



# Old Delhi Food Walk with Rocky and Mayur

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**Venue:** Jama Masjid / Chawri Bazaar / Meena Bazaar

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### **SAIR food walk with Rocky and Mayur**

Rocky and Mayur broke the 5-star glass ceiling and went inside little-known hotels and cafes, ate from hawkers and thelas at remote places in India, and got the spotlight on these unsung food heroes. Their food cum travel show, a trendsetter in India, was extremely relatable. No wonder, the approach was a huge success, and viewers who did not take food programs seriously also hooked on to **Rocky and Mayur's "Highway On My Plate"**.

**SAIR, a travel community, organised the SAIR Conclave last Saturday, 23rd November 2019. "Delhi On My Plate With Rocky And Mayur", an Old Delhi food walk for breakfast, was a precursor to the Conclave.** We were happy to have been a part of this amazing and fun gastro-tour.



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Rocky and Mayur had already shortlisted **top restaurants in the Jama Masjid** area where they would take the participants. The list was a surprise. But we could see, balancing vegetarian and non-vegetarian choices, they chose **famous Old Delhi restaurants** that are legends. Their expert opinion certainly helped. While we kept trying **breakfast places in Delhi or Gurgaon**, early morning in Old Delhi was new. Rocky and Mayur, through their grounded charm, easy sense of humour, and food anecdotes made sure that waking up before time on a winter morning was totally worth it. While we cannot pass on the taste or flavours, here is our attempt to give you a fun guide as to **where to eat near Jama Masjid**, Rocky, and Mayur style.

### Tea shop in Jama Masjid area



We religiously perform our annual ritual of [Ramzan food walk](#) in Old Delhi, [Jama Masjid](#) area. And in that course, we have Irani chai at least once a year. But where can one get the best chai in Delhi?



The food walk with Rocky and Mayur punctually started at 8 in the morning to avoid regular pandemonium in that locality. Needless to say, many of the participants, who would have started much earlier, were still groggy. Caffeine kick was the order of the hour and the first stop on our gastro journey was **Ustad Tea Point at Meena Bazaar behind Jama Masjid**. The tea was prepared in front of us and they added milk and milk foam on top of the tea liquor and stirred the glass. The resultant chai was full of volume and had the necessary caffeine kick. The best part was it was very moderate in sweetness and the 'tea-totaller' in us was suddenly alert!



Tea is a unique experience. Some like it sweet, some bland; some

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question about the [\*\*best tea places in Delhi\*\*](#), we say – it is each to their own. Delhi street food is any **foodie's delight** and from experience, we can say we have our favourite chaiwalas in different areas. In [\*\*CP\*\*](#) there is [\*\*Cha Bar\*\*](#) and in the Lodhi Road area, there is this chappie Imran in Meherchand Market. If we are in Lajpat Nagar, we do make it a point to visit [\*\*Wagh Bakri Tea Lounge.\*\*](#)

Apologies for digressing. Coming to the food walk, we loved the tea at Ustad Tea Point and it is now our favourite in Old Delhi. It has a small bench outside that seems to be perennially occupied. But tea was the best we have had in this area and we came back later for a second round.

### **Vegetarian places in Old Delhi**



Thanks to the tea, our breakfast appetite had been stimulated and we were looking forward to solids. But where do we start?





Old Delhi is a heady fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultures. If you have read historian Rana Safvi's "[City of My Heart](#)", you would know that both these communities have cohabited Old Delhi with a history of cultural exchanges. They would have a long list of special food preparations during festivals and celebrations. Most Hindu households follow a vegetarian diet. As a result, some of the **Old Delhi vegetarian restaurants** carry heavy legacies and are crowd-pullers even now.

One such place is **Shyam Sweets at Chawri Bazar**, our first real breakfast stop. Established in the year 1910, they have more than a century-old heritage to live up to. Their hot favourites are *Bedmi Puri* and *Nagori Halwa*. Talking about hot literally – if you are a spicy food person – *Bedmi Puri*, is your thing. The Puri bread was made of ground lentils, flour, and a lot of chili flakes. The Puris were served with potato curry a.k.a. *Aloo Sabzi* and pumpkin curry a.k.a. *Sitaphal Sabzi*. Every item was tasty but the spices. We loved the pumpkin curry where the spice was balanced with the sweetness of pumpkin. Our host Mayur – a vegetarian led the show here.



ghee. Nagori – small crispy Puri breads with carom seeds or *Ajwain*, were served with the Halwa. Almost by reflex, we perforated the Puris and stuffed that with the Halwa. This balanced the taste and then we could see why this dish was a star.

### Non-vegetarian breakfast in Old Delhi



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The vegetarian taste buds having been satiated at Shyam Sweets, it was turn for the carnivores. In fact, any Old Delhi food walk is incomplete without a taste of Mughlai food which, more often than not, is non-vegetarian.



When one thinks of **non-vegetarian breakfast in the Jama Masjid area**, the first item that comes to mind is **Paya Nihari**. It is like a

based on their health benefits and then this pot dish is prepared on slow flame. Paya Nihari is had for breakfast to boost the system with the push of good health early in the morning.

The long lane opposite to Gate 1 of Jama Masjid is the **non-vegetarian food zone of Old Delhi**. This is where you can find Karim's, Qureshi, and a host of other eateries that have *tandoors* with chicken pieces hanging in the front. During their recce, Rocky and Mayur had selected Al Jawahar for *Paya Nihari*. In fact, we had heard before too that Al Jawahar was among the top places to have **Nihari Paya in Delhi**. On hearing about this place, non-vegetarians' sleepy faces glowed with anticipation.

We occupied two tables and in a short while, dishes of *Paya Nihari* and plates piled with *Khameeri Roti*, a dry bread, were served. We were already full from Shyam Sweets and shared a single dish. The Paya Nihari was moderately spiced but oily. It was a lovely golden brown shade and was somewhat smooth in taste. The spices did not come in the way of enjoying the dish. The meat was cooked to perfection and came off easily from the bones. To balance the taste, one needed breads to have with this dish, and the Khameeri Roti came in handy. This dish would have tasted great with the mildly sweet Sheermal bread too. We enjoyed Paya Nihari but then we could see this dish was an acquired taste and would appeal more to regular meat eaters.



This section of the breakfast was moderated by Rocky who ate non-vegetarian. He regaled us with fun anecdotes about the etymology of this dish and as we say – food talk is good talk.

### Daulat ki Chaat in Delhi



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No food experience in Old Delhi can be complete without the divine *Daulat ki Chat*. It is a dessert available only during winter. Apparently, the cream layer or Malai on milk is separated, whisked till frothy, and left to cool in the open under the winter dew. The result is a mildly sweet, extremely light whipped cream dessert that is served with saffron, powdered sugar, and butterscotch toppings. Legend has it that it hails in Lucknow but we cannot vouch for this. For instance, Benaras has its own version of this

dessert and there they call it –*Makhan Malai* and some call it *Malaiyo*.

Daulat ki Chaat is mostly sold on carts in the lanes of Old Delhi. Rocky and Mayur had already selected *Khemchand's Daulat ki Chaat* to feed us. Served in small paper trays, these dollops of goodness were a hit what with all the spicy food we had been having since morning. The Daulat ki Chaat melted in the mouth and seemed to soothe the system on its way down.



That was the sweetest way to end the “**Delhi On My Plate**” food walk, followed by selfies with Rocky and Mayur of course!

**Thank you SAIR for arranging this amazing event and having us over.**

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## 15 Comments

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Have always loved Delhi street food. Old Delhi, of course, is the place for some wonderful food at legendary eateries. it must have been a great experience to do the walk with Rocky and Mayur who are legends in their own right.



**Gaya3** on 21, December, 2019 at 10:38 PM

**Reply**

I love the way you present your blogs and Delhi is one of my favourite places and being a vegetarian lover and Southie I prefer North Indian food. Delhi food are lip smacking



**Nisha** on 22, December, 2019 at 2:54 PM

**Reply**

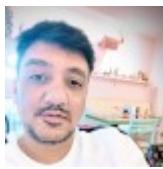
Delhi is so happening and exploring it's crowded narrow streets is definitely a great fun thing to do with friends. Loved it.



**Jhilmil D Saha** on 23, December, 2019 at 8:14 AM

**Reply**

The team of Rocky and Mayur has given us so much information about small cafes and food joints throughout the nation. I can understand how much exciting it must have been to explore the Delhi street food with them



**Rahul Prabhakar** on 24, December, 2019 at 2:22 AM

**Reply**

Rocky and Mayur are fun people, so I'm assuming the event would have been fantastic. I would love to be a part of this amazing and fun gastro-tour next time.

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