



THE

FOOD CRAWL

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It's 3 a.m. You have just finished your assignment, and now can finally sleep. You lie down on the bed, and cover yourself with your blanket. Then you feel it. You do not want it to happen, but you know it is going to happen either way. Your. Stomach. Growls. And now you drag yourself out of bed, forage for food within your room. You fail to find anything. It's too late for you to go to any in-campus canteen. You now need to drag your sore tired body all the way to one of the only convenient sources of late night food for a IIIT student. You have to go to DLF.

DLF is a row of roadside food-stalls, that stay open well into the early hours of the morning. Not exactly hygienic, not exactly gourmet, but definitely cheap and tasty and improves the state of your stomach, at least in the short run. When you wake up you might not be in the most charitable mood, but at least you gain the ability to sleep

peacefully. That is what DLF is. A life saver, a sleep giver of sorts, for cash strapped IIIT students. An alternative to ordering from restaurants when your allowance is running low. That, dear reader, is what DLF is.

It usually opens post-dinner, at 8pm-ish, and peaks at around 12am. Then, some shops shut down, or run out of food, but many continue to stay up till dawn. Of course, during the course of their operations a few minor hiccups like passing police cars do come up, but DLF takes such things in its stride, faltering occasionally, but never stopping, walking miles before it sleeps.

Between the tried-and-tested stalls serving piping hot *tawa bondas* or a classic Milky Way burger, there are many hidden gems on this street. Our mission was to find as many of these as possible and judge these dishes based on their taste, quantity and price.

AM-PM Maggi Point



We decided to review one of the DLF favourites in recent times: the fried Maggi from AM-PM Maggi point. The place was quite popular and was packed with people from college, IT companies and shut down clubs. We ordered the egg fried Maggi and risked our appetite by standing right behind the stoves. While we will refrain from commenting on the questionable hygiene of the cardboard boxes of plain noodles, the dish itself tasted great. It was hot, spicy and flavourful. Don't let the name fool you — the Maggi is cooked twice, and not *fried* per se. The dish wasn't innovative in its entirety but rather, a slight variation on a standard fare bowl of Maggi. The quantity was a bit lesser than we would've liked but it had all the makings of a staple.

Dish: Egg-fried maggi

Quantity - 4/8

Taste - 6/8

The Magic Straw

Next on our list was a cute little shack nestled away on a dark road leading upto the masala chai-wala called The Magic Straw. The place sold mojitos and milkshakes, among other beverages. Our taste buds were still burning from the Maggi so we ordered the Strawberry Storm. It was one of the cheaper items on the menu but still wasn't in the range of an everyday item. Initially, the drink had a clear segregation of syrup, ice and water which ruined the experience for us. After a good shaking, it tasted like a normal mojito you would get from a restaurant and was quite refreshing. However, they had put in huge blocks of ice which took up almost three-quarters of the entire volume. Overall, the drink was lazy and wasn't worth the money spent on it.



Dish: Strawberry Storm

Quantity - 3/8

Taste - 5/8

Pariwar Eatery



Tawa bondas are an essential part of every DLF trip but this time, we got a bit creative and ventured into Pariwar Eatery and ordered a butter cheese fried *vada*. The place was on the street before GD's and had a delicious buttery scent wafting around it. The dish was prepared just like a *tawa bonda*, but as it was made with just 2 *medu vadas*, the dish was painfully small. However, the taste more than made up for it and had equal parts spiciness, buttered crispness and masala. All in all, the dish must definitely be tried at least once but we have a hard time seeing this as a replacement for our trusty *tawa bondas*.

Dish: Butter cheese fried vada

Quantity - 4.5/8

Taste - 6.5/8

Chai Factory

Chai Factory is a rather deceptive name for a place that sells more non-chai items than chai items. The list of items available over there was so long that due budget constraints we could only try out the ones with the names that seemed to pop-out the most. *Bombay bhel*, and *dahi samosa*.

Bombay bhel, like the city itself, was full of rather unexpected flavours, all very densely packed into a tiny plate. Like the city, I had had enough of it after eating just half of it, was far too tired to complete it, and the plentiful nuts that were present did not help. Overall, it was quite an okay dish, with a lot of quantity.

We then moved onto the *dahi samosa*. Words that seem to make perfect sense when read separately, that simply do not seem to make any sense when combined. We were served a snow capped mountain on a plate, and upon plunging our spoon into the mountain, the hot interior was exposed. Metaphors aside, it solely consisted of a samosa, with dahi on top. Tasted quite good, although a bit more quantity would have made it better. It tasted a lot like dahi vada, except that the taste of the seemingly bland vada is replaced by a more dynamic samosa.

We also tried two of the many chais available, masala chai and black tea. The masala tea was akin to swallowing lava, except with a five second delay. Initially, the taste seems to be fine. And then, Mt. Vesuvius explodes within your oesophagus. Not a pleasant experience. But it had masala. 12/10 for honesty. The black tea was actually quite good, and although it did have far more sugar than necessary, I would definitely buy it again.



Dish: Masala Tea

Quantity - 5/8

Taste - 4.5/8

Dish: Dahi Samosa

Quantity - 7/8

Taste - 6.5/8

Dish: Bombay Bhel

Quantity - 10/8

Taste - 4.5/8

Dish: Black Tea

Quantity - 5/8

Taste - 6/8 (-1 for the layer of sugar at the bottom)

Amul

The store itself is a very well known feature among students. But, we were tired and wanted dessert. And since we were here to review food, why not try something completely out of the left field? So *Ice creamy yo land* it was. As a safety, we also got the old trustworthy Chocochip ice cream. Which was a good decision, as *Ice creamy yo land* was... meh. At best. Definitely not worth the asking price; maybe a good dish one could try as a quirky purchase. The most interesting thing about eating the dish was the jelly, and getting shuttered in when the police came patrolling yet again. As for chocochip, it was chocolate ice cream with chocolate chips. Standard Amul fare, probably not worth the price all considered.

Dish: Ice creamy yo land

Quantity - 4.5/8

Taste - 5/8

Dish: Chocochip ice cream

Quantity - 6/8

Taste - 6/8



It is obvious that the average IIT student's body is composed mostly of nimbu Pani (as it is affectionately called), maggi (fried or otherwise), and varying amounts of oil and fat. And DLF plays a vital role towards helping the students maintain this ideal body composition even under the most strenuous of conditions. Its importance is impossible to overstate, and foolish to ignore. It is as much a part of IIT as any of the canteens, something that burns a slow hole in our pockets and stomachs, while satisfying our taste buds and hunger pangs.

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