



>> The desserts at The Baker's Table are not spectacular

MIXED BAG

We sampled a range of sweet and savoury dishes from **The Baker's Table** and found that our experience was a mix of hits and misses. **Rhea Dhanbhora & Shirley Mistry** tell you more

Bakeries and confectioners are dime-a-dozen — throw a stone, and it will probably land smack in front of a quaint, inviting patisserie. We sampled dishes from The Baker's Table, one such venture in Kandivali, and were suitably surprised.

SWEET TREATS

We sampled cookies, biscottis, pastries and brownies from their exhaustive menu. Take a look at what we thought.

- **Almond Biscotti (₹200 for 200g):** The Almond Biscotti was good, although it was certainly a little too crunchy for my taste. But, it was not overpoweringly sweet, thereby allowing the classic biscotti flavour to shine.
- **Cookies (₹200 for 200g):** These were our absolute favourites and we were pleasantly surprised since they



looked rather average in the plastic containers. But, they're large, chewy and the flavours really pop, making them a delightful tea-time treat.

- **Chocolate brownie (₹50 per piece):** These brownies definitely tasted better than they looked. They were slightly cakey, but the moist chocolate inside made them better,

especially when they were warmed through. That being said, we would have definitely liked them to be a lot gooier and have a richer chocolate taste.

- **Death by chocolate pastry (₹60):** A slice of this popular pastry certainly looked inviting, with the dark, glazed exterior, but it didn't taste spectacular. They used milk chocolate instead of dark, and the cake itself was too moist (almost wet), turning into mush the minute you slide your fork through it. With a drier crumb and the use of dark chocolate instead of milk, this dessert would certainly fare better.

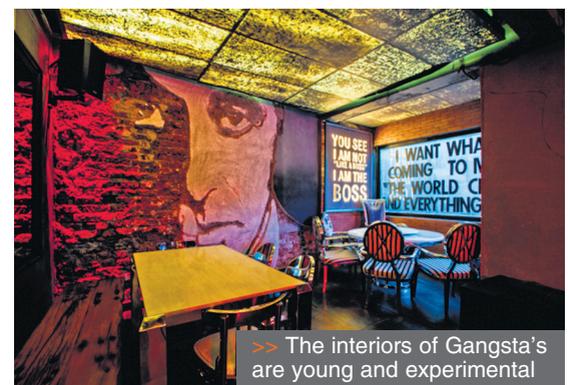
SAVOURY DELIGHTS

We tried their panini sandwiches (₹120 each), but they also offer pastas, soups, pizzas and burgers. Read on to find out what we thought.

- **Spinach and corn Panini:** The spinach in this sandwich was a little too creamed and it contained too much corn — taking the spinach flavour away. However, it tastes really good if it is eaten cold.
- **Peppered tomato and goat cheese Panini:** This sandwich was our favourite. The bread was lighter than the bread used in the other sandwiches and the flavour of the goat cheese and tomato worked in tandem, making it a delightful snack.
- **Peppered mushroom on toast Panini:** This sandwich didn't go down too well with us, simply because the mushroom was way too peppery. It works well as an evening snack, but I wouldn't recommend it unless you prefer your food to pack a serious punch.

The Baker's Table also has a range of cakes to pick from; we were particularly interested in the Lemon Cake with Cheesecake frosting (₹90 per piece, ₹500 for a medium cake and ₹950 for a large), the American Coffee Cream (₹50 per piece, ₹350 for a medium cake and ₹650 for a large cake), but the Chocolate Heaven (₹70 per piece, ₹425 for a medium cake and ₹800 for a large cake) really disappointed us.

The place is decent, but not spectacular by any measure. If you're in Kandivali, do swing by, but, it's wares definitely don't warrant a special trip. As far as friendly neighbourhood bakeries are concerned, it stands fine on its own.



>> The interiors of Gangsta's are young and experimental

A DEAL YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Gangsta's – Café and Bar promises unique décor and a great culinary experience. **Dev Goswami** pops in to tell you whether you should be visiting

Bandra has several restaurants with curiosity-inducing names, but not many that deliver on what they promise. However, walking up the steps to Gangsta's, past the cage-like iron rods, you know that this is not your run-of-the-mill restaurant that doesn't have much going for it except a unique name. The décor is impressive — for the young and experimental. An older crowd may be taken aback by the chairs and paintings that stay true to its name. However, Gangsta's doesn't seem like the sort of place that wants to impress fine dining familiar sections of society anyway. Spread over two floors, they have the luxury of space, which they have used well. The tables are spread out and the walls feature sketches of popular cinematic dons like Marlon Brando. They have balanced the predominately black décor with bright colours so as not to make it look depressing or dim.

We were lucky enough to sit in the Boss's (VIP) section, which features plush chairs, dark décor and a special menu with premium alcohol (however, we sampled dishes from their regular menu as the VIP one wasn't up and running yet). We started with the rum-based Ginger Martini (₹400) and Scarface (₹700). We loved

the Martini and the vodka-based Scarface was delicious too, with just the right amount of apple juice. However, my favourite was the Spiced Manhattan (₹700). The Jack Daniels-based drink had refreshing flavours of watermelon and passion fruit, but wasn't overly sweet and was extremely smooth. The Long Island Iced Tea (₹450) however, was a bit disappointing.

We paired our drinks with kebabs. While they weren't average bar bites, they weren't mind-blowing either. However, the stuffed chilli deserves a special mention. Stuffed with spiced and diced chicken, it was perfectly flavoured, with the crunchy chilli lending it great texture.

The Mediterranean fare won us over. The Horiatiiki salad (₹260) was excellent, with melt-in-your-mouth feta cheese and a tart, vinegary dressing. The Hummus Awarma (₹475) had dry, but flavourful lamb ragu perfectly balanced by hummus. Also try the Jalebis with ice cream (₹295), which are crunchy and syrupy.

By the end of my meal, I was impressed. The Mediterranean dishes and cocktails are impressive and the décor is unique. However, remember that this is quite an expensive place. If you have the money to spend, I recommend you visit for a memorable meal.



BEYOND BEER? What can The Beer Café offer apart from varied beer? Absolutely nothing, says Shirley Mistry

On paper, The Beer Café sounds promising. With over 37 beers priced competitively, what could go wrong? Turns out, a lot. The place looks like any other food outlet in the mall and the bright, yellow plastic chairs, along with empty beer towers across a wall do little to impress.

We started with Peroni (₹325), an Italian beer that's light, crisp, refreshing and served chilled. We also tried the Balty Morzo (₹245), a beer-based cocktail that also contained cranberry juice, lime and sugar and to say that we were not so impressed would be an understatement. The other components of the drink overpowered the beer, and we couldn't drink more than half of the saccharine-sweet drink. We also tried Liefmans (₹745), a crisp, fruity beer with raspberry and strawberry. The menu explains each beer in detail and they also have a concise menu of hard liquor.

We sampled the Chilly Paneer (₹245), reminiscent of a spicy, saucy dish at a Chinese take-away joint; Sheekh Kebab (₹295) that was tough, dry and lacked flavour; Tandoori Prawns (₹445) that were well cooked but lacked flavour; Chicken Nuremberg Sausages (part of their Oktoberfest menu), coated in garlic and a barbecue-like sauce and the White Sauce Penne with Chicken (₹345), which tasted like the effort of a struggling home-cook.

The food is such a disappointment, that you're better off



Where Unit 2/3, 1st Floor, Phoenix Market City, LBS Marg, Kurla Kamani, Kurla (w) **Contact** 61801782 **Meal for two** ₹2,000 **Alcohol served** Yes (Pint of beer starts from ₹175)

sticking to French fries. The air conditioning was extremely poor and after repeated requests to turn it up, we were still sipping our beer in a considerably warm room. Service is super slow, which is another deal breaker for me. While I wouldn't mind heading here for a quick, speciality beer while I'm shopping, a leisurely meal is out of the question.

Where New Kamal Building, Opposite National College, Waterfield Road, Bandra (w) **Alcohol** Yes (Beer pint: ₹180 onwards) **Meal for two** ₹1,500 (without alcohol) **Contact** 987676645/ 8976023843