

Bites in Bothell: These 2 restaurants are worth a trip to the Eastside

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Two miles south in Bothell is **Bay Leaf Bar & Grill**. A friend and I walked into the cavernous space for lunch on a Wednesday around 12:30 p.m. The air conditioning was comfortably cool; the music played at a pleasant volume. And in the complete opposite vein of Ta Joia, we were the only ones there.



The lamb kebabs from Bay Leaf Bar & Grill are tender and herbaceous, served with rice, salad and sautéed vegetables. (Jackie Varriano / The Seattle Times)

The menu globe-trots around the Mediterranean and through India; there are dolmades and gyro sandwiches, chicken korma and saag paneer. The drink menu includes Indian wine and beer alongside plenty of Northwest-made libations. There is even a smaller lunch menu with lighter portions of curries, sandwiches and salads.



Bay Leaf's lunch menu includes smaller portions of vegetable and meat curries plus soups, salads and a handful of sandwiches. (Jackie Varriano / The Seattle Times)

We ordered the lunch portions of the chicken korma (\$14), saag paneer (\$13) and Greek fries (\$6), plus the full entrée-sized lamb seekh kebabs (\$22) and a piece of naan (\$3.50). It seemed strange to be the only ones there — even stranger once the food came, because lunch was incredible.

The Greek fries arrived first — and, judge if you want, but a hot, crispy French fry drizzled in tzatziki and crumbled feta? “Desert island” food. “Comfort me with Greek fries” is my new motto.



The superb Greek fries at Bay Leaf Bar & Grill in Bothell are topped with crumbled feta and drizzled with tzatziki. (Jackie Varriano / The Seattle Times)

Things got even better from there. The lamb seekh kebabs were wildly herbaceous and tender, served with a yogurt sauce, small salad, rice and vegetables. The spinach in the saag paneer was downright creamy and the chicken korma was rich and buttery.

We asked our server why we were the only ones there and she just shrugged, telling us lunches are slow, dinners are much busier. The restaurant has date night “dinner for two” specials and Bollywood disc jockey dance nights often — so I can see the appeal for the dinner crowd. But if you find yourself hungry in Bothell midday, you can’t go wrong with either Bay Leaf or Ta Joia.