

Restaurants & Cafés

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New reviews

The Jungle Restaurant

Consume



It's not every day that you have to walk through an Amazonian rainforest – complete with 200 species of plant, an array of creepy crawlies and even a moving and roaring dinosaur – before you take your seat for dinner. But this is all part of the experience of dining at The Jungle Restaurant, one of the latest venues to open its doors in Muscat.

Located in Al Qurum, next to Qurum National Park, The Jungle is definitely one eatery you're unlikely to forget in a hurry – both for the impressive food and the unique premises. Arriving through the large stone arch gates, which look like the entrance to *Jurassic Park*, diners walk down a path through the drizzly rainforest, before entering the restaurant. It was only after arriving slightly damp into the dry eatery that we realised there were umbrellas available to those wanting to roam 'outside'.

My lunch companion and I, along with our two hungry one-year-olds, were led to a rustic wooden table by a friendly waiter. The dining room, covered in tiger stripes and tribal art, is large and spacious, with floor-to-ceiling glass windows overlooking the lush green entrance area.

We chose a 'watermelon fizz' consisting of watermelon juice 'slush', lime juice and ginger ale, and a green

mint tea, made of chilled tea and honey with mint leaves. Then we perused the exciting international menu. With everything from beef burgers to Mexican quesadillas and chicken tikka kebabs to margherita pizza, food from every corner of the globe makes an appearance here.

For our children, we ordered from the Junior Explorer menu. We agreed that Muscat lacks restaurants that offer healthy kids' meals made with fresh ingredients, and sadly, The Jungle's children's menu only included the usual fast food options found elsewhere in the capital. Nonetheless, my friend's little girl enjoyed her chicken nuggets and chips, and my son made a good attempt at eating his margherita pizza, which was large enough to feed an adult with a good appetite.

My friend ordered the mushroom madness for her starter – a simple cream of mushroom soup, which she said was 'homely and fresh' – while I opted for the spicy sweet shrimps. I was presented with a tower of some of the largest prawns I've ever seen, covered in a crispy batter and served

with a sweet chilli dip. They were gorgeous.

From the extensive main course menu, we tried The Jungle's signature experience, The Jungle Grill. Staff try to create a campfire atmosphere at your table, by revealing your personal grill (stored inside a secret compartment at your table), on which to roast your own kebabs. We asked our waiter to bring us a selection of the chef's recommended kebabs and we were not disappointed.

The most popular kebab is the Kakori – an Indian-style kebab with minced lamb, raw papaya and mixed spices. The meat was beautifully cooked and a real highlight of the meal. Next came the Xinjiang – a Mongolian kebab with beef tenderloin slices, seasoned with ginger, soy sauce and sesame oil.

Despite the meat being slightly tough, it was still a real treat for the taste buds. The Hawaiian kebab with honey and soy marinated chicken next, and was complemented beautifully with crunchy red pepper and garlic. We also tried the tender and tasty chicken tikka marinated in yoghurt, cashew nuts, cream, cardamom and mild spices. But

we both agreed that the most delicious of our five kebabs was the Omani hammour (local fish), grilled with dill, celery, leek, onion, garlic, mustard and lemon juice.

With just enough room to sample the dessert menu, we chose the tropical fruit salad, served with honey yoghurt, and the slightly less healthy chocolate molten lava cake – a light, fluffy chocolate pocket filled with warm melted milk chocolate, served with vanilla ice cream.

We agreed that the service could have been faster. What was supposed to be a quick lunch lasted two and a half hours, which was too long to keep the little ones sitting still. Older children, however, can head to the souvenir shop, where staff will look after the kids while you enjoy your meal. There, they can watch documentaries, learn about rainforests and get their hands dirty while learning to pot plants, which they can take home with them.

Overall, The Jungle is a welcome addition to the culinary scene in Muscat, offering value for money and something a bit different with its rainforest experience.

Average price of a meal for two with soft drinks OMR35. Open daily noon-3pm; 7pm-11pm. The Jungle Restaurant, next to Qurum National Park (24 56 1700).

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