

THE HOTEL JOURNAL

THE HOTEL JOURNAL A local's guide: the very best restaurants in Delhi, India will have you coming back for more

From Vietnamese street food to beloved Indian stalwarts.

10 SEP 2025 • BY RAGHAV MODI ([HTTPS://THEHOTELJOURNAL.COM/AUTHOR/RAGHAV-MODI/](https://thehoteljournal.com/author/raghav-modi/))

DELECTABLE DELHI DELIGHTS



We've already shared the best boutique hotels in Delhi (<https://thehoteljournal.com/best-boutique-hotels-delhi-india/>) and our handy art lovers guide (<https://thehoteljournal.com/things-to-do-in-delhi-india-art-design-lovers/>) to the city, but did you know that Delhi is one of the most underrated culinary destinations in the world? As a city immersed in history, culture, and diversity, it offers some of the most delectable offerings packed with flavours covering the entire spectrum of the epicurean world. Moreover, so passionate are the residents about local food that the best restaurants in Delhi are not simply a means to an end but destinations in themselves, celebrating eats from not only India but across the globe. So, if the thought of "Delhi belly" has you worried, push it aside and get going on this feast of favourites from Delhi local (and self-confessed foodie), Raghav Modi (<https://thehoteljournal.com/author/raghav-modi/>).

Plus we've popped the stops on a map for you (https://maps.app.goo.gl/RC68WkWhZm94C5i77?g_st=i) so you can easily see where they are.

The best restaurants in Delhi can not be missed

1. Indian Accent | The Lodi

Indian Accent

Multiple award-winning Indian Accent is arguably the best restaurant in the country. Under the helm of Chef Manish Mehrotra, this fine dining establishment is responsible for reinventing classic Indian recipes and serving them in an avant-garde contemporary avatar. That the chef maintains the authenticity and essence of each dish makes every dining affair at the Indian Accent all the more impressive.

The tasting menu at Indian Accent is exemplary and a must-order on your first visit. It showcases the chef's diverse repertoire while taking the guest through India's epicurean landscape. We particularly love how Chef Manish Mehrotra and Executive Chef Shantanu Mehrotra often come out from the kitchen to mingle with guests, taking feedback and sharing their passion for food.

Dishes to look out for include mini gol gappas with flavoured water, blue cheese kulcha, pulled

lamb dumplings, smoked duck sharmi, mint sea bass, old monk rum ball, and daulat ki chaat for dessert.

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Find out more about Indian Accent (<https://www.indianaccent.com/newdelhi/index.php>)

2. Moti Mahal | Daryaganj

Moti Mahal

Butter Chicken and Tandoori Chicken are arguably the most well-known North Indian dishes worldwide. Surprisingly, their origins trace back to the same restaurant, Moti Mahal, in Daryaganj. Delhi's beloved Mughlai eatery started its operations in Peshawar in the 1920s under the leadership of Kundan Lal Gujral. When India's partition from Pakistan brought him to Delhi as a refugee, he continued his passion for serving delicious tandoori food to the local clientele. Here, he

invented butter chicken to save leftover pieces of tandoori chicken by placing it in a rich tomato gravy.

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Over the decades, the popularity of butter chicken and Moti Mahal grew exponentially, attracting the rich and famous, such as Jacqueline Kennedy, Richard Nixon, the Shah of Iran, Jawaharlal Nehru, and many more, to eat and appreciate Kundan Lal Gujral's food. Today, his grandson continues the legacy. While eating at Moti Mahal in Daryaganj comes with ample nostalgia, there are several franchises spread across the country where you can enjoy the same quality of food without having to venture too far.

The interiors of Moti Mahal might seem dated, but the food more than makes up for it. Besides the obvious butter chicken, try their other specialities, such as the fried fish Amritsari, chicken pakora, and murgh musallam.

Learn more about Moti Mahal (<https://motimahal.in/>)

3. Khandani Pakodewala | Sarojini Nagar

Khandani Pakodewala

Khandani Pakodewala highlights the range of street food in the city. A specialty restaurant in Delhi, it primarily serves fritters. However, over 15 types of fried patties, a few rice dishes, and

some sweets are on offer. Moreover, Khandani Pakodewala is next door to two more street joints, Durga Sweet Corner, plating delicious chola bhaturas and Kulcha King serving Amritsari kulchas, so there's enough to pick and choose from.

An authentic street-side establishment in every sense, it has no place to sit. A couple of counters outside that you share with other visitors are the only places to stand and eat. This is a classic example of what defines street food in India. Everyone, irrespective of status and background, stands and eats around a solitary table, all for the love of food.

When it comes to the pakodas, you can mix them up, asking for one of each to taste the entire variety. Served with a tangy sauce, the paneer, green chilli, lotus root, onion, and spinach fritters particularly stand out. And don't forget to pair the pakodas with a refreshing lassi (yoghurt drink) from the shop next door.

Find out more about Khandani Pakodewala (<https://khandani.in/>)

4. Olive Bar & Kitchen | Mehrauli

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Olive Bar & Kitchen

A stone's throw away from the towering Qutub Minar in South Delhi, Olive Bar & Kitchen is as iconic as restaurants can get in the country's capital. In a neighbourhood that oozes ancient charm, Olive is a modern Mediterranean-style eatery with a noticeably laid-back aura. Started in 2003 by famous restaurateur AD Singh, Olive, with its white interiors, courtyard seating under a gigantic Banyan tree, and terrace bar, has won a plethora of awards over the past two decades.

While Olive is forever in the magazines and newspapers for hosting some of the city's most sought-after parties, the food remains its main draw. The mezze platter with dips, salads, small bites, and flatbread is a great way to start any meal when dining in a group. Their thin-crust Roman-style pizzas are hand-rolled and delicious enough to satisfy the most ardent pizza aficionados.

Other must-haves include the duck adana kebab pide, Hokkaido scallop and hemp ajoblanco, New Zealand lamb shanks, and the chef's signature pappardelle. Olive also offers an extensive wine menu with bottles from both classic and new-world regions.

Find out more about Olive Bar & Kitchen (<https://olivebarandkitchen.com/obkdelhi.php>)

5. Sita Ram Diwan Chand | Paharganj

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Paharganj is a backpacker haven interspersed with budget hotels, shops, money exchangers, and tour companies. Locals, though, visit the neighbourhood to eat at some of the most famous and economical restaurants in Delhi, of which Sita Ram Diwan Chand is at the top.

Operating since 1950, this is a no-fluff shop with standing tables only. It is also a single-dish eatery, wherein Sita Ram Diwan Chand only serves chana bhaturas. While regulars come here for breakfast or lunch, it closes by 5 pm, so many get the food packed to take home.

The bhaturas are flat, have a paneer filling, and are soft with a slightly chewy texture. The recipe, particularly the spices in the chana, is a well-guarded secret. You can buy a spice mix from the shop to try and replicate the dish later. Served with raw onions and green chillies, the chana bhaturas are quite the guilty pleasure that will, in all probability, result in a food-induced afternoon nap.

Find out more about Sita Ram Diwan Chand (<https://www.sitaramdiwanchand.co.in/>)

6. Guppy | Lodi Colony

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Guppy

Colourful, bright, and eclectic, Guppy flawlessly embraces the aura of its surroundings, the Lodi Art District, an open art gallery known for its murals. The go-to place for Japanese food in Delhi, it's a cosy little space that comprises a sushi bar, casual indoor seating, India's first poke bar, and an intimate courtyard with anime wall art.

The appeal of Guppy lies in how seriously it takes food. Still, it simultaneously creates an environment that is fun and inviting. Think of multicoloured chairs, painted brick walls, exposed wooden beams, trippy light fixtures, and plenty of knick-knacks as showpieces. As such, it is ideal for a business lunch, a family get-together, or that crucial first date with someone special.

There's much to choose from at Guppy in terms of food, but do try the signature pork belly, wasabi shrimp poke bowl, and the black rice California roll. For the main dish, it's the Tsukemen, a dipping ramen featuring handmade egg noodles and a robust broth that's simmered for 72 hours. Slurping is, of course, encouraged!

Find out more about Guppy (<https://www.instagram.com/guppydelhi/?hl=en>)

7. Sagar Ratna | Defence Colony

Sagar Ratna holds a solid nostalgic factor for anyone who lived in Delhi during the 1980s and 1990s. It revolutionised South Indian food in the capital and has grown from starting its first outlet in Defence Colony in 1986 to now having 90 plus dotted around the country.

However, the charm of the original still holds, even though, by modern standards, it's a little cramped. Nonetheless, the ambience has a community feel, and the service is as fast as it was when this restaurant in Delhi opened its doors in the 80s. Additionally, despite rising food costs

When this restaurant in Delhi opened its doors in the 80s. Additionally, despite rising food costs, Sagar Ratna is one of the more pocket-friendly restaurants in Delhi.

Sagar Ratna offers North Indian and Chinese food on its menu. We recommend skipping that section and picking any of the dosas from the long list available. The paper masala dosa and ghee roast masala dosa are personal favourites. At the same time, curd rice, dahi vada, and idli act as excellent sides. To end the meal, nothing beats a piping hot South Indian filter coffee.

Find out more about Sagar Ratna (<https://sagarratna.in/>)

8. Gulati Restaurant | Pandara Road

Gulati Restaurant

Gulati is one of those fallback restaurants in Delhi that truly comes alive later in the day, especially since it stays open till midnight. It's an old-timey place that started operations in 1959 as a small dhaba (roadside eatery). Over time, it has matured into a proper sit-down spot with updated interiors, albeit its aesthetics are still very much classic in character.

The food at Gulati is so delicious that the love for the restaurant is often passed from one family

member to another over generations. Specialising in Mughlai, Northern Indian, and tandoori recipes, the must-haves at Gulati Restaurant include the quintessential boneless butter chicken, dal makhani, chicken tikka, dahi kebab, and the Hydrabadi dum pukht biryani.

Learn more about Gulati Restaurant (<http://www.gulatirestaurant.in/>)

9. Gaya Prasad Shiv Charan Paranthas | Old Delhi

Gaya Prasad Shiv Charan Paranthas

Paranthe Wali Gali in Chandni Chowk is a dark and narrow street, having a web of electric wires overhead, lined with eateries selling paranthas – an Indian flatbread. Of them, Gaya Prasad Shiv Charan is legendary, satiating the cravings of locals and visitors alike since 1872.

A meal here is as much about immersing yourself in the bustling vibe of Old Delhi as it is about tasting the many stuffed paranthas made in desi ghee. Don't expect any special treatment, though. The seating is basic, and the food quickly arrives, leaving you with little time to take in the atmosphere and the aromas.

On the other hand, do expect an extensive selection of over 25 stuffings. While you can go with the more common stuffings like potato, cauliflower, or paneer, we recommend trying the eccentric ones, such as lemon, dry fruits, bitter gourd, okra, and banana. Prices depend on the stuffing you pick, but you can have a filling lunch here for under £5.

Learn more about iconic eateries in Delhi (<https://tickereatsttheworld.com/best-old-delhi-food-guide-with-over-20-iconic-stops/>)

10. Bukhara | ITC Maurya

Bukhara

Iconic and expensive, Bukhara has played host to many famous faces from across the world, from Hollywood stars and presidents to sports personalities and dignitaries. Surprisingly, the menu at this four-decades-old restaurant in Delhi, plating North West Frontier delicacies, has hardly changed.

A culinary experience at Bukhara starts much before the food arrives. Firstly, you're encouraged to eat with your hands. The décor is humble, with low-rise sofas and stools instead of traditional

chairs and tables. Also, try and take a seat near the glass-enclosed open kitchen, wherein chefs prepare a plethora of bread, kebabs, and tikkas in the tandoor.

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Bukhara's food options favour vegetarians and non-vegetarians, but refrain from going overboard. Dal Bukhara – creamy lentils simmered for 18 hours defines the restaurant and is thus a must-eat. If you're visiting in a large group, go with the naan Bukhara, enough to feed a party of four. And in case you do not get a reservation, try your luck at Dum Pukt in the same hotel. An equally impressive restaurant, it plates regal recipes that date back centuries.

Learn more about Bukhara (<https://www.itchotels.com/in/en/restaurant-listing?hotel=itcmaurya-new-delhi>)

11. Little Saigon | Hauz Khas

Little Saigon

Chef Hanna Ho's Little Saigon is a homage to her home country's cuisine. A cute-as-a-button Vietnamese restaurant in Delhi, it captures the spirit of the South Asian street food scene, welcoming guests to a limited space packed with plastic chairs and tables.

The food follows suit, simple to look at but bursting with authentic lip-smacking flavours. While the cutlery on your table is a bizarre mix of glass bowls to steel plates, there's coherence in the

The cutlery on your table is a bizarre mix of glass bowls to steel plates, there's consistency in the dishes that transport you to Vietnam or take you to another moment every time you take a spoonful or bite.

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Our favourites include Banh Mi, Cha Gio Ga – crispy spring rolls, Pho, Cari Ga – chicken in yellow curry, Goi Xoai – raw mango salad, and coconut ice cream with jelly. The prices at Little Saigon are slightly on the higher side for a small restaurant, but the quality and taste of the food are worth the money.

Learn more about Little Saigon (<https://www.facebook.com/little.saigon.delhi/>)

12. Megu | The Leela Palace

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A decade ago, Japanese cuisine was a culinary fashion statement when it came to eating out in the capital. Nowadays, it is an intrinsic part of the city's gastronomic zeitgeist, with more and more Asian restaurants in Delhi serving sushi, ramen, tempura, and other Nippon classics. Megu at The Leela Palace Hotel elevates the Japanese epicurean experience to a fine-dining level, serving the best produce in a spectacular setting for an unforgettable meal.

Megu first sets the ambience just right, inviting guests into the zen-like Buddha Hall, accentuated with the occasional bright furnishings, the ornamental bonshō bell, and exotic decorations. It's definitely modern but, at the same time, traditional, a theme that carries forth in the food served here. However, should you wish for an intimate dinner, their eight-person private room, Kimono, is ideal.

The food, presentation, and service at Megu have led to it being listed among the top restaurants in Asia. Its yellowtail carpaccio is to die for, the 24-hour braised pork belly is a treat, and the crispy asparagus, as a starter, sets the mood right for an exquisite meal prepared using ingredients imported from Tsukiji Market in Tokyo. The restaurant uses the Sumibi Aburiyaki technique to grill, which utilises bincho-tan charcoal, adding a distinct flavour to the yakitori. And to wash it all down, they offer over 60 varieties of sake.

Find out more about Megu (<https://www.theleela.com/the-leela-palace-new-delhi/restaurants/megu>)

13. Dum Pukht | ITC Maurya

Dining at the award-winning Dum Pukht is a royal experience in every way possible. Within the already posh interiors of the ITC Maurya in Delhi, Dum Pukht is a regal culinary respite adorned in lavish decor comprising ornate arcs, hanging lanterns, rich fabrics, and fine-dining cutlery. As one of the best restaurants in Delhi, Dum Pukht is a gastronomic attraction that has satisfied gourmet cravings since its inception in 1987.

Plating recipes originating from the kitchens of Awadhi Nawabs passed down from generation to generation, Dum Pukht specialises in slow-cooked food prepared inside dough-sealed earthen pots called handis. The process allows maximum flavour extraction from the ingredients, giving the food a richly palatable and intensely aromatic disposition. Adding to the dishes' taste is a

the food a fiery palatable and intensely aromatic disposition. Owing to the dishes taste is a unique masala concoction made using 21 spices in just the right proportions.

The Dum Pukht biryani, rice cooked in a handi featuring specific-sized meat cuts, is the most popular dish on the menu. The Kakori kebabs come next, known for their melt-in-your-mouth characteristic and supremely satisfying flavour. Other dishes not to be missed include the shahi nihari – lamb cooked overnight and served with lentils and onions, and the gulab ki kheer for dessert.

Learn more about Dum Pukht (<https://www.itchotels.com/in/en/dining/dum-pukht>)

14. Andhra Pradesh Bhavan Canteen | Ashoka Road

Andhra Pradesh Bhavan Canteen

The canteen at Andhra Bhavan has been one of the best places to have South Indian food in Delhi for nearly three decades. Add to that its pocket-friendliness, and you can imagine that the canteen attracts locals and outsiders from all walks of life. The restaurant epitomises the concept of back-to-basics. The interior is a large hall lined with chairs and tables, and that's about it.

The menu is as simple as Andhra Bhavna's decor. You can order thalis – a combination of different dishes served on one plate – and top up anything you fancy. The food is where the place truly

shines. It's authentic to the Andhra region, meaning the spice levels are typically higher than average, and there are more non-vegetarian options.

In addition to the South Indian thali, Andhra Bhavan Canteen is famous for its Hyderabadi biryani, mutton fry, idli, vada, and rasam. When planning a visit, avoid peak lunchtime, when the restaurant is busiest.

*Find out more about Andhra Pradesh Bhavan Canteen
(<https://www.facebook.com/AndhraBhavanCanteen>)*

But wait, there's more...

- We recently stayed at New World Phu Quoc Resort (<https://thehoteljournal.com/new-world-phu-quoc-resort-vietnam-review/>)
- Take a look at the best boutique hotels in Amsterdam (<https://thehoteljournal.com/best-boutique-hotels-in-amsterdam-the-netherlands/>)
- And meet the sisters behind the Omicron Hotel Group (<https://thehoteljournal.com/interview-omicron-hotels-co-founders-danae-konstantina-orfanake/>) in Greece

Raghav Modi

Seasoned travel writer Raghav has a special place in his heart for quirky hotels and experiences.

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More Gorgeousness Below

REVIEWS/

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