander, cumin and peppercorn. There are also marinated mixed grills

such as Lucknow seekh kebab and Malai chicken tikka, plus many vegetarian options that showcase paneer and tofu.

## PRICES ARE TREMENDOUS VALUE

Those looking for the heat of red chilli and warming spices balanced out with coconut milk and lime, should try the chicken Mangalore. Meanwhile the butter chicken is a proper Delhi masterpiece. Grilled chicken thigh tikka is finished lovingly in a slow-cooked tomato curry, garnished with sundried and flavoursome fenugreek.

Desserts are done well here and the traditional North Indian dessert of Gajar halwa, caramelised carrot and rabri is a perfect way to finish a meal.

Prices are tremendous value for such a central and well-connected

location. Dinner with a drink is around the £40-£45 mark. Choose from a range of cocktails and wines that have been well chosen and are easy on the wallet. The luminous red onyx patterned bar is particularly eye-catching and perfect for a pre- or post-theatre tippie.

For a refreshingly different experience, try the Masala High Chair; an imaginative take on afternoon tea. At £24 per person, guests enjoy a sumptuous array of treats for tea, including sliders, pakoras, samosas, sandwiches and sweet dishes.

If not Masala Zone Piccadilly Circus, why not pop into the other Masala Zone restaurants in Earls Court, Soho and Covent Garden? The decor is equally as divine, the food as devilishly moreish and the service, reassuringly sweet. ■



**Clockwise from main:**  
Dine in the spectacular surroundings of Masala Zone Piccadilly Circus; admire the shimmering golden ceiling; dishes are innovative yet authentic; the interior is magnificent