

[Penang, Malaysia] *A Passage through India* with Manju Saigal, Eastern & Oriental Hotel
indian-food mughlai north-indian penang

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Eastern & Oriental Hotel, 10, Lebuh Farquhar, Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, MY

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Penang's grand old dame, the 135-year-old **Eastern & Oriental Hotel** had a guest chef, Manju Saigal, at the moment, cooking at its sea-fronting fine dining restaurant, **Java Tree**.





Renowned Malaysian-Punjabi chef, Manju Saigal, was born in the foothills of the Himalayas in her native Uttar Pradesh, Northern India. She moved to Kuala Lumpur in the 1990s when she married her Malaysian husband. She's now renowned for her cooking classes and private dinners, specialising in Northern Indian cuisine, in Kuala Lumpur.



Full house at Java Tree yesterday evening, as Penangites turned up in full force to taste Chef Manju's cooking



Our dinner spread last night:



Prosecco to start



1. **Appetisers:** *Amritsari machli* (Punjabi-style spiced fried fish, Amritsar-style), *dhokla* (Gujerati-style steamed semolina cake, topped with coconut chutney), and *pani puri* (crisp, puffed pastry

ball filled with spiced potato, served with spiced-tamarind liquid).





2. Palate cleanser: *Tamatar saar* (spiced tomato sorbet)



3. **Mains:**

Bhuna Gosht (Bengali mutton curry) - a rather aggressively-spiced dish, with strong mustard and ginger over-tones.



Kesari Murg (spiced Mughlai chicken) - my favourite dish for the evening: the firm-textured chicken breast meat smothered with a delicately-spiced, saffron-tinted creamy sauce.



Jhinga Balchão (spiced Goan-style prawns) - probably the spiciest dish on the table,



Punjabi Kardhi (gram flour dumplings in spiced yoghurt curry) - I love this dish when I'm in India. The version here paled in comparison to those I got abroad.



Koshambir (cucumber-carrot salad with coconut & cashewnuts).



Phal ki chaat - fruit salad, with dragonfruit, pomegranate, mangoes & cashews.



Zeera Chawal (cumin-scented biryani rice), with all the accompanying side-dishes:



Naan (North Indian tandoor-cooked flatbread)



Condiments (right to left): *Ananas ka raita* (lightly-spiced pineapple with yoghurt), *imly ki chutney* (tamarind chutney), and *tamatar ki chutney* (spicy tomato chutney).

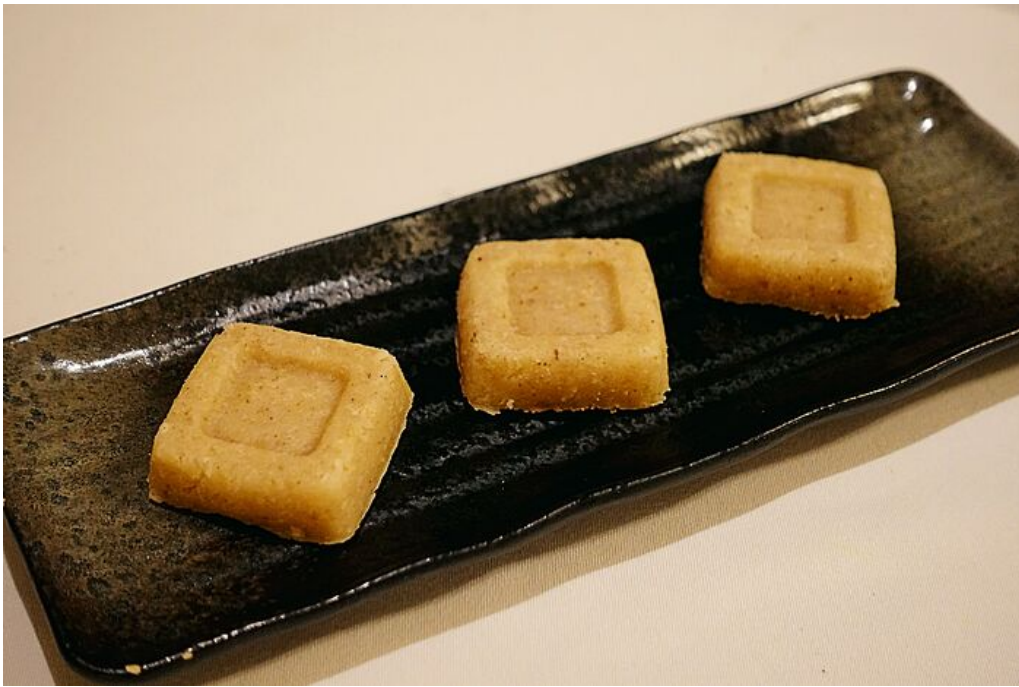


Desserts:

Shahi Tukra (Mughlai royal bread-and-milk pudding, garnished with nuts)



Coconut-and-milk barfi petit four



It was a satisfactory meal - Chef Manju managed to give Penangites a peek into the soul of Indian cuisine, with its myriad of flavours and textures, and its small regional variations. Kudos to the Eastern & Oriental Hotel for bringing Chef Manju to us.





**Address**

Java Tree, Eastern & Oriental Hotel
10, Farquhar Street, 10450 George Town, Penang
Tel: +604 222 2151
Opening hours: 6.30pm to 11pm, daily.